CHAPTER V

RESTRICTIONISTS WIN THE DAY

Well, it begins to look like they intend to make this country a grand dump of the world! They may have found a brand new way to get around the immigration laws....How long will America still be America? 1

Let's not go overboard on acceptance of refugees from Communism. We have some wise men in Congress who have spent a lot of time on the question of immigration, and they have set up limitations and quotas. 2

On 15 May, Herbert Brownell Jr., the Attorney General, announced that the government had liberalized its refugee parole programme to allow more refugees to come to the United States. He said that the revised programme would extend entry for the first time to Hungarian refugees in Britain and other European countries other than Austria. Refugees in Austria who were relatives of those who had already come were to be given top priority. 3

Some felt that more was expected of the United States by the western nations. This attitude was reflected in an editorial that appeared in the New York Times, in which there

1. Letter to the editor by Chas R. Timmons, Columbus (Q) State Journal, 5 January 1957.
was the complaint that other nations of the free world, considering their relative sources, had done much better than the United States. In fact, it said that the difficulties blocking the way of Hungarian refugees had "undermined" seriously whatever reputation the United States had left in Europe as a refuge for those who fled from Communism.  

Among the European nations tiny Switzerland and overburdened Austria had extended substantial help to the refugees. By the end of February Austria had spent $16 million buying food and rehabilitating former army camps to shelter refugees. It had agreed to take 30,000 refugees and Austria had already accepted half a million refugees from other countries after the Second World War. Switzerland took about 10,000 refugees. Canada was making a generous gesture by agreeing to take an unlimited number. On the same day of Brownell's announcement the President's Committee on Hungarian Refugees was dissolved and Camp Kilmer was closed. The reason given for the closure was that the emergency phase was over.

WORK OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE

The President's Committee on Hungarian Refugees, under the Chairmanship of Tracy S. Voorhees, during its tenure, worked

4. Ibid., 17 May 1957.
on several fronts to co-ordinate the work of the voluntary agencies. When Voorhees began his work, he knew that the funds for the programme would reach him through bureaucratic channels much later. So, for the first six weeks or more, he bore the expense of a major portion of the $40,000 to be spent. He had to keep the problem alive in the public eye and this he proceeded to do by making use of the radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Communications Counsellors, who did the publicity work wrote down their priorities to be:

1. Speed—getting this thing moving.
2. National participation—integrated throughout the country—not concentrated in East or through any one organization.
3. A good press.

And they worked out a plan by which the refugee story was to be told in terms of "human interest." Apart from this, a press story was planned for select members of the Press in Austria and other places to draw a contrast between Displaced Persons camps in Europe and the Kilmer Refugee Centre. The screening process was also to be explained to prove that efforts were being made to keep out Communists. It was hoped that these would "tend to keep the heat off 'scandal stories' in the

7. Personal, unfinished, unpublished account of Vorhees (hereinafter mentioned as Personal Account), Vorhees Papers, p. 11.
While Voorhees was trying to keep the public interested in the programme, the attitude of the Government was reticent. A letter that issued from the office of the Coordinator of the Government Public Service Advertising, from Special Assistant James M. Lambie Jr. to the Advertising Council gave in a nutshell the reaction of the Government.

Lambie wanted the appeal to the public to be a general one. "Because there is a great number of refugees relative to our population", he wrote, "we have all agreed that our initial appeal should be somewhat low-keyed and tentative." Regarding commercials on T.V. he said:

First, for purposes of avoiding any appearance of trying to influence legislation, there should be no reference to future Hungarian influx. Second, we must, regretfully, avoid reference to the United States as a traditional haven for the oppressed of the world but rather speak only of the Hungarians and the present situation. 10

The Advertising Council was later phased out of the whole programme.

The Governors' Committees formed earlier to assist in the working of the Refugee Relief Act, helped now in


resettling the refugees. The Governors' Committees tried to get scholarships for students; have the refugees covered by the State housing projects; and hasten assimilation by assuring acceptance of the refugees.\textsuperscript{11}

The refugee students were to be assured educational opportunities through the assistance of the Institute of International Education and World University Service. Dr John A. Krout, Provost of Columbia University, was to help in this regard.\textsuperscript{12}

The President's Committee successfully completed the task that it took up. In its report it suggested that the future assistance should be on a major scale in supplying better temporary care in Austria and transportation to countries of permanent residence.\textsuperscript{13}

**Closure of Camp Kilmer**

The closure of Camp Kilmer provoked an editorial in *New York Times* which declared that the United States ought to be searching out new ways to give help and give it generously. The editorial ended with a poignant question: "Will official indifference—on the part not of some remote European bureaucrat

\textsuperscript{11} How Cooperative Agencies Function, Files of President's Committee, Operation "Safe Haven" (All Papers) Press Kit, n.d., Eisenhower Library.

\textsuperscript{12} Pamphlet on the Outline of the Organization and work of the President's Committee, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{13} *Department of State Bulletin* (Washington, D.C.), vol. 36, 17 January 1957, pp. 984-5.
but of our own American government--kill all hope for those who remain?\textsuperscript{14}

The growing apathy shown towards the refugee problem was apparent when the month of June approached. There was despair and a sense of hopelessness in the air in the refugee camps at Austria and Yugoslavia. Underlying the sadness was a resentment against the US Administration because more Hungarians were not admitted to the United States. Angier Biddle Duke, the President of International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Claiborne Pell, the Vice-President of IRC, were eye-witnesses to this. At a luncheon at Ambassador Hotel, Claiborne Pell remarked that fifty suicides or attempts at suicide had been committed in the camps at Austria and Yugoslavia since December. He added that there was no need for the Russians to exert redefection pressure to get the refugees back to Hungary since mishandling of the situation by the Western powers did it for them.\textsuperscript{15}

The shaft did not seem to go home. The Refugee Reception Centre was shifted from Camp Kilmer to the Saint George Hotel in Brooklyn, New York, operated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in May 1957. On 23 December 1957, the President announced that effective from 31 December 1957, the emergency programme for Hungarian refugees coming to the

\textsuperscript{14} New York Times, 26 June 1957.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 14 June 1957.
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United States would be discontinued. Out of 172,732 refugees in Austria, 35,026 had departed to the United States by the end of December.

RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

It was not difficult to find jobs for the refugees. Most of them were skilled or semi-skilled workers the American labour would accept. Wall Street Journal brought out the news that US firms were deluging the refugees with job proposals. Three-quarters of the refugees had scientific background.

The voluntary agencies played an important role in sponsoring and placing the escapees. Both in Austria and at Kilmer the voluntary agencies had involved themselves in several facets of the programme. CARE, American Friends Service Committee, and the International Rescue Committee and the American Red Cross had contributed labour and finance to an appreciable extent.

All the voluntary agencies engaged in the work of refugee rehabilitation were members of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service. Those actively engaged in assisting the refugees were many. But agencies like American

18. See Appendix 6 for break-up of the refugee professionals.
Friends Service Committee; American Friends of Austrian Children; American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees; American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; Brethren Service Commission; Catholic Relief Services; Church World Service; Cooperative for American Remittances to Everywhere (CARE); Foster Parents Plan; International Rescue Committee; Lutheran World Relief; and Save Children Federation, were the most important.

The American Red Cross operated through the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Red Cross Committee. Most of the volunteers of the voluntary agencies wore Red Cross badges whenever they had to go into Hungary to distribute supplies. What was done for the refugees was a co-operative effort of all the voluntary agencies.

As early as 29 October 1956, Arthur Foster, senior representative of the World Council of Churches' Service to Refugees in Austria telephoned Edgar H.S. Chandler who was then the Director of the Refugee Service of this organization, from Vienna. He gave a grim picture of the situation within Hungary and said that he had already negotiated with the American Embassy for the release of US surplus commodities to assist refugees. The first shipment by air of medicament, vitamins, concentrated foods, clothing and blankets to the value of $16,743 came immediately from an American voluntary agency.

Church World Service, New York. 21

By 12 November, the American Red Cross had spent or allocated approximately $130,000 for relief and the first Red Cross team to leave the United States for Vienna went on 3 December 1956. More than 500,000 pounds of clothes and blankets were sent to the refugees in Austria by 10 December by the Catholic Relief Supplies. Relief supplies from the voluntary agencies were pouring into Austria by the end of November. They were distributed among the refugees by representatives of the agencies. Every effort was made to keep the flow of relief supplies adequate. A spokesman for the American Friends Service Committee announced that planes returning to Europe were being loaded with supplies for refugees then in Austria.

The Red Cross and CARE in particular had to curtail services elsewhere to clothe and feed refugees from Hungary. By 22 December, the American Red Cross had spent $2,567,250 for the refugees in Austria having set up a goal of $5,000,000 to be collected. 22

The voluntary agencies continued to help even after the emergency programme came to an end. By the end of 1957 most of the refugees who had entered the United States were resettled

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in various parts of the country mainly due to the efforts of the voluntary agencies. Lewis M. Hopkins, Executive Secretary of American Friends Service Committee, in a letter in the New York Times stated that the American voluntary agencies were prepared to welcome these additional refugees with the same kind of cordiality that they showed the first arrivals. His organization appointed two persons who along with representatives of other American voluntary agencies did welfare and social services in Yugoslavia under the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. 23

By 30 April 1957 the voluntary agencies had successfully resettled almost the entire lot of refugees in the Kilmer Reception Centre (KRC). 24

The battle now was to be with the Congress.

REACTION IN THE CONGRESS

The repeated appeals and criticism of this period were aimed at the Congress that had a Democratic majority. It is worthwhile examining whether the Congress had any responsibility for the manner in which the problem was dealt with.

In his news conference held on 23 January 1957, President Eisenhower indicated that no fixed policy towards the refugees could be adopted without Congressional action. 25 He explained

23. Ibid., 16 May 1957.
24. See Appendix 7.
why this was so in another news conference held on 10 April 1957. The refugees had been allowed during a recess of Congress. Now it was for the Congress to decide about taking them in. The President said that without some Congressional action he would certainly be handicapped. Considering the fact that Eisenhower respected the constitutional role of the Congress, his handicaps with respect to the refugee problem were too many.

At the Congress, the opposition to any liberalization in immigration law came from two staunch supporters of restriction in immigration. In the House it was Francis E. Walter (Democrat, Pennsylvania) and in the Senate it was James O. Eastland (Democrat, Mississippi). Walter was Chairman of the House Judiciary Sub-committee on Immigration and also co-author of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act. Eastland headed the Senate Judiciary Sub-committee and after McCarran's death, he had taken his place in the Senate in defending the basic immigration law. The two Democrats considered it their duty to preserve the McCarran-Walter Act as it was.

As pointed out earlier, it was Walter himself who had suggested the parole procedure. Later, when he came to believe that the refugee issue might be used by his long-standing critics to undermine the law of which he was the proud author, and thereby shake the very foundation on which it rested, he

turned with determination to the task of protecting the law. Thereby, as he viewed it, he was safeguarding American security and well-being. His best weapon, after having written favourably about the admission of a limited number of refugees, was to cast aspersions on the screening procedures and raise the fear of Communist subversive activities.

On 4 January 1957, Walter said the handling of the Hungarian refugee operations should be investigated by Congress before consideration of any easing of immigration legislation. According to him, the first refugees admitted were mostly Communists fleeing popular wrath. \(^{27}\) He renewed his attack on 10 January. He served notice that Congress would proceed "very very carefully" on legislation to let the refugees remain in the United States permanently. He said that the security procedures taken while admitting them were not adequate. "All the administrators of the law wanted to do apparently under orders from high quarters", Walter said, "was to bring in a large number of people quickly and worry about who has entered the United States--later." Walter said that during his visit to Austro-Hungarian border, he had learned that "many" refugees had torn up Communist Party identity cards as they crossed into Austria. \(^{28}\)

As though to corroborate with Walter's statement the Senate Internal Security Sub-committee urged on 15 January that

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 5 January 1957.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 11 January 1957.
no more Hungarian refugees should be admitted before further
investigation. The Committee had heard sworn testimony by a
masked witness who said that a Soviet secret agent had been
"planted" in the US Legation in Budapest. Another report
received by the subcommittee was to the effect that a former
clerk for the Hungarian secret police had been found among
refugees at Camp Kilmer. The Administration officials, however,
insisted that appropriate security measures were being taken. 29

Both in the Senate and the House, a careful investigation
of the emergency admittance programme was decided upon. Walter
expressed the opinion that public interest will be affected by
admitting thousands of persons who "obviously were no refugees"
or "who had not engaged in the Hungarian revolution against
Communism." 30

In a special message to the Congress on 31 January 1957,
the President made certain recommendations to revise the
Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and to resolve the
problem about the status of the refugees. The President re-
commended that the Congress should enact legislation entrusting
the President with the power to authorize the Attorney General
to parole into the United States refugees who have fled from
Communist "persecution and tyranny." He also sought discre-
tionary power to the Attorney General to permit these parolees

29. Ibid., 16 January 1957.
30. Ibid., 19 January 1957.
to stay as permanent citizens.

The President again suggested "vigorous measures" to eliminate defects in the quota system while the Congress continued to make its own study. The "interim measures" suggested by him were aimed at: (1) Determining the quotas based on the census of 1950 in the place of the 1920 census. These additional quota numbers were to be distributed among various countries in proportion to the actual immigration into the United States since 1924 to July 1955. (2) Pooling of unused quotas and distribution of the quotas in a twelve-month period on a first-come first-serve basis, to aliens who had the needed skills or had close relatives in the United States. (3) Removal of mortgage of quotas. Apart from these, the President also suggested some technical amendments like eliminating the requirement for fingerprinting temporary visitors.31

The opposition for liberalization was, however, not a group effort by all the Democrats. Among the Democrats there were some who favoured liberalization. Likewise, there were Republicans who opposed liberalization. There were no partisan views as regards the immigration legislation. But among the Democrats, the Southern Democrats formed a powerful group opposing strongly any kind of liberalization and the Republicans who were hostile to liberalizing the law to admit the Hungarian refugees joined the Southern Democrats. Among the Democrats,

the person who worked hard to liberalize the law and who was also optimistic of putting through the President's programme was Emanuel Celler (Democrat, New York), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

Celler sponsored legislation jointly with 27 other Democrats on 21 January. This legislation proposed a major revision of the immigration and nationality laws by substituting the quota system based on national origins by a "class" basis. The legislation suggested to fix the quota at 250,000. The Celler plan set up five classes of immigrants--family unification, occupational, refugee, national interest and resettlement. Within each class fifteen per cent and not more than that, was to be allocated to any one country. The President was to submit to the Congress the proposed allocation and the Congress was to be given sixty days to approve or disapprove of it. Celler was opposed to the "two-headed system" of the Department of State issuing visas and the Department of Justice deciding on the admissibility. He suggested leaving the administration in the hands of a single official. 32

Celler did not suggest this particular legislation with only the Hungarian refugees in mind. His desire was for overhauling the whole system, the need for which, he argued, had been demonstrated clearly by the Hungarian refugee problem. But the legislation that he proposed might have gone a long way

in clearly defining the status of the refugees admitted on "parole". It might have been managed to bring them under various classes and the problem of sending them back in case their residence was not made permanent, could have been solved.

Celler's moves to strike at the root of the immigration legislation of 1952 were met with counter-moves by Walter. On 29 January Walter introduced a bill to ease immigration restrictions without impairing the national origins principle. He recommended cancellation of "mortgages" which would allow entry of more from many countries each year from the following year. Walter made it plain that he was not intending to sponsor any more bills. In the beginning of February, Walter's Committee was still fixing up the time for "extensive" hearings to discuss the President's proposal.

Walter's indifference to the President's proposal was due to his conviction that Communist subversives might have entered in the form of refugees. His position appeared to receive support from certain allegations contained in a report the House Committee on Un-American Activities brought out. The report suggested that a Communist "hard core" was still at work

33. The system of taking half of the allocation for the subsequent years in case a country's current year quota was exhausted was called "mortgaging quotas". Sometimes the mortgages extended to even more than hundred years of a country's subsequent allocation.

and that there should be a tightening of passport regulations. Such an appraisal in any case, was to be expected for Walter was the Chairman of the Committee.

Though this seemed to be the most decisive blow to kill the Celler plan, there were some who still thought that the Celler plan could be incorporated in other bills. John D. Dingell (Democrat, Michigan) was one such optimist. On 18 February 1957, Dingell remarked in the House that the Hungarian refugee problem had demonstrated with dramatic clarity the weakness in US immigration laws. He pointed out that an immigration policy should be adaptable to the desire of the United States that the people of Eastern Europe should attempt to escape Communism. He introduced three bills to provide 30,000 non-quota immigrant visas each year to Hungarian and other East European escapees. The second one was to consider the Hungarian refugees admitted as parolees, as non-quota immigrants. The third one was a companion bill to the one introduced by Celler.

The attempt at liberalization initiated by Celler appeared to be in its death throes after this. A continual attack against liberalization began in the Congress.

The debate that followed in the later months showed little sympathy for the Hungarian refugees. George S. Long

35. Ibid., 10 February 1957.
36. USA, Congressional Record, vol. 103, 18 February 1957, pp. 1943-5.
(Democrat, Louisiana) asserted in the House that he found it hard to generate much enthusiasm over the Hungarian refugees who had deserted their homeland in a time of crisis and who under the guise of freedom fighters had migrated in wholesale lots to the promised land of America. He was of the opinion that refugees from Communism was a broad term that included refugees from the Far East and the Middle East as well. Long's argument meant that being refugees of Communism was no reason why Hungarian refugees should be considered as a special case. There were so many others who could qualify on that basis.

Senator John Stennis (Democrat, Mississippi) was equally unsympathetic. He remarked in the Senate that the Hungarian refugees had been admitted through an "unusual, tortured interpretation of the parole provisions" of the immigration law. While discussing the competition in employment opportunities and the security problem posed by the entry of Hungarian refugees, he remarked that the screening was not thorough. He did not believe that America could be made more strong or resolute in its determination to stop Communist imperialism by weakening its security structure or by disrupting the domestic economy by promoting jobs that would otherwise be available to unemployed American citizens. He suggested forming freedom corps of refugees from behind the Iron Curtain and making it a part of NATO forces and also sending them to countries whose

economy might need them. These were far-fetched suggestions that had nothing to do with the problem on hand.

Congressional inaction was criticized by the New York Times in an editorial. It stated that Congressional inaction was the outcome of a "spy scare". It bitterly commented that "this haggling over numbers, this preoccupation with possible 'risks' and above all, this strangling, soul-destroying exhibition of miles upon miles of red tape must be repugnant to most of the citizens." It asserted that the Hungarians would be an asset to the country. The editorial ended with a comment that something was obviously wrong in the handling of the problem.

What obviously was "wrong" was the support the House Committee on Un-American Activities received from "patriotic" organizations and from influential Democrats in raising the bogey of Communism. On 18 April, the Daughters of the American Revolution supported the Committee's demand that the McCarran-Walter Act should be left intact. Richard Arens, Director of the Committee had said that his Committee's investigations and hearings had revealed that the Communist Party had created over 130 organizations for the purpose of creating sentiment against the immigration law and to pressurize the Congress to weaken the Act. The patriotic organizations reiterated Aren's views.

38. Ibid., Senate, 2 March 1957, pp. 2937-9.
40. Ibid., 19 April 1957.
In the end of May, Walter confidently announced that he would now hold the hearings on the President's programme. He was sure of the results. He said that he wanted to hold hearings to give critics of the Act, who had called it discriminatory, an opportunity to prove their charges. He declared that he would like to hear what the critics had to say from the witness chair rather than from the side lines.41

In the second week of June, Walter introduced a bill for relaxing the immigration restrictions to carry out several of the technical amendments mentioned in the President's special message. Walter's bill did not make any provision for granting permanent status to the refugees.42

A companion measure was introduced by John F. Kennedy (Democrat, Massachusetts) and John O. Pastore (Democrat, Rhode Island) in the Senate. It was co-sponsored by a few other Democrats and two Republicans. Pastore felt that the bill provided only "a drop in the bucket" toward what was needed but that the fight did not stop there.43 The compromise bill did not include the basic changes that the President wanted to bring about. It dealt with using unused quotas of the Refugee Relief Act, admission of orphans and skilled specialists with

41. Ibid., 25 May 1957.
42. Ibid., 14 June 1957.
43. Ibid.
non-quota status and cancellation of mortgages. The sponsors of the bill were careful to seek Walter's support for the bill. They said that the bill was in accord with Walter's thinking. Sources close to Walter said that he had reservations about some features but some members of the Senate maintained that Walter had endorsed all provisions except granting permanent status to the Hungarian "peoples" which incidentally, was the one problem that had to be settled soon. In fact, none of the provisions had anything to do with those already admitted awaiting a clarification of their status. The President's request had been put in cold storage obviously for the coming year. And granting of permanent status to the Hungarian refugees was probably dropped out of the provisions for fear of non-co-operation from Walter and the majority of the Congress, for the bill was to go to a Senate House Conference Committee after Senate passage for agreement on final version. Walter had scuttled a similar bill only the previous year.

The Senate Judiciary Committee that was to consider the bill also had lingering doubts about the trustworthiness of the Hungarian refugees for it appointed Tibor Kerekas, Chairman of the History Faculty in Georgetown University, as consultant to the Senate Judiciary Committee on Hungarian refugees. He was to leave on 1 August to Vienna, and begin a study of the

44. Ibid., 4 July 1957 and USA, Congressional Record, vol. 103, 21 August 1957, p. 15494.

present line of Communist propaganda among Hungarian refugees. 46

In its final form, the Senate bill introduced by Kennedy and others was silent on giving a permanent status to the Hungarian refugees. 47 On 15 August the compromise bill was approved tentatively by the Senate and the House Judiciary Committee considered Walter's bill. The House Judiciary Committee rejected the President's plea for granting permanent residence to the Hungarian refugees by a reported vote of 15-11. 48 To keep the pressure still mounting and possibly to prove that his bill was fair, Walter brought out the report of the Committee on Un-American Activities even while the compromise bill was being approved. The report alleged that the Communists were operating through the American Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born to destroy the McCarran-Walter Act. 49

46. Ibid., 1 August 1957.

47. USA, Congressional Record, vol. 103, 21 August 1957, p. 15494.

Frank J. Lausche (Democrat, Ohio) asked Arthur V. Watkins (Republican, Utah) one of the sponsors of the bill:

Lausche - "To what extent would any of the provisions of the pending measure apply to any of these 27,000 Hungarians, if at all?"

Watkins - "I doubt very much that any of the provisions of the presently adopted legislation would apply to them...."


49. Ibid., 16 August 1957.
There were some in the Congress who ardently tried to put through the President's programme. Kenneth B. Keating (Republican, New York) tried to revive the ignored President's programme, by introducing a bill to reunite families of refugees who had fled from Iron Curtain countries. They were to be given non-quota visas. Jacob K. Javits (Republican, New York) urged the Senate to enact a speedy legislation to regularize the status of Hungarian refugees in the United States and for the admission of those in Austria. But the death knell for the President's programme, a part of which, dealt with the Hungarian refugees, had already been sounded. On 29 August the House passed a Senate-approved bill to make some modifications in the McCarran-Walter Act by a vote of 293 to 58. The Senate passed the bill the next day.

The legislation passed (P.L. 85-316) permitted the entry of more than 60,000 additional immigrants which category included members of families that had escaped from Communist countries or from persecution in non-Communist countries because of race or creed, and other aliens needed because of their technical and other skills. The measure did not talk of pooling of unused quotas, changing the basic year for determining

50. USA, Congressional Record, vol. 103, 4 June 1957, p. 8327.
51. Ibid., Senate, 8 July 1957, p. 10952.
quotas or about the Hungarian refugees. It provided for cance-
ellation of mortgages, waiving of fingerprinting requirement,
entry of unlimited number of orphans adopted by Americans, in
a period of two years and other technical amendments.53

Keating, while supporting the measure, gave vent to
his disappointment in the House. He remarked that there was
no chance for adequate debate or opportunity for amendment. It
was a "take-it-or-leave-it" proposition. He said that such
arbitrary method of legislating at the very end of the session
was not responsible and was not fair to the membership.54 The
New York Times in its editorial on 30 August titled "Immigra-
tion's Half Loaf", said that with the rush of Congress to
adjourn, it had become necessary to be satisfied with several
issues being given as slices of bread or quarter loaves or half
loaves instead of whole loaves. The new immigration bill was
one such case. The editorial stated that while wide-open doors
were not possible, there was no valid excuse for national,
racial or religious discriminations or for a defense against
totalitarianism so exaggerated that "it defeats its purpose".
It called the McCarran-Walter Act as one that betrayed American
ideals.55

53. Senator Clifford P. Case, "Toward a New Immigration Policy",
Reporter (New York), 7 March 1957, pp. 26 ff.
54. USA, Congressional Record, vol. 103, 28 August 1957, p. 16303.
While the President reluctantly signed the bill on 11 September, the State Department considered the bill to have "humanitarian" aspects. The two principal defenders of the bill—Walter and Eastland—were elated. Walter held that the signing of the bill removed any legislative basis for complaints against the immigration procedures. "It has been particularly instructive, he said, "to see how the Congress reasserted its complete confidence in the immigration system established by Walter-McCarran Act." He justified his stand regarding the Hungarian refugees by reiterating that a move to regularize their status was inadvisable since the first wave of refugees contained many thousands who were Communists. The Hungarians ceased to be in the headlines after the immigration legislation ended in a victory for the antagonists of liberalization, particularly the Southern Democrats.

In February 1958, Michael A. Feighan (Democrat, Ohio) introduced in the House a bill to regularize the status of Hungarian refugees. By now, the fear of Communist subversives having entered in the form of Hungarian refugees had considerably died down since they had been screened thoroughly, and the bill had the approval of Walter. In the last week of July 1965, the Hungarian refugees became permanent residents of the United States. 56

56. Ibid., 12 September 1957.

There was a sense of dissatisfaction among some Congress members after a debate on the refugees was over. Alvin M. Bentley (Republican, Michigan) said in the House:

"...I have a feeling that our people are unhappy and concerned that more concrete, more positive assistance (to the refugees) was not forthcoming. I have not talked with anyone in a private capacity who is satisfied that we have done all we can."

It was not the Congress that had been the sole body responsible for stalling any action on the Hungarian refugees. The President and his Administration had also floundered irresolutely. Representative Celler had remarked in February that Congressional action would be good if President Eisenhower used "a little elbow grease". During the discussion about the continuing of the Hungarian refugee program, the Washington Post and Herald Tribune of 18 April 1957 remarked that the administration had done little to press for the legislation. The editorial concluded that "the President owed it to the country to set this disgraceful matter right at once with a clear statement of his intentions and a fresh call upon Congress for enactment of permanent legislation."

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58. Ibid., 7 January 1957, p. 309.


60. USA, Congressional Record, vol. 103, 29 April 1957, pp. 6114-15.
Averell Harriman blamed the President and the Administration for not having worked with sufficient vigour or speed to persuade Congress to enact a decent revision of the anachronistic immigration statutes. As for the Democrats of the Congress, Harriman said that they had done very little to redeem America's position as a haven for the free and the brave from other lands. Harriman called for an all-out effort led by the President to break the log-jam on immigration legislation.\textsuperscript{61}

A breakdown of figures of refugee admittance shows that considering the receiving country's population the United States had admitted only 22 refugees per 100,000 population when its population was roughly 167,440,000. If the number of refugees taken per hundred million National Income was calculated the United States had taken only 9 by June 1957. Extending it to the end of the year the number might go up to 12 which was negligible. Switzerland, a small country with a population of 4,987,000 had taken 10,336 refugees which was 208 refugees per 100,000 population and 192 per hundred million National Income.\textsuperscript{62} The refugees would have formed a very small part of the total US population. The President and the Congress delayed the settling of the issue by hesitation and uncertainty.

\textsuperscript{61.} \textit{New York Times}, 1 May 1957.

Senator Richard L. Neuberger summed up the role of the United States in a sentence: "...As the traditional haven of the oppressed and persecuted from other lands", he said, "America actually has little cause for smug self-satisfaction in our record of accepting Hungarian refugees into our own country." He added that the United States ranked at the bottom of the list of Western democracies which had extended the welcome of the free world to these escapees from Soviet tyranny. He sounded a note of caution that the gap between US declarations and US performance might have damaged US reputation in central Europe, which was not in the self-interest of the United States. 63

At a later date Neuberger gave an explanation of Senate's attitude towards execution of Hungarian leader Imre Nagy by the Soviet Union. What he said might very well apply to what the Administration and the Congress had done regarding the Hungarian refugee problem. "We in the Senate", Neuberger remarked, "have a tendency very often to substitute oratory for action". 64 That was precisely what the Administration and the Congress had done.

The feeling remained among the officials who worked in Vienna that they had muddled through a crisis not altogether to the best advantage of the exiles. It appeared as if the problem


64. Ibid., vol. 104, 19 June 1958, p. 11682.
had been solved in a mathematical but not in a humanitarian sense. 65

Despite its sharply reduced impact, the House Committee on Un-American Activities kept on "documenting" the threat from alien subversives. The Korean war had ended and McCarthyism had lost its vicious spell over the lives of many Americans. But the Committee did not consider its duties to be over. It went on successfully doing its business of raising the bogey of Communism whenever it could possibly do so. But its work was not as exciting as it had been in the previous years when the Committee could point at anybody and dub him as a Communist. The Hungarian refugee problem seemed to provide that opportunity which it most needed to portray Communism with all shocking horror and instil the fear of Communism in the hearts of people. In every report that it brought out, it accused the Hungarian refugees of being Communist subversives. Whether it succeeded in scaring the people or not, it amply succeeded in winning over many of the Congressmen, which was precisely what its Chairman, Walter, the co-author of McCarran-Walter Act, had desired.

Even the Commission on Government Security seemed to agree with the Committee. The Commission, in its recommendations, said that "the admission to the United States of any large group of aliens en masse creates a serious security problem". It particularly recommended that the status of those admitted

on parole should not be changed until all had been adequately screened.

In reality there was not much substance in the alleged threat to American security posed by "Communist subversives" among the refugees. Out of the 33,542 Hungarians admitted into the United States a mere 192 were either deported for various reasons or returned home voluntarily. Out of the 192, only 16 had been found "guilty" of Communist affiliations. Joseph M. Swing, Immigration Commissioner told reporters on 25 January 1957 that 100 cases involving Hungarian refugees were under investigation. Fifty-seven investigations had already been completed. The completed investigations had proved that most of the complaints were "merely spite work". He gave an example of receiving a complaint where the name of one of the refugees was identified to be a former member of the Communist Secret Police in Hungary. Investigations had revealed, Swing said, that the refugee bearing that name was two years old.

The President, in his news conference, on 23 January 1957 revealed that though the possibility existed of Communist infiltration in the body of refugees, he did not believe any Communist subversives had actually entered the United States as refugees. The President's belief was proved to be justified.

66. Ibid., 23 June 1957.
67. Ibid., 26 January and 11 August 1957.
68. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1957, p. 84.
Whatever the reality was, the man who made capital out of the fear of Communism was Representative Walter who had the double advantage of being the Chairman of a Committee that raised such fears and being the Chairman of another Committee that could take action to eliminate those fears. He was in the possession of a double-edged weapon which he cleverly used to save the Act.

To Walter, the fight for non-liberalization of the immigration laws was a personal prestige issue. With McCarran dead, he considered himself the sole defender of an Act which, to him, was in every way a symbol of perfect logic and reason. There had been occasions in the past when using his influence as the Chairman of the House Judiciary Sub-committee on Immigration, he had fought against any kind of liberalization in the immigration laws. His antagonism for the Refugee Relief Act has been noted earlier in the present work.

The New York Times had a write-up on Walter in its column "Man In the News" in which his attitude towards the McCarran-Walter Act was given along with a few choice comments of his close associates. It was said that he looked upon the McCarran-Walter Act as his monument and the National origins system as its corner-stone. One of his colleagues remarked that he was like a caged animal on the defensive constantly and that he had become almost psychopathic about any criticism of himself or the Act. 69

The triumph of McCarran-Walter Immigration law revealed the strength of not just Walter and his associates but the strength of a whole set of concepts which continued to flow in the life-stream of the country. The concept of Nordic superiority, the concept of American way of life being superior, the concept of not letting "alien notions" enter the country, the concept of protecting America against the invasion of Communist ideas, had all asserted themselves time and again during the debates in the Congress and in public expressions.

What one is really concerned about is not whether the problem was solved in a more humanitarian or less humanitarian manner. One is not even concerned about the moral obligations of the United States to help this particular group of refugees. Eschewing emotion and proceeding on the assumption that human misery is tolerated or solved according to political expediency, what still strikes one's attention is the attempt to make it appear as a purely humanitarian issue. "This is our program", declared Voorhees, "justice to the refugees in a humanitarian undertaking". 70 If this was so, the programme would not have petered out while there were 68,000 refugees still left behind in Austria and Yugoslavia. Having recognized it as more a foreign policy issue than a refugee one, and being in the dual role of the self-styled leader of the "Free World" and an aspirant to sit at the table with Soviet Union to negotiate

some time in future, it was considered safe to play it as a purely humanitarian issue. The first batch of refugees were no freedom fighters. A personal interview with a select group of refugees, though only a random sample, is quite revealing concerning the "revolutionary" activities of the refugees. And yet, it was necessary to call them freedom fighters for propaganda purposes and also to make the American public receptive to the idea of admitting the refugees. The very fact that no long range policy to meet in future such emergencies was planned, makes one assume that such emergencies would not be appreciated really, even though apparently the irksome role of the leader of the Free World had to continue.

The American Ambassador at Moscow boycotted the Soviet celebrations of the Bolshevik Revolution on 7 November. If his action was intended to show the world the West's "revulsion" over Soviet actions in Hungary, it needs to be viewed in conjunction with Eisenhower's cordial reply to Bulganin when the latter conveyed his congratulations on Eisenhower's re-election as President.71 The two actions represented two facets of American policy.

The Hungarian refugee programme was likened to past refugee programmes and treated as an emergency problem to be solved temporarily, and not as an indicator of future policy

towards any flow of refugees from East European countries. As a voluntary agency spokesman put it lightly in a conversation, the refugee problem was like a circus in a carnival. It was temporary. After the circus is gone, the carnival still remains.