

1955**The Chronological Development of the American
Committee as a Propaganda Instrument in Political
Warfare****Citation:**

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Summary:

This unsigned AMCOMLIB memorandum traces through March 1955 the startup of AMCOMLIB publishing and radio operations and the evolving role envisaged for the Soviet emigration.

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THE CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE

AS A PROPAGANDA INSTRUMENT IN POLITICAL WARFARE.

(1755?)

It is interesting that our organization came into being as a result of a suggestion from George Kennan. On September 13, 1949, he made a formal suggestion to our advisers that a center of Russian political refugees in Germany and in Austria be formed in West Germany. His communication anticipated that when the center was established and the capabilities of individuals or elements to initiate and develop operations revealed, the State Department and our advisers would discuss the problem of policy guidance and the determination of activities for the center. Mr. Kennan was consulted throughout 1949 and 1950 while his idea was being translated into concrete form.

In September 1950, a project outline was drawn up and approved at the highest level. Its stated objective was to organize a united front of Russian emigres which would serve to mobilize the emigration into an effective anti-Communist political force in the propaganda field. The united front would not only mobilize the emigration into an anti-Communist force but would also be a symbol of that force for the peoples in the USSR.

A year later, in August 1951, an Advisory Board project planning paper was written which elaborated this outline. It gave primary emphasis to communication with people in the USSR by means of emigres and secondary emphasis to the objectives of establishing a center. These two objectives were treated separately but as closely related. Specific projects were proposed in order of precedence: (1) Radio, (2) Newspaper, (3) Practical activities, and (4)

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Research Institute. An Advisory Board Study later commented that these plans did not say what people in the USSR should be communicated with nor what should be communicated.

On September 6, 1951, a high level meeting took place between the State Department and our Advisers at which this planning paper was discussed. Concern was expressed over the ability of the emigres to maintain cohesion in a center. Our Advisers requested of the State Department guidance on the potential importance of broadcasts to the USSR and their probable impact on the people, guidance also on the nature and the extent of control by the center over propaganda, and how this control should be exercised. These requests, it appears, were never answered. It was decided that the radio was too ambitious a project for the first effort of the center and new priorities were given the projects: (1) Newspaper representing views of the center, (2) Institute, (3) Radio broadcasting on experimental scale using RFE facilities. These facilities were never used.

For the next year and a half the efforts of the American Committee were devoted to establishing a Political Center of emigres and numerous conferences of representatives from various political parties were held. These conferences actually began in January of 1951 at Fuessen where four Russian groups met but could not agree on a definition of self-determination or on the grounds on which they would allow non-Russian groups to join them.

In August of 1951, five Russian groups did manage at Stuttgart to resolve these two differences and to agree on a program for a Political Center. In October at Wiesbaden five Great Russian groups met with six nationality groups and broke up without reaching an agreement.

No further meetings were held until June 1952 at Starnberg where four Great Russian groups and six nationality groups came to no conclusion but laid the ground work for a meeting in Munich in October. At this First Munich Plenum four Great Russian (with NTS abstaining) and five nationality groups (minus the Ukrainian Federalists) signed statutes to form the "Coordinating Center for Anti-Bolshevik Struggle", KTsAB. Plans were set in motion to initiate broadcasting which actually began five months later.

The Second Munich Plenum was held in January 1953 and the participating member organizations could not agree on the admission of new groups. The next conference was agreed upon and held at Tegernsee, in May. Again agreement could not be reached on this issue and the Coordinating Center broke up into two new combinations of groups, one consisting of Russians and the other predominantly of the separatist nationality groups.

Meanwhile on March 1, 1953, Radio Liberation began broadcasting under the sponsorship of KTsAB and enjoyed this sponsorship, as related above, for about three months until the Center broke apart. Admiral Stevens went to Munich for the inauguration of the station and later reported that he "repeatedly assured (the emigres) that our original concept of the radio was unchanged and that it would be transferred to emigre hands as rapidly as possible while still assuring a continuity of acceptable output." *

Also in March 1953 a special task force composed of representatives of the State Department and our Advisors, examined the Committee's mission and program. The task force divided on the questions of whether an emigre center

* This assurance has never since been modified formally by an American official nor denied that this is the intention today.

feasible or even desirable as was/a sponsor for Radio Liberation. Efforts to establish a center, it was held by some participants, detracted from the development of the radio, and sponsorship of Radio Liberation by an emigre center was considered to be of dubious propaganda value by these participants. The issue was resolved in favor of the center concept at a State Department Advisory Board meeting in June as indicated below.

At a meeting between the State Department and our Advisors on June 5, 1953, it was reaffirmed that the cooperation among emigres was not an end in itself but a means to achieve U.S. objectives. It was decided that despite the split and possible collapse of the Center, the radio and other propaganda work should continue. They had value even without formal organized emigre sponsorship. It was suggested that the radio and the Political Center ought to be separated. Admiral Stevens took an opposing position and carried his point. He reaffirmed his belief that the Center could be reestablished and would be valuable to the United States. He assured the meeting that the balance between American control and emigre participation was now good and was working beneficially in the interests of both Radio and the Center. He held that separation of the two projects would jeopardize progress because sponsorship of Radio Liberation was a strong incentive to the political groups to cooperate. It was agreed at this meeting that the Radio should be strengthened and that the Center effort should be pursued as a parallel but not a subordinate objective. These decisions were communicated to Munich through Advisory Board channels.

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The same month the President's Committee on International Information Activities, known as the Jackson Committee, which was set up in January, 1953, issued a report. Its recommendations were approved by the OCB on September 30, 1953. These recommendations were being drafted over the previous months when the Political Center was in its formative stages and while it was actually established and running. Meanwhile, of course, in May the Center had split apart on the nationalities issue.

The Jackson Committee Report stated that the American Committee project could make its greatest contribution by de-emphasizing its political activities and devoting its major effort to the improvement of broadcasts over Radio Liberation. It was held that the Radio was the effort of the American Committee most likely to have an immediate effect; expenditure of funds for the Center, it was directed, should be reduced to the point where the Center was merely maintained in existence.

This same Report brought all the propaganda efforts of the USA together and indicated the areas in which each propaganda organization should operate. The area assigned to the Voice of America was blocked out; it was limited to that intensity for which the U.S. Government could be formally responsible and was to concentrate on the propagation of official pronouncements, etc., etc. Then the American Committee was directed to take up at the boundary where the VOA left off, and to indulge in "rough and tumble" propaganda, direct and tactical in this sector of political warfare.

The President did not see the Jackson Committee Report until long after it was issued and then he saw only extracts. However, he was told by his

political consultant immediately on issuance that his position was not at variance with the Jackson Committee Report, and since during the same month it was issued his position of not subordinating the efforts to have a workable Political Center established to those of Radio Liberation was approved by top personnel from the State Department and our Advisors, he continued operating policies along the lines of his position.

No instructions were issued by Washington to New York based on the Jackson Committee recommendations either after the OCB approved them or at any time later. No instructions were ever issued to Munich by New York. It was not until June, 1954, with an exchange of memoranda between the State Department and our Advisors that the application of these recommendations was taken up. The application was to be made later in our current operating document.

Following the collapse of the Political Center a proposal for a Working Alliance arrangement was drawn up in the winter of 1953-54 as a basis for the relations of the American Committee with emigre political parties. The Working Alliance approach to emigre relations provided for an executive body called the Working Commission which was to set up advisory staffs for Radio Liberation and the Institute. The Working Alliance itself was to develop and implement special projects and act as sponsor. Communications from the State Department to our Advisors approved the proposal and said that it was in accordance with the Jackson Committee recommendations. Subsequently, the State Department pointed out that the Working Alliance arrangements should be kept separate from the concept of a political center. In these same communications it was predicted by State that if the Working Alliance arrangements were rejected by

the political emigre groups, it would probably be necessary for the American Committee to limit its operations to direct control of Radio Liberation and of the Institute.

In February 1954, an internal memorandum of our Advisors threw light on the American Committee operating policies coming after the issuance of the Jackson Committee Report and its approval by the OCB. This memorandum held that Radio Liberation can, should and does serve a function "of a nature wider than that presented by the Jackson Committee Report; it is not obligatory for Radio Liberation to concentrate on rough and tumble, direct, tactical propaganda warfare." Its mission, it was held, was not merely a complementary one, nor supplementary to VOA, although it must hew to U.S. policy line. This interpretation was intended to point out that the American Committee through Radio Liberation, should not consider itself bound to a "rough and tumble" approach in propaganda output in any particular instance when a milder approach would produce better results.

In July 1954 the State Department and the office of the Director approved a new statement of mission and objectives for the American Committee based on a new set of priorities prescribed by the OCB on the basis of the Jackson Committee Report. This statement was to be incorporated two months later in our present operating document.

The next month an internal Advisory Board paper set forth the official conception of Radio Liberation as being distinct from VOA in its private sponsorship, in its emigre point of view and voice, and in its ability to stress "rough and tumble", direct, tactical, propaganda warfare. It can speak more freely, more forcefully, and more propagandistically.

On September 1, 1954, the current "Statement of Mission, Operating Objectives and Policy Guides" was issued which will be discussed in detail in a following section. It was written at a time when the Working Alliance was still a prospective basis for relations with the emigres.

State
January 1955 a top-level statement was issued describing the long and short-term propaganda objectives of the American Committee and suggesting where we should place the emphasis in our activities.

For the long term we should create support for alternative forms of government in the Soviet Union and better satisfy the national aspirations of the Soviet peoples as well as the interests of the U.S. in free-world society.

For the short term we should foster defection, create doubt in the minds of the Soviet leaders concerning the loyalty of both individuals and groups in Soviet society.

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We should direct action at the overthrow or replacement of the Soviet regime, also at gradual change within the Soviet regime, but not foment unrest on a broad scale at the present time.

The reservation was made that it was improbable that cohesion and unity of emigre groups would be achieved in the foreseeable future. Another comment of significance to the operations of the American Committee was that various attempts of different, disunited emigre groupings accurately to predict the course of events in the Soviet Union have met with failure.

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It was pointed out that devoid of formal U.S. control or sponsorship, such activities as the American Committee counts on could exploit an area of Soviet vulnerabilities of demonstrable value in a manner denied official U.S.

agencies, such as USIA. Specific mention was made of the Institute where studies were urged for investigation of problems anticipated in a future non-Soviet Russia (Sic.)

In February 1955 the State Department advised that the American Committee efforts to have set up a broadly-based emigre sponsorship for American Committee activities should be suspended and at the same time reaffirmed its belief that such sponsorship would be desirable for maximum effectiveness. Concentration (in our relations with the political emigre groups and with the emigration as a whole, as opposed to emigres as individual staff members or paid collaborators) should be placed on practical projects.

Accordingly, on March 8, 1955, a policy paper was issued to Committee personnel from New York, "American Committee Policy with Respect to the Emigration". This policy paper was prepared particularly for those officers/who deal with emigre relations and instructed them to encourage the creation of work projects and their implementation by political emigre groups; it had the purpose, too, of persuading the staff of Radio Liberation to accept cooperation from emigre groups with whom the Emigre Relations Office was dealing. The interest in principle of the American Committee in having an emigre political center established was restated.

This paper suggested cooperation by the Emigre Relations Section with Radio Liberation in recognizing the desirability of obtaining advice from emigres on programming for the Radio. It stated that the American Committee as a whole favored having set up a Board of Advisors which would be chosen on a merit basis, not as representatives of political groups. Advisors chosen

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also on a merit basis as individuals, not as representatives of political groups were advocated for the Institute. An American Committee publication was favored whose purpose would be primarily to serve as a unifying element among the emigration as a whole, particularly among political groups.