

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : C/OOB

DATE: 27 July 1954

FROM []

SUBJECT: A E Brief

The attached is a rewritten & ^{partially} corrected
 (by me) version of a paper by A E Brief
 on his impressions of America after
 six months here. His original follows
 the typewritten version of the PRODUCT
 That's very fine! Does this attitude
 change his future work decisions? 10/17

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
 NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
 DATE 2007

POOR QUALITY DOCUMENT
SEE 201 FOLDER FOR HARDCOPY

I am very surprised how much the Americanization School has given me in these 5 months. Of course, I cannot still understand all of the ways of American life, I cannot yet speak English fluently, but I now understand many things that were 3 or 4 months ago completely incomprehensible.

I understand now what the people say on the street, what the radio-speaker says, what is written in the newspapers, and I can speak with my neighbors. It seems to me that I begin to understand the philosophy of the American way of life.

When I was in Germany I always felt that I was only an "ausländer" — a foreigner. Almost everybody who could notice my foreign accent, looked at me with hostility. Even such people who had lived in Germany a very long time always were considered as undesirable foreigners.

It seems to me that it is true that a human being can be a full and useful member of mankind only if he has a mother-country: if he has fought not only against something, but also for something. "One person alone on the field is no warrior", says an old proverb. And so I decided to get a new country.

I have heard of only one country in the world where everybody could feel themselves at home, where everybody was free, and where the happiness of each citizen was the aim of the government. That country was America.

Everyone who has recently arrived in a new country is a foreigner, even if he is going to stay there permanently, even if that country is America. But America is a land of pilgrims, of immigrants, of people who sought and found a holy land, a new free country. And so I ~~thought~~ that perhaps after 5 - 6 years when I will be able to speak English well, I will not be considered anymore as a foreigner and will become an American.

When I went to the Americanization School and in the course of conversation told the director that in my opinion here in America everybody or everybody's ancestors are foreigners, he replied that I was completely wrong. "Nobody is a foreigner here", he said. "Everyone is an American, everyone has the same right and everybody has the same duties. Also you, who are here only a few days." This was my first and most pleasant surprise.

First what I noticed in America were the very wide and good streets and heavy traffic. However, in the wide streets it is almost imperceptible. And there are very few pedestrians: almost every family has a car. Traffic is regulated automatically. The policemen take part in traffic regulation only in rush-hours. Noiseless and quick streetcars and busses

are supplied with such automatic devices that each car or bus is served by one person only. It goes without saying that seats in the busses and streetcars are upholstered and there is never a crowd; in the rush-hours the busses and streetcars go continuously and special "rush-hours only" lines come into operation. Naturally these transit lines belong to private companies; and I think that this is the reason for their success.

Americans are accustomed to a comfortable life. Although the USA is famous for its skyscrapers, the most part of the population lives in two-story houses - cottages. Usually in each apartment in the apartment-houses or in each cottage there is a bath, hot water, central heating, telephone, radio, very often TV. There are also many other things which are almost unknown in Russia or are a rarity in Europe. No housewife washes the linen by hand: the washing-machine does it. The modern American kitchen resembles rather a laboratory than that which in Europe is called a kitchen.

I remember our kitchen in Russia in a "municipal" apartment, where the kitchen was used by 3 or 5 families, where the only device for cooking was a "primus" stove, and where the only mechanization consisted of a water-pipe.

The American housewife doesn't spend all her time in the kitchen or at housework. Thanks to mechanization of housework and cooking, she has a great deal of free time and takes part in social life. Sometimes even more than her husband. There are many women's clubs, schools, leagues. They very often arrange the parties, meetings, etc. Of course, almost every woman can drive a car. Many families have two cars: one for the husband, another for the wife. Shopping takes usually an hour or less daily. The food can be kept fresh in refrigerator for 3 - 5 days.

My mother spent daily 3 or 4 hours in queues to get food, and very little of it, and 3 - 4 hours, in addition, for cooking.

No woman here feels herself old. Everyone from a 14 year-old girl to a 100 year or more old woman uses "make-up". Really, America is the land of youth.

Once upon a time I met a woman who asked me about the location of some hotel. She was so painted that I couldn't immediately recognize her age. She could have been 40 as well as 60. But she told me that she was almost 70.

I think that a 40 year old Russian woman would look like a 60 year old one here.

It is difficult to recognize who is who by only clothing, or to determine the job of someone. Everyone wears what he likes, what seems to him more comfortable. It is possible to meet here a very rich person in very simple dress, consisting of trousers or slacks of the cheapest sort and a shirt with short sleeves, without a tie, as well as a simple unskilled worker in a modern dacron suit. Long trousers are obligatory for everybody.

Women's dress is still more varied, - from very short skirts and blouse in summer days to fashionable evening dresses

Very common among both the men and women are the blue long (or sometimes half-long for girls) trousers of a rough material.

And only in church or in official meetings, evenings, etc. do they put on their best dresses.

Small children here are like all children in the world: lively, gay and often disobedient. But earlier than everywhere else they become independent. Most parents teach their children to be independent and responsible for their actions, whether there are adults present or not. Very interesting is the American custom of "dating". To have a "date" means to have an engagement for a social affair with a friend usually of the opposite sex. For example, one has a date to go for a walk, to go to the movies, to a lecture, etc. The young people go without a chaperone. The basis for this custom is the wish of the parents to make their children independent and responsible. The more "dates" a girl has, the more honor for her.

Very often young people work in their free time as newspaper-sellers, postmen, etc., to earn their own money. It isn't rare that a 15 - 16 year-old boy has his own automobile (of course not new, but always in good condition). Almost everybody likes sports very much. National sport is baseball. In summer each small sport-place is crowded by baseball-playing youths.

Americans don't usually shake hands as much as some other people do. Sometimes in introductions a woman extends her hand to a man or another woman, but it is not necessary. Americans are very friendly, but their greetings and leave-takings are short and informal.

Movies are very comfortable, sound equipment is excellent, The acting and music in most films are very good, but they don't present a true picture of American life (except a few films). The movies often exaggerate or emphasize the sensational and the exceptional instead of showing how most people in the United States

really live. Most Americans usually go to the movies for amusement; they want to escape from the monotonous routine of everyday life. They don't take the movies seriously, because they know that the films are made especially to entertain the public. And how much these American films differ from communist-propaganda films in the USSR! I have never seen any American propaganda film. I haven't even heard whether there are any.

Very characteristic for American households -- in distinction from European ones -- is the lack (if not a full absence) of the house-servants, housemaids. Human labor is so expensive and the household is so mechanized that the most part of American families do without servants. On the other side, very few persons are willing to get a servant-job because there are plenty of better jobs.

Doctors' offices are usually very well equipped, and the patients don't need wait a long time because the appointments are very well regulated. After my small experience, the doctors (at least dentists) are very resolute men. Once I had a bad toothache and went to the dentist. After a short examination and radioscope, the doctor told me something (I didn't speak English) -- and a few minutes later my bad tooth lay on the doctor's table. I didn't feel any pain, but I was glad that I hadn't hurt my leg.

It is clear that for such people who have been born here and all their life lived in America, such values as freedom of way of life, right for change of work-place, free enterprise, etc. are self-evident. And sometimes they don't recognize what kind of human good they own. Some have no idea of how life under a dictator could be.

A little while ago I stood on an intersection and waited for the green light. Near me stood an old woman. After the green light was given we went across the street. At this moment a car approached the corner at a very high speed. Apparently the driver only noticed the red light at the last moment. He put on the brakes and stopped his car after the white line. The old woman was very indignant. She turned to me and asked: "Don't you think that we need a Stalin here?" "No", I answered candidly. She laughed and added, "Don't think that I really wished it."