

June 29, 1956

Radio Liberation Programming Staff Comment on the Report “An Estimate of the Effectiveness of Radio Liberation” William Schramm, 1 September 1955 [redacted] with attachments Radio Liberation Policy Manual and Listener Testimony Omitted

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Summary:

Radio Liberation program staff comments on the Schramm report with reference to the RL policy manual and other listener testimony.

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English

Contents:

Original Scan

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Radio Liberation Programming Staff Comment
on the Report:

"AN ESTIMATE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
RADIO LIBERATION
"Wilbur Schramm
"1 September, 1955"

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The officers responsible for Radio Liberation programming welcomed the careful, comprehensive, objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the operation in the subject report, and the author's recommendations for improvement thereof. They especially appreciated the difficulty of the author's task in working out independently a picture of Radio Liberation, when its own concepts and policies had not at that time been set down in exact formulations agreed to by all.

This situation has changed in the interim: after nearly a year of concentration on a basic policy review, a comprehensive Radio Liberation Policy Manual has been hammered out in final form.

In preparing the following comments on the subject report, the Radio Liberation officials have attempted not merely to dispute that which has already gone on record. Rather, with a repeat operation coming up in a few months, they have endeavored in this paper to delineate the areas in which they discerned major differences of opinion or incomplete information and to present their views and information in a clearer form for reconsideration by the author of the report and those who will be participating in the new discussions and the preparation of the new report.

The major questions with regard to the subject report revolve about Radio Liberation's audience and its aims and objectives, about the conclusions outlined in paragraph 4 of the SUMMARY. Radio Liberation is now able to point to its Policy Manual (Attachment A) which states its position on these questions in some detail.

Specifically, Radio Liberation sees no justification for assuming that its audiences are limited, practically speaking, to "a small but important group of the Soviet vIast, notably members of the hierarchy and military forces, particularly stationed outside the Soviet Union". Radio Liberation's much broader concept of its audience and its supporting information are set forth in some detail in the Manual, especially on pp. 6-9. It should also be noted that the limitations assumed by the report were certainly not supported by the admittedly meager information cited therein.

[redacted] The "non-Soviet and indirect testimony" indicated listening at all levels, including the concentration camps, and the mail seems to come mostly from the lower levels. (These listings were incomplete: see Attachment B). A similar picture has been conveyed by the more extensive evidence of reception during the subsequent year (Attachment C).

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Radio Liberation believes its audience to be broader than assumed by the report, not only in physical composition and range, but also in reasons for listening and attitudes toward it, as spelled out on pages 9-11 of the Manual. Note especially the positive factors and elements discussed under "the spirit of opposition" and "national interest" which seem to be neglected in the report.

Deriving from its broader and more positive picture of its audience, Radio Liberation also has a broader and more constructive concept of its aims and objectives. To "plant doubts in the minds of the Soviet ~~flast~~" is certainly an important aim of Radio Liberation's programmers, but it is only a part of the broader aims and objectives described on pp. 3-5 of the Manual.

It is believed that the report's question regarding the name "Liberation" (p. 20) will be answered by the Policy Manual. Radio Liberation's broad aim is stated (and announced over the air) as the liberation of the peoples of the USSR from the Communist dictatorship and the achievement by them of a democratic order in its place. The report states: "If the Curtain should open, if something like normal exchange of printed materials and persons should become possible between the Soviet Union and the West - then we should doubtless want to consider the function and even the need of Radio Liberation." This statement is fair enough; but all depends on our interpretation of normal. Certainly the carefully controlled, though considerably expanded, exchange taking place at the present time is only a small step in the direction of normalcy. Radio Liberation has an important function until the peoples of the USSR achieve practically a full measure of freedom of speech and press: at which time we can indeed consider their "liberation" as achieved. Radio Liberation must not settle for less.

A few minor factual errors should be noted, if only to prevent their repetition in a later report. In Section III, p. 5, it is stated that Radio Liberation broadcasts "in nine languages": the correct formulation, of course, is "in 17 languages prepared by 9 national desks". In Section VIII, p. 18 (and in the SUMMARY, p. 2), the report speaks of a program length of 4 minutes: correct formulation should be feature or script length. The figure of "only one out of 100" persons in the USSR have sets with short wave components is far from the best estimates available to us. One out of 40-50 would be closer - and, of course, this is getting into a significant range, considering families, multiple use, grapevine, etc.

June 29, 1956

RADIO LIBERATION POLICY MANUALPART ONE - GENERAL POLICY OUTLINEI. What is Radio Liberation

Radio Liberation is a free voice of emigres from the USSR dedicated to implacable struggle for the liberation of their fellow countrymen at home from the Communist dictatorship and for the establishment in its place by all the peoples concerned of a system of government freely elected by and responsible to them.

Radio Liberation broadcasts to the USSR programs prepared by nine national desks - Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian, Belorussian, Georgian, North Caucasian, Tatar-Bashkir and Turkestanian. Each desk endeavors to speak from the point of view of its own people in support of the common cause. Radio Liberation considers that the achievement of a democratic order would assure all peoples the right of national self-determination; that is, the right of each people freely to determine its own fate. Radio Liberation operates outside the borders of the USSR because freedom of speech is denied inside.

Radio Liberation enlists guest-speaker participation and contributions from individuals and organizations throughout the world, from both emigres and the public at large.

In the operation of Radio Liberation emigres from the USSR are assisted by the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism, an association of American citizens which endeavors to represent the American people and to solicit from them the necessary support for the broadcasting operations. The American Committee and its supporters act in the conviction that the achievement of a democratic order by the peoples of the USSR is essential for the welfare of all peoples of the world.

II. To Whom Does Radio Liberation Speak

Radio Liberation's broadcasts are addressed to all citizens of the USSR, including those stationed abroad in the Soviet armed forces and other missions, those who can themselves hear the broadcasts and the larger public who receive its message indirectly. They are intended to appeal to thinking citizens in all segments of Soviet society.

Radio Liberation considers that some of its most important listeners are naturally found in the upper strata of power and privilege, because: (a) they have more and better radio sets and more privacy for listening; (b) the dictatorship can be most effectively challenged when the will for change takes hold in important elements of the power structure as well as among the common people; and (c) effective messages aimed at such elements will also have a positive effect on others, who will welcome the pressure and constructive influence on the upper strata. However, Radio Liberation obviously speaks not only to the privileged few but to its many thoughtful listeners everywhere, to junior officers and soldiers in the field as well as the generals, to the foremen and workers in the factories as well as the engineers and managers, to the students and the teachers, the toilers on the collective farms and machine tractor stations and the agricultural bureaucrats in the cities, even to the inmates and guards of slave labor camps.

When Radio Liberation deals with matters of special interest to particular groups, it makes sure that such broadcasts are of sufficient interest to hold the attention of all of its listeners.

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III. What Are Radio Liberation's Aims and Objectives

Radio Liberation's ultimate aim is the liberation of the peoples of the USSR from the Communist dictatorship and the achievement by them of a democratic order in its place. In order to mold the thinking and guide the will of its listeners toward this end, Radio Liberation endeavors to break down the oppressive isolation separating them from the outside world; to inspire them with faith in the eternal values of liberty as indispensable to genuine human progress; to fortify the convictions of those consciously opposed to the present regime and encourage them with information about their friends and allies abroad; to bring into sharp focus existing subconscious opposition; to foster doubt and dissatisfaction as steps on the road to opposition; and to develop in the minds of all listeners a realization that real and permanent solutions to their problems can be found only in the liquidation of the Communist dictatorship and the establishment of a free, democratic order at home.

In pursuing these aims, Radio Liberation sets for itself the following major programming objectives:

A. Capture and Hold a Wide Audience

Broadcasting at long ranges through jamming to a more or less clandestine audience in the USSR is an extremely difficult form of communication, involving considerable effort and risk for the listener. Therefore, the first objective is to capture and hold the attention of a wide audience by use of the most imaginative and varied programming techniques as well as by the interest and significance of its program content.

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B. Expose and Analyze Inadequacies, Injustices and Failures of the Soviet System

Radio Liberation must not only expose the specific inadequacies, injustices and failures of the Soviet system, but it must go on to prove that they are direct and inevitable results of the system. It must show, for example, exactly how the regime exploits the people for its own ends and conceals its exploitation and failures by juggling or hiding statistics; how bureaucratic central planning squanders human lives and natural resources; how the tremendous dual superstructure of State and Party control cuts down productivity, imposing extra work and sacrifice upon everyone, etc.

C. Present Attractive Alternatives - Democratic Education

To promote the will for a change, it is not enough to show its listeners how bad the Soviet system is: They must be given a vivid picture of how representative government, labor and industry, agriculture and commerce, science, culture and the professions function in a free society. The vision of the free future can be a powerful element in destroying the shackles of the present.

D. Stimulate Independent Political Thought

Perhaps the greatest challenge for Radio Liberation is to stimulate independent political thought among the peoples of the USSR, for without it there is no road to freedom and democracy.

Broadcasting through jamming to an unseen audience is a poor substitute for the free give-and-take out of which ideas are born and developed, but Radio Liberation must make the best of it. It must resist the temptation to concentrate on "answering the other side" and guard against the danger of lapsing into what the listener will regard as just another form of propaganda. Every effort should be made to stimulate the process of independent political thought through the objective presentation of information, impulses and viewpoints, in a fresh and completely nondogmatic manner.

In its efforts to present positive alternatives and stimulate independent thought, Radio Liberation must always preserve its integrity and militant character, must always serve as a source of inspiration and encouragement to freedom-loving forces in the USSR, crusading on their behalf for liberation from the Communist dictatorship and for their achievement of a democratic order in its place.

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RADIO LIBERATION POLICY MANUAL

PART TWO - OPERATING GUIDE

Part Two is intended as an operating guide for planning, supervisory, editorial and production personnel in the Radio Liberation programming operation. It discusses in more detail various aspects of the programming objectives outlined in Part One and presents specific, detailed ground rules for writers, editors and producers.

IV. The RL Audience

To accomplish any of its programming objectives, RL must know and understand as completely as possible its actual and potential audience. It must constantly seek the best possible answers to the following questions:

- a. Who receives RL's message?
- b. Under what conditions?
- c. Why do they listen to RL?
- d. What image of RL do they have?
- e. What image of itself does RL want to create for them?
- f. To what audiences should RL appeal?
- g. How can RL best make its appeal?

Our answers to these questions will be subject to continuous review and revision in the light of experience, new ideas and new information.

A. Who Receives RL's Message?

Quantitative information in this field will always be difficult to obtain. It is even difficult to estimate the number of radio sets capable of receiving RL's signals, to say nothing of the effects of jamming, fear of incurring repression from the regime, etc. However, the following information can be stated with reasonable assurance:

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1. There are probably 4-6,000,000 sets capable of receiving RL's broadcasts (short wave) in the hands of Soviet citizens today. Moreover, the new 5-year plan calls for the production of about 8,000,000 sets per year by 1960 (plan states 10,200,000 total radio and television).

2. Soviet radio sets capable of receiving RL are comparatively inexpensive. The price range of 300 rubles and up, although high by American or European standards, seems low compared with the cost of a suit of clothes at 1,000 - 1,500 rubles or more, a pair of shoes at 250 - 400 rubles, etc.

3. Although the availability of sets and living conditions suitable for listening naturally increase with a higher economic status, there is substantial evidence that RL's listeners include factory workers as well as intelligentsia, people in country towns and collective farms as well as city dwellers, enlisted men as well as officers, and even slave laborers in distant concentration camps.

4. Geographically speaking, RL has evidence of the reception of its broadcasts in almost all areas of the USSR west of the Urals (major exception: the far northwest corner, Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, etc.), and there are also isolated reports of reception at widely separated points in Kazakhstan and in central Siberia, near Krasnoyarsk. It is believed that RL's Far East transmitter is (or will soon be) covering the most populated areas in the Primorskiy Kray (Maritime Province), Sakhalin, the Amur basin, and along the Trans-Siberian Railway line near Chita.

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There is naturally a greater concentration of sets in the large cities. On the other hand, jamming is much more an obstacle in the cities, especially where there is local, ground-wave jamming.

5. A special category of RL listeners consists of the large number of personnel who must or can listen with equipment furnished by or at least with the approval of the regime. These range from personnel in the huge jamming apparatus, official monitors, media and other propaganda workers, to ordinary Party members and/or government officials who may plead that they must know what the enemy is saying in order to counter it.

6. RL's audience includes not only those who listen directly to our broadcasts but also those who get our message second and third-hand. In spite of the obvious risk of discussing our broadcasts, there is substantial evidence that news received from foreign broadcasts spreads rapidly and that ideas are discussed in inner circles.

B. Listening Conditions

Much more information is needed on this subject. At this time it is possible to say only that:

1. Although listening to foreign broadcasts is not forbidden by law, it has often been used by the police as evidence of political unreliability, and most Soviet citizens realize instinctively that it is potentially dangerous. This would certainly apply more to a station like RL than to the radios of foreign governments, such as BBC and VOA.

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2. The Soviet regime has succeeded in jamming most of RL's broadcasts at this time with a greater or lesser degree of effectiveness. However, (with the exception of local, ground-wave jamming which rather effectively hinders reception most of the time in the center of Moscow and possibly other major cities) there is good evidence that during much of the time this jamming makes listening difficult but not impossible. During certain hours of the day, however, RL broadcasts can usually be heard with clarity.

3. Housing conditions are so crowded that the norm is still 2-3 persons per room, which imposes further difficulties for those who would listen to our broadcasts.

4. Aside from private radios at home, we have positive evidence of listening under special conditions:

- a. Radios in tanks
- b. In radio repair shops

5. We do not yet have enough evidence to establish which periods of the day and week find the largest number of listeners.

C. Why do they Listen:

What moves a Soviet citizen to endure the risk and hardship of listening to foreign broadcasts, and especially RL?

1. Curiosity. Curiosity about the outside world (and about conditions elsewhere in their own country) is strong among the peoples of the USSR, due to the long isolation in which the regime has kept them, its own preoccupation with the outside world, and the several mass contacts with the outside world which have let in brief flashes of light into the darkness. Anything coming from abroad, and especially in their own language, will attract their attention.

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2. Intellectual interest. This applies to those who hunger for "forbidden fruit" - complete objective news and commentary, suppressed literature, proscribed music, opinions of important personalities, etc.; to those who yearn for participation, even vicariously by radio, in free discussion of philosophical, ethical, religious and other such questions.

3. National interest. Many listeners, both Russian and non-Russian, are deeply concerned about the problem of preserving their national heritage, culture and traditions in the face of Sovietization and welcome RL's contribution to this cause. (Some listeners may also seek aid and encouragement in the cause of future state independence for one nationality group or another, but RL can not go beyond the limits of its basic policy calling for the right of national self-determination for all peoples after liberation from the Soviet Communist dictatorship).

4. The spirit of opposition. Several different types of listener are motivated by the spirit of opposition:

a. Listeners thrilled and fascinated by the very novelty of a Russian (Ukrainian, etc.) voice speaking in opposition to the Communist regime.

b. Listeners consciously opposed to the regime, seeking encouragement, the comradeship of kindred souls, and the solace of knowing they are not forgotten; they look to us for new ideas and new information to bolster their convictions or increase the effectiveness of their struggle against the regime. This may well be our most important category of listener. But the degree of, and the reasons for, their opposition may be extremely varied; their knowledge or understanding of Western democracy may be quite limited. Even in this group RL may find listeners who would resent what they considered "interference" from abroad.

c. Listeners seeking the moral satisfaction of hearing the truth about the regime and its leaders uttered aloud.

d. Conscious opponents of Communism primarily interested in well-reasoned, well-documented, telling criticism of the regime. Broadcasts appealing to this motivation can have a desirable effect on supporters of the regime as well as opponents.

e. The idealistic listeners concerned for human freedom and other high values, who will turn to RL for a spiritual message of love and hope for all mankind. Their kind can be a powerful force even under an iron dictatorship.

(There are probably listeners who would relish abusive denunciations of the Communist regime and all associated with it. But RL considers it unnecessary and harmful to attempt to satisfy this extreme demand at the expense of alienating large numbers of other important potential listeners).

5. Official Listeners. As noted earlier, there are large numbers who listen to RL in an official capacity, including those who listen by direct order, such as monitoring personnel and propaganda workers, those who listen voluntarily on the grounds that they must know what the enemy is saying.

D. What Image of RL Do They Have?

The answer to this question should be filled out by continuous audience research. The rather slim evidence to date indicates that few of our listeners have a very clear image of RL. Some occasional listeners probably confuse RL with VOA or other non-Communist stations. On the other hand, there is indication that some recognize it as an emigre station and others as "our station", some with strong approval and some with denunciation. There is little evidence as to who they think is behind the station or whether they even give much thought to this question.

E. What Image of Itself Does RL Want to Create:

The image of itself which RL wants to create is identical with the actual definition of RL in Part One. RL must not give the listener reason to regard it as:

1. the tool of - or acting in the interest of - any foreign government, institution or organization,
2. the organ or voice of any particular party or faction of the emigration,
3. the voice of any government-in-exile, or any group of exiles waiting to return to the homeland to take over.

F. To Whom Should RL Appeal:

The answer to this question is indicated in section II of Part One. The important point is that RL wants to make a maximum appeal to all thinking Soviet citizens of all nationalities, occupations, political attitudes, economic conditions, no matter where they be; which means concurrently to avoid needlessly alienating any significant elements of the population. While due attention will be given to the "elites" in general, and the new "technical managerial" class in particular, RL will not concentrate on them to the neglect of the "masses."

G. How Can RL Best Make Its Appeal:

The major factors attracting RL's audience, as indicated above are: curiosity, intellectual interest, national interest, spirit of opposition and official status. RL must obviously give careful consideration to these factors and capitalize on them.

To capture and hold the widest possible audience, it is not enough to take the right approach to the right subjects. How it says it is just as important as what RL says. This obviously calls for a staff of well-trained, talented speakers and good studio techniques and equipment. It also demands conscious and continuous efforts to prevent RL from settling into a groove as a proficient little closed collective of skilled workers broadcasting pertinent, accurate, carefully prepared news, commentaries and discourses, but dull and frozen in set patterns. It requires, among other things:

1. Clever, sparkling, brief, vital writing, with plenty of variety in style.
2. The use of a variety of forms to carry the message: feuilletons, clever satires, poems, songs, skits, etc., in addition to serious discourses.
3. "Personalization" of the message by addressing it from and to specific individuals or organizations. This personalization is made far more effective with a wider spread of originators.
4. The broadcasting of messages or opinions from people and organizations throughout the world which would be of significance to the listeners, in their own voices where possible (fading into translation, if in a foreign language).
5. On-the-spot coverage of actual events of significance, such as meetings, lectures, forums, concerts, riots, etc., with authentic background noise.
6. The development of special program devices, such as a few bars of music in a significant context, a penetrating or derisive phrase or catchword which, if used with sufficient originality and persistence will catch the attention of our listeners and spread among the population.

RL's aims should come through clearly in the type of programming described above. It will be necessary, however, to broadcast regularly general statements of what RL is and what its objectives are. Such statements should not go beyond sense of the formulations in Part One, and they should always be written and delivered in a calm, reasonable manner.

V. Exposing and Analyzing the Soviet System:

Section III-B of Part One, discussing this as one of RL's major objectives, outlined our general operating approach to it. Detailed, specific guidances will be found in Section VIII, Specific Guidances.

VI. Democratic Education - Presenting Positive Alternatives - Stimulating Independent Thought

A. The attitude of the Soviet citizen towards the Communist regime is determined in large part by his concept of the outside world. If he is unaware of an attractive alternative to the Soviet system, then his discontent is less likely to find positive expression. But if Radio Liberation succeeds in creating a vivid and convincing picture of life and events in the free world, then the conception of a better political, economic and social structure for his country in the future will grow in the listener's mind, and his discontent with the present regime will take on purpose and direction.

B. Scripts on Soviet domestic questions are almost invariably negative in approach. If they are not balanced by positive material, the listener's reaction may well be: "Well, things could be better, but we have after all achieved a great deal, and look how powerful our country is today." RL must prove to him that the accomplishments of democratic countries are much greater in terms of what they offer the individual and the people as a whole.

C. It is psychologically unwise flatly to tell the listener what he should think or do. It is desirable, however, to suggest lines of thought, to advocate change by indirection, to educate by example. This may best be done by presenting, in full perspective and in language clearly understandable to the Soviet listener, facts about life in democratic countries. Education by example can suggest the advantages of sweeping changes (e.g., how the British parliamentary system works), of achieving more modest objectives (e.g., consumer cooperatives in Sweden), or the benefits of the ever-rising standard of living of the common people in the United States under an economy of private and widely distributed ownership.

D. In addition to presenting factual data, Radio Liberation must also try to make clear to the Soviet listener the ideas and forces which have formed, and are still forming, the ways of life of free countries. Factual descriptions of political, economic or social institutions or practices should be complemented by discussion of the political, economic and social theories and trends which explain the present and point the way to the future. A determined effort should be made to prove that a rich cultural life and a progressive economy have their foundations in political liberty for the individual.

Specific guidances will be found in Section VIII.

VII. Ground Rules for Writers, Editors and Producers

The general policy outline set forth in Part One is the foundation on which RL's program policy is built. The following supplementary specific rules are set forth for ready reference and guidance of all writers, editors and producers:

A. Identity of the Station

Radio Liberation broadcasts no material which would give the listener cause to regard it as the voice of any political party, faction, group or coalition in the emigration, a government-in-exile or any foreign government or interest. The viewpoint should always be that of an independent, democratic voice speaking in the interests of the peoples of the USSR. Ideas, symbols and language should be fresh, not borrowed from the arsenal of Soviet, partisan emigre or Western propaganda. The partisan views of any groups or individuals will not be presented except when clearly identified as such in special programs for that purpose.

B. The Right of Self-Determination

Radio Liberation cannot take a partisan position on any question which can properly be decided only by the freely expressed will of the people. This applies especially to all questions concerning the relationships between the peoples of the USSR, the future form or forms of governmental structure and the precise manner in which the popular will is to be expressed. The broadcasts must not contain any material offensive to the aspirations of any nationality or tending to stir up differences among them.

C. Calls for Action

Radio Liberation will not encourage any acts of premature overt or violent resistance to the Soviet regime which could only result in fruitless sacrifice. It will make no promises which it cannot itself fulfill, and will never indicate that freedom and democracy will be achieved except through the will and endeavors of the peoples of the USSR themselves. Radio

9. Eliminate:

undocumented generalities,
violent, unreasonable, flowery, or precious language,
quixotic slogans,
cliches.

10. Features should not be longer than absolutely necessary to register the intended point. Under existing conditions, one point is all that a feature should contain. Four minutes is the general outside time limit for the effective communication of an idea. If the point can be made in two minutes, then four minutes is twice too long.

11. When longer features are essential, they should be framed so that any four-minute segment would make some real sense in itself.

VIII. Policy Guidances on Specific Issues

This part of the manual will be developed to provide specific guidances for the treatment of major and more or less permanent problems which RL must handle. They will be broken down into such form that any aspect may be readily reconsidered and revised in the light of new developments, information or ideas.

ATTACHMENT B

Listener Testimony Omitted from
Sections IV and V of Report

Section IV:

"Soviet Defectors". Lt. Grigoriev, communications officer who had listened to RL broadcasts probably more extensively than any other defector and who testified to their superior effectiveness at a British-staged press conference before RL even knew of his defection.

Also, Burlutsky, MVD Colonel who was interviewed by Charlie Thayer for Life Magazine article, gave testimony similar to that cited for BS-2072; i.e., he had not heard RL inside but says concept is fine and should be more effective on Soviet listeners than any others.

"Non-Soviet and Indirect Testimony". The elderly Greek Georgiades, repatriated in December 1954 after confinement in the Vorkuta concentration camp system followed by two years of "free exile" in Syktyvkar listened to our broadcasts and identified individual staff personalities.

Section V:

"Mail". There were 11 letters received by RL through the end of March 1955 which were not listed in the report, of which one came from the USSR, two from satellites and eight from Western Europe. They are listed as follows:

1/6	in Russian from Paris
1/9	in Ukrainian from Poland
1/55	in Russian from Belgium
1/55	in Russian from Austria
1/30	in Russian from Belgium
2/12	in Russian from Prague
2/19	in Russian from Belgium
2/28	in Russian from Belgium
3/3	in Russian from Estonia
3/11	in Russian from Nurnberg
3/55	in German from Dresden