

**May 5, 1958**  
**Letter, Richard Bertarandias to Howland H.  
Sargeant**

**Citation:**

"Letter, Richard Bertarandias to Howland H. Sargeant", May 5, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Released by the Central Intelligence Agency on October 16, 2019, in response to Mandatory Declassification Review request EOM-2018-00930. Contributed by A. Ross Johnson.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/290913>

**Summary:**

RL European program director Richard Bertrandias provides AMCOMLIB President Sargeant with a 24 page joint response by RL program managers to AMCOMLIB founder Isaac Don Levine's critique of RL programming.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

19

11/67  
10/07

May 5, 1958

A M C O N F I D E N T I A L

Mr. Howland H. Sargeant  
American Committee for Liberation  
1657 Broadway  
New York 19, New York

Dear Howland:

Here are the responses to Mr. Levine's criticism of some of our programs as prepared by a joint committee consisting of Messrs. Malamuth, Critchlow, Ronalds and myself. I hope this reaches you in time.

We have attempted to avoid sounding defensive or argumentative and have tried to present you with a completely candid set of reasons why the items to which Mr. Levine objects appeared in our programs. We also allow for goof-ups. I think one of the most important things to come out of this effort is the conclusion we feel can be drawn that no "deliberate pattern" exists; the sources and the circumstances under which these programs were prepared are much too varied. I hope that you will agree with this view after you have gone through our material.

I am not entirely happy with our presentation, but due to the time element we faced and the fact that most of the work was done over the weekend, making it difficult to gain access to all necessary files, it's the best we could do.

Please advise us if any further elaboration is required on any of the points we have made.

Best regards,

Richard Bertrandias

RB:lr

Encl. (2 copies)

42/78-2915/8/4

### INTRODUCTION

In his letter to the President dated March 15, 1958 dealing with Radio Liberation programs, Mr. Isaac Don Levine states that the items objectionable to him "form an unmistakable pattern which is not casual or accidental in origin." In a sense this is correct: we have noted that most of the items which Mr. Levine finds objectionable are a logical result of changes which have taken place in Radio Liberation policy over the past two years -- changes which may not have been entirely clear to him at the time his report was written.

It will be explained below what is meant by changes in policy. Mr. Levine appears to believe, however, that there is a person or that there are persons, holding key positions in the radio station, who are wilfully and systematically serving the cause of the enemy. Whereas mistakes in judgment have sometimes been made, we fail to find evidence to support his assertion that the radio station has been "infiltrated by elements set upon subverting from within the purposes and policies of Radio Liberation."

First of all, the responsibility for preparing, editing and approving the items chosen by Mr. Levine rests with a very considerable number of persons. Four programs to which he refers were prepared as scripts or finished tapes originated by the New York Program Department and were virtually unedited in Munich. During the period in question, overall responsibility for the Russian program was divided between the Manager of the News Department, Francis Ronalds (first half-hour, including the newscasts) and Victor Frank (second half-hour). However, programs are prepared six days a week, with an 06:30 to 22:00 work schedule on the News Desk, whereas each individual officially works five days a week, eight hours a day. Many editorial decisions, therefore, were taken by deputies to Ronalds or Frank. Most of the news items and features distributed on Saturdays (which fill in parts of the Saturday, Sunday and Monday programs) were okayed for broadcast by the Supervisor of the News Desk, Victor Ryser, as were some items and features carried during the week. Vacations, sick leave and other factors serve to break the continuity of supervision and work assignments.

Decisions are, however, seldom left to individual editors. A daily news list, which includes most but not all of the news items broadcast each day, is discussed at the daily Policy and Planning Meeting, attended by Mr. Bertrandias and/or the Policy and Planning Adviser, Charles Malamuth, together with the other members of the American advisory staff. The daily commentary usually goes to Mr. Malamuth for approval before it is sent to Production. Mr. Bertrandias and Mr. Malamuth are also consulted when special problems arise. Mr. Malamuth has recently begun

sitting in on the 10:00 A.M. News Desk meeting, at which a preliminary news priority list is prepared. (Beginning almost immediately, he will hold as many regular meetings as possible with the individual desks, with priority to the Russian Desk.) In short, practically all of the top personnel in the station have taken some part in making the policy and editorial decisions which resulted in the items listed by Mr. Levine, as well as the vastly greater number of news items and feature scripts broadcast by RL but not mentioned in his list.

Despite our system of checks, we are aware that occasionally errors in judgment and in fact are made by Radio Liberation editors and program advisers. Our task is the more difficult due to the lack of fully qualified personnel. For example, in our News Department, only the three top-ranking jobs are filled by persons who were professionals in journalism or radio before employment with the American Committee.

As to policy changes: Radio Liberation has steadily moved further away from the concept that its role lies in fostering violent overthrow of the Communist regime in the USSR and towards the idea of fostering evolutionary trends in the USSR. We have been getting away from the negative, carping approach in favor of presenting possible positive (but subversive) alternatives to various aspects of the system and offering objective information which will help the listener to come to his own conclusions. To the extent feasible, we wish to establish RadLib as an independent voice, to speak to the Soviet listener in terms understandable to him and, when considered desirable, express his own unspoken thoughts for him. Radio Liberation must not give the impression that it defends U.S. or Western interests. On the contrary, it should give the impression that it is concerned with the interests of its "fellow countrymen" in the USSR and that it views world events from an enlightened emigre viewpoint. Obviously, then, Radio Liberation cannot be, and is not, neutral in the struggle between freedom and dictatorship.

All of the foregoing has by now been made explicit in the Program Policy Manual of June 1956, and in our Newsroom Operations Manual. The anticipated Country Paper promises to be even more explicit with respect to Radio Liberation's character. In his report, however, Mr. Levine many times implies (see items 3, 11, 18, 32, 36, 43) that RL should not carry any material which might equally well be included in the Soviet press or radio. It is RL policy, however, to establish credibility by reporting events which may have negative implications in terms of our long-range interests but which are nevertheless of importance; to win over the listener by presenting various points of view rather than hew to one monolithic line. Unlike the Soviet dictatorship, RL has no monopoly over the organs of communication which reach the Soviet citizen; RL cannot prevent him from learning certain facts by excluding them from our broadcasts. Our

policy line in this regard is clearly stated in the News Department Operations Manual revised as of January 24, 1958 and submitted to New York on January 29. It reads in part: "Events of world importance should be reported even if their immediate impact appears to be negative from the point of view of RadLib's ultimate aims..." and "inclusion into our newscasts of stories covered or likely to be covered fully and fairly accurately by Radio Moscow and other Soviet media is required when (a) the story is of world importance; (b) when a less important story has particular appeal to a Soviet audience."

The following analysis of the policy and editorial decisions taken on the items listed by Mr. Levine was prepared by a committee made up of members of the American advisory staff in Munich.

. . . .

PART I

The two broadcasts on Mao Tse-Tung were not out of line in equal measure, but both erred policywise in the sense that Mr. Frank was carried away by his well-intended purpose of trying to impress the Russian listener with the fact that whereas the Chinese Communists have a leader of stature in Mao, the communists in the Soviet Union suffer by comparison. The materials used in these scripts admittedly contained excessive praise of Mao and an inadvertent acceptance of certain communist propaganda cliches which could have been avoided upon more thoughtful consideration. We are not inclined to minimize the nature of the errors in both scripts.

It should be added, however, that the second part especially did contribute to a correction of the official Soviet version of what transpired in China; especially, in indicating that the Mao Tse-Tung communist movement was for years independent of direct supervision from Moscow.

Another unfortunate aspect of the handling of these scripts was inadequate attribution to the source, which tended to create the erroneous impression that these were Radio Liberation views rather than those of a London Observer writer. ✓

1. October 9, 1957.

Disorders in Warsaw: RadLib, in reporting events in Poland, kept close touch with policy-making personnel in Radio Free Europe. We were advised that the possibility of a Hungary-style uprising existed and that nothing should be done to make the disorders appear even more serious than they were since this would help to give the Soviet Government an excuse for intervening. In the item quoted, we merely reported the facts available to us. The same news item, however, went on to give the details on a student meeting of protest over the closing of Po Prostu. The students who were arrested and put on trial were not arrested for taking part in the workers' demonstration in question, but for taking part in prior demonstrations. In any case, we make clear that we are quoting a statement made by the Warsaw Police Department.

The item in question can only be considered in the context of RadLib's full coverage of the developments in Poland. A news item on the same day, broadcast immediately prior to the one in question includes the following: "According to reports of Warsaw newspapers, more than one hundred students and young persons, arrested during the disorders, will soon be brought to trial." ✓

2. October 9, 1957.

Western Press on Sputnik: The interim policy position paper composed at a Policy and Planning Meeting attended by all RL advisory personnel concerned states: "Care should be taken, in selecting foreign comment and writing commentaries, that it does not offend the legitimate national pride of our listeners and that it does not strike a "sour grapes" note. Our approach should be basically positive." Advice from New York was of the same order (see PXC 6, 10-14-57; PXC 10, 10-8-57; PXC 7, 10-7-57). PXC 7 of 10-7-57 states: "The launching of Sputnik deserves all the praise now being heaped on Soviet science both at home and abroad."

Looking back, it may be that we carried more praise than necessary of this undeniably great scientific achievement. We could not, however, prevent our listeners from finding out what was being said and written abroad. A positive attitude, we believed, was more likely to bring us the sympathy of our listeners. ✓

3. October 10, 1957.

Polish Newspaper on Sputnik: As quoted by Mr. Levine, it would appear that including this item was definitely an error in judgment, particularly if one assumes that the listener might mistakenly consider that the Communist Warsaw newspaper (Zycie Warszawy) represented RadLib's point of view. The full paragraph, however, gives a different impression: "I do not know, the author of the article in the Polish newspaper goes

on, what weight a Sputnik must have to photograph what is going on on the ground. But I know that the Soviet artificial satellite has flown over Washington several times. It is difficult to predict how the disarmament negotiations will go on now but there is no doubt that the artificial earth satellite will play some role in them." As explained and approved at the noon Policy and Planning Meeting, RL carried this quote from a Communist source to disprove Soviet claims that the Sputnik had a purely peaceful significance.

4. October 10, 1957.

Commentary on Sputnik: This New York Program Department commentary, written along the lines indicated by the Xydis Yedigiaroff PXO 10 of 10-8-57, pointed out that the Sputnik was made possible by the relative freedom given to scientists working "in that branch" of science. The commentary, as Mr. Levine indicates, points out that great strides forward could be made if more freedom were given to persons working in other fields. This is a logical expression of RadLib's policy, explained above, calling for the presentation of possible positive alternatives to various aspects of the Soviet system.

5. October 12, 1957.

Praise of Sputnik: The reason for broadcasting praise of Sputnik should be clear to anyone who has been sensitized by the constant charge levelled at Radio Liberation as an emigre station that emigres tend to be denigrating about all achievements in the Soviet Union to the point of assuming an anti-patriotic posture with reference to the achievements of the people as distinct from the claims of their communist rulers. It is in an effort to counteract this charge that Radio Liberation tried very hard to dispel any possible impression of "sour grapes" concerning this achievement.

It is moreover perfectly legitimate for an emigre station to express admiration for a notable achievement of their fellow-countrymen. The danger lies in doing it so frequently that it either sounds defensive or inadvertently serves the purposes of Soviet propaganda, which tries to confuse national patriotism with Soviet patriotism (i.e. loyalty to the Communist Party, etc.) and tries to create the false impression that all the achievements of Russian genius are due to the leadership of the Communist Party. It is not always easy to draw the line, and judgments as to exactly where to draw it may differ.

6. October 13, 1957.

Contingents of Chinese Communist Army leave Tibet: This item involved a violation of RadLib policy resulting from the inexperience of a news writer and an oversight on the part of the night news editor in charge. It is standard policy to describe the communist regime in China as "the government of Mao Tse Tung."



Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

It was expected that the listener would learn from this news item how much trouble the Chinese Communists were having in subjecting the Tibetans. It is emphasized that we are quoting from Tibetan newspapers "after the seizure of Tibet," that units of the Chinese Army will remain there, although Peking has been obliged by popular resistance to give up converting Tibet into an ordinary province of the so-called "Chinese People's Republic."

This item, even aside from the violation of policy indicated, could have been more clearly written. It is, however, against accepted News Desk practice to inject RL comments, as such, into the news.

7. Oct. 14, 1957.

Crossman Quote: Admittedly, the incorrect statement by Richard Crossman that the American Government published Djilas's The New Class should have been corrected when introducing the verbatim text of Crossman's statement. This, at the time, seemed difficult to do without destroying the structure and context of Crossman's statement. Perhaps the best way to have handled this particular portion would have been to give it in paraphrase. At this point the announcer could have said simply: "Continuing, Richard Crossman said that the American publisher of the book had compared Milovan Djilas with Karl Marx, called the book the anti-communist manifesto and commented as follows," and then proceeded with direct quotes from Crossman. The fact should not be ignored, however, that Crossman's statement was valuable because it was a criticism of Djilas from the point of view of an anti-Marxist socialist.

8. Oct. 14, 1957.

Sputnik: (See Items 2 and 5.) In English translation, the third sentence could also read: "The success of this experiment not only eases the problems of Soviet propaganda, but involuntarily compels the world temporarily to forget the shortcomings of the Soviet system (this was the intended sense of the Russian word "mechanism") which put all the achievements of the communist regime in doubt." There follows a reminder on the anniversary of the Hungarian uprising, the failure of the Soviet five-year-plan, etc. The Bevan quote and what followed was intended to put across the idea that the Soviet Union's evident military power gave it no reason to fear an attack. This idea was, unfortunately, expressed rather naively and a listener could have gotten the impression that, in RL's opinion, the Soviet Government failed to come to an agreement on disarmament not because of its aggressive plans but due to its fear of Western power.

9. Oct. 14, 1957.

Kadar: In case of another uprising, Kadar is quoted as saying in the item, communists must be ready to fight with guns in their hands.

We think the listeners would realize that, in referring to "cowards" Kadar was in fact referring to communists who refused to defend the regime. Soviet citizens have long since gotten used to the Aesopian language of communist leaders. It might be noted that three of our news editors, including the copy editor, are post-war defectors, upon whom we rely to judge the reactions of the listener. We could have dotted the "i's", but to do so could have resulted in overloading the item with propagandistic phrases.

It does not seem likely that the listeners would misunderstand the reference to China and believe that Kadar had returned from Taipei rather than Peking.

10. October 25, 1957.

"Hostile Activity": The complete news item reads: "A local court has sentenced three students to prison for terms of from one to four years on charges of carrying out "hostile activities." According to reports in the communist press, this activity consisted in tearing down red flags from several buildings, where they had been placed the first of May celebration."

Aside from the fact that it is against standing policy to include comment into news items, no comment would seem necessary here inasmuch as it seemed obvious that the students' activity was hostile from the communist standpoint, not from ours. ✓

11. October 26, 1957.

Tear Gas: It is RadLib policy to give the facts about strikes in the West, which may set an example to Soviet workers. The fact that tear gas was used in this instance could not be hidden by RadLib: Radio Moscow could very well carry this report by quoting Western sources and our reference to the tear gas only proves our objectivity and credibility. In general, however, RL attempts to give background information which furnishes a perspective to strike stories; i.e., how much the workers in question make and what they can buy with their wages, what increases they have won in the past, etc. We also report gains made by workers through striking or threatening to strike. That the item in question did not include such background material was unfortunate, but the facts are not always readily available, particularly when news deadlines loom.

12. November 1, 1957.

Fortieth Anniversary Broadcast: It is unavoidable in a debate to let each side state its position as vigorously as possible. Unless this is done, the debate does not sound genuine. And this dialogue was in the nature of a debate. In such a dialogue it is important to reflect communist arguments as faithfully as possible and then refute them as vigorously as possible. The unfortunate thing about this statement is

that it came toward the end of the dialogue and remained unrefuted in this particular broadcast. The refutation was held over for the next broadcast in the series. Conceivably, many listeners would not hear the following broadcast and the refutation of this particular statement. Others would. Looking back, we realize it was not to our advantage to leave the statement unrefuted. On the other hand, leaving such a statement unrefuted at the end of a broadcast might have the effect of a teaser.

13. November 4, 1957.

"New Epoch": This statement is quoted out of context. No one who had heard the entire commentary could have conceivably misconstrued it as echoing the communist propaganda line. There was no intimation of praise for the "new epoch". On the contrary, it was a very sober discussion of the tragic and disastrous effect of that "new epoch".

14. November 5, 1957.

Bevan: The complete sentence quoted in part by Mr. Levine runs: "A considerable change has taken place in the Soviet Union in comparison with the time when undesirable leaders were liquidated after undergoing especially arranged political trials." Bevan was identified as the leader of the left wing of the British Labor Party. This remark was made in connection with Zhukov's fall, and is in keeping with RL's general line of emphasizing that times have changed, due to historical and popular pressures, and that the Soviet leadership cannot turn the clock back without further aggravating its problems. This quote was one of very many quotes from Western sources on the Zhukov ouster. It was immediately preceded by the following news item: "The New York Times writes that the events of the past week in the Soviet Union have revealed a basic contradiction in Soviet society (literally, in Soviet reality). This is the contradiction between the labor of Russian scientists, who are opening new perspectives before humanity, and the primitive methods of the struggle for power, in the course of which the aim justifies the use of any means."

The fact that Bevan's remarks are sometimes made use of by Soviet propaganda make him the more useful to us when he says something which the Soviet dictatorship would prefer to suppress. When, for example, the Soviet press quoted from a Bevan article printed in the Daily Herald last September we supplied the quotes deleted in the Soviet version-- on the inadequacy of housing facilities in the USSR, on the use of women for heavy manual work, on the fact that "the diplomatic aggressiveness of the Russians was due to their weakness at home, and not of strength."

15. November 10, 1957.

"Astonishing Achievements": The phrase "whose achievements sometimes astonish the imagination of the whole world" may not have been strictly necessary. It is, however, immediately corrected by the sentence

that follows: "But Gorky's chief apprehension was confirmed: the nature of the communist dictatorship, which began as Gorky put it with a 'shameful attitude toward freedom of speech and person' has not changed in forty years." This NYPD script again reflects the justifiable pride of emigres in the achievements of their fellow-countrymen in their homeland. This again reflects the effort to ward off the charge of "sour grapes" so often flung at RadLib as an emigre station. Perhaps we are a little too sensitive to the charge and are at times over-eager to counter it.

16. November 12, 1957.

Fast: This script followed up the sentence quoted with, "However, Fast writes, in spite of all of that, no one attempted to prevent him from writing and publishing his works." Along with Paul Robeson, Howard Fast is perhaps the best known American in the Soviet Union. We are not telling our listeners anything that they did not know in mentioning his prison term - but we are driving home a very important point in underlining his freedom to write as he chose and to get his works published.

17. November 13, 1957.

Zapotocky: It is agreed that this item, although harmless, had nothing in it which might not have been carried by a communist source and that it had no value in our broadcast as written.

18. November 29, 1957.

U.S. Bases in Morocco: The story of King Mohammed's visit to Washington, and the results of that visit, is news, whether or not it is carried by the Soviet press. The item is a reflection of RL news policy which calls for coverage of major world events whether or not they may reveal developments or facts which are negative from the point of view of RL's long-range aims or which may be open to misinterpretation on the part of some radio listeners. If we suppressed such information, we would be open to the charge of presenting one-sided and misleading newscasts. ✓

19. November 29, 1957.

Bronstein: The decision of the State Department to deny a visa to the Soviet chess champion Bronstein was discussed at some length between the Manager, News Department, and the Policy and Planning Adviser. (It was a holiday and the full advisory staff was not on hand.) It was decided that this DOS action gave RadLib a chance to demonstrate its independent position without compromising any basic U.S. policy, and that a short feature should therefore be written taking a point of view which, it was felt, would win the sympathy of

many listeners. In reviewing the script after broadcast, however, it was felt that the language used (i.e., "stupid") was unnecessarily sharp. There was certainly no "attempt to draw a line between the government and the people of the United States" but only to criticize a U.S. Government agency's action of little significance in order to indicate the independence of the station.

20. December 2, 1957.

"Atomic Giants": The purpose of this statement was twofold: (1) to show that Western Europe, which is allied with the United States, is becoming strong enough through unification to rival Soviet power in its own right, thus tipping the scales still further in favor of the free world; (2) by stressing the independence of the Western European Union, to emphasize the difference between the voluntary ties which bind the Western democracies and the bonds of servitude which operate to hold the Soviet bloc together.

The reference to the Soviet Union (as well as to the United States and to Western Europe) as "an atomic giant" was merely realistic acceptance of a fact. It was felt that by acknowledging this fact and reducing it to the perspective of the overwhelming free-world strength which opposes Soviet power, a greater propaganda advantage could be gained than by ignoring a truth that is no more a secret to the Soviet listener than it is to the Western newspaper reader.

21. December 3, 1957.

Communist China: The Peking datelines used in both cases made it clear that the items concerned the Communist Government of China. Radio Liberation, whose newscasts also go on the air from Formosa, has, of course, never recognized the Mao regime as the legitimate government of China. There is a minor policy violation here: the news-writer neglected to follow his standing instructions to call the communist regime "the Mao government", and this lapse was overlooked by the editor. In general the Peking government is not labelled with the adjective "Red" or "Communist" in RL broadcasts in order to avoid adding an expression which may sound propagandistic to the Soviet listener, especially if he is only on the fringes of disloyalty.

The first item reported conscription of 18- and 19-year-olds into the Chinese Communist Army. It was designed to reflect the militaristic character of the Red regime.

The second item, which dealt with Peking's economic penetration into two Western European countries close to the borders of the Soviet Union, was intended to underline a regular RL theme: the danger to Russia's legitimate interests (in this case, economic interests) which the Soviet regime is developing by nurturing an aggressive and expansive "ally" with a population three times as great as its own. (Defector or interviews have indicated that Soviet citizens of all political convictions are worried about their government's policy in this respect.)

Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

22. Dec. 3, 1957.

Committee Report on Science:

This item served two purposes:

- 1) To show that action is being taken in the United States to meet the challenge (and remain ahead of) Soviet scientific progress.
- 2) By citing the special committee's report to the effect that Soviet science might overtake American science in 5 or 10 years, to counter Communist propaganda claims that supremacy had already been achieved.

It should be noted that during this period the Soviet press and radio were full of Cassandra-like quotes from American newspapers which bewailed the "backwardness" of American science in the East-West competition. Since it was unable to control American editorial pages, RL had to resort to items like this in order to minimize the advantages which Soviet propaganda was gaining from the wave of pessimism sweeping the United States. ✓

23. Dec. 4, 1957.

Polish Travel: Primary aim of this program feature was to stimulate envy of the relative freedom to travel abroad which is enjoyed by Polish citizens, and thus to create pressure on the Soviet government for a more liberal passport policy. (This was an indirect implementation of RL's instructions to induce defection by other than overt means.)

The minor-key treatment of Polish defections (only 1 per cent, "but of "many thousands") was felt to be a subtle yet effective way to stress that even in a country like Poland which enjoys far greater political freedom than the Soviet Union many people defect to the West, without at the same time compromising the apparent objectivity of the newscast.

The increase in Polish passport fees was not yet in effect when the item was broadcast.

Another aim underlying this script was to encourage a more liberal travel policy on the part of the Soviet government.

24. Dec. 5, 1957.

Geller on Dulles: This item was discussed at length by a full meeting of the American advisory staff, at which the decision to carry it was based on the following reasons:

(Celler's evaluation of Dulles, while extremely negative, demonstrated that in the United States a member of Congress is free to criticize a top government leader, so that his statement was not a clear loss for our side. Certainly it would be unthinkable for a Supreme Soviet deputy to criticize Gromyko in defiance of the party-line.)

It may be argued that in this case RL bent over too far in an effort to reinforce its reputation for independence, credibility, and objectivity. In review it was recognized that the item could have been written less sensationally.

The reference to Congressman Celler as a Republican was an unfortunate error, of the kind that are never excusable but always inevitable in a spot-news operation. The mistake was made by a European employee, and remained undetected in the editing.

25. Dec. 6, 1957.

Atomic Ship: Development of the world's first atomic-powered surface ship is legitimate news for any newspaper or radio station. Since this story was given heavy play in Soviet media, RL had little to gain by suppressing it. To do so would merely have made our newscast seem biased and unreliable.

There was an additional positive reason for selecting this item. RL is always on the lookout for news of internal developments in the Soviet Union which can be used to give its newscast an "inside" orientation even though the intrinsic propaganda value may be slight.

26. Dec. 6, 1957.

Stockholm Newspaper: It is RL's regular policy to emphasize all evidence of weakening political control in the Soviet Union, and thus to encourage listeners to think and act more freely. The Swedish newspaper was careful to point out that the rule of law "has not yet reached its full development," and its qualified statement that it "is nevertheless stronger than in the era of Stalin's arbitrary power" does not appear to us as an endorsement of the Soviet Union as a "safe haven." (RL also quoted Tidningen as saying that the "Communist Party's monopoly of power is not subject to doubt.")

RL never suggests that the loosening of political control since Stalin's death is a result of humane motives on the part of the Communist leadership, but implies that it has come about through inability of Stalin's heirs to cope with popular unrest. We believe that this is a particularly effective propaganda line.

Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

Execution of the ~~Abakumov~~ group was part-and-parcel of the liquidation of Beria. In a staff-written script this might have been pointed out for greater accuracy. The news editor was faced, however, with a different choice: whether to use a Swedish press comment which fitted nicely with the station's basic line, or to reject it because not all of the "i's" were dotted. Naturally, he could not rewrite what the Swedish paper had said. He might have added a footnote, but he was operating under a policy which dictates that press-reviews are more effective when RL comment is kept to a minimum. In the case in point, a violation of this rule did not appear sufficiently justified.

27. Dec. 6, 1957.

The full sentence from which Mr. Levine has drawn his first quote reads as follows:

Indeed, as Winston Churchill, one of the most convinced enemies of Stalin-type socialism, once said: "We are all Socialists now," i.e., we are living in a period when certain fundamental moral principles of socialism have become part of our flesh and blood.

What Mr. Frank means by "certain fundamental moral principles of socialism" is clear from the excerpt from the new Austrian socialist program which he had just finished quoting: "Freedom of man and freedom of the peoples, freedom of religion and of conscience, economic independence of the individual, social equality of classes, confidence in tomorrow. The path to this goal is political democracy."

It is certainly clear that Mr. Frank's concluding reference to "new roads" summarizes all of the elements of the Austrian socialist program that he had just been describing in detail, and in particular the program's recognition of all of the changes which have taken place in the world since Marx's day. The whole point of Frank's commentary is the way in which he contrasts the Austrian socialists' "new roads" to the obsolete and undemocratic principles expressed in the Communists' "Moscow Declaration."

We think that this is an excellent commentary which deals effectively with a development toward which Soviet media have repeatedly demonstrated a frightened sensitivity.



Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086  
28. Dec. 8, 1951.

American Values: The advisory staff of RL is under instructions to make the station an effective anti-communist weapon without letting it appear to be a branch of U. S. propaganda.

This was an NYPD item. It is clear to us that the commentary writer was using a discussion of the problem of values in American society to emphasize the benefits of life in the United States. He was able to bring out the following eye-opening facts without resorting to an openly propagandistic, non-objective approach:

- 1) The average American can afford to spend twice as much on himself as the citizen of the wealthiest European country.
- 2) Sixty percent of American families have their own homes (a real revelation to the Soviet citizen with his five square meters of floor space).
- 3) Three out of four families have their own automobiles.
- 4) In spite of the fact that the country which is the bulwark of Western defense against Communist aggression spends 42 billion dollars for its military needs, the amount spent by citizens for food, clothing, housing, household furnishings and automobiles is five times as great.
- 5) Americans are able to travel abroad to the tune of one-and-a-half billion dollars a year.
- 6) The U. S. government cannot act without the consent of the governed.
- 7) ~~The~~ U. S. there is unfettered popular discussion of important issues.

The author's concluding sentence makes it clear that he sees in the current discussion of values in America a sound and healthy phenomenon. At the same time, it is a deft jab at the lack of freedom in the Soviet Union: "Without the ability of the people -- of every people, including our own -- to hold a regular reappraisal of values, there can be no vitality, no progress in society."

"Not by cake alone" is an allusion to Dudintsev's novel "Not By Bread Alone," which has been heavily censured by the Communist Party. It implies two ironic comparisons of American and Soviet standards: a political comparison of differences between a society where criticism flourishes and one where works of criticism are condemned, and an economic comparison, i.e. "cake" versus "bread."

The reference to "our scientific achievements" was deliberately inserted as part of RL's campaign to drive a wedge between the

Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

Party and other elements of Soviet society (e.g. "our Army," "our peasantry"). In this case, it implies that the attainments of Soviet science, while they may have been usurped by the Party, are truly the fruit of native genius and not the product of "partiylnaya opeka." The listener, who knows that RL is always jammed and who has probably seen attacks on the station in the official press, can hardly be led to believe that RL is trying to identify itself with the Communist Party when he hears this terminology.

The commentary's criticism of certain values in American society is far weaker than that to be found in many articles and statements emanating from responsible U.S. public figures of all political persuasions. Such expressions of opinion, even though they stem from good intentions, are frequently quoted by Soviet press and radio for sinister purposes, and they are also available to a goodly number of Soviet citizens from less tainted sources than their own controlled media. The commentary writer was attempting to come to grips with what the informed Soviet listener already knows about currents of re-examination in American society, and to reduce them to a healthy perspective.

Implementation of a policy designed to establish RL in the listener's eyes as an independent voice free of American control frequently calls for painful decisions. The commentary in question was passed by the American advisory staff because in their opinion it fell within the framework of this policy as an effective piece of anti-Communist propaganda. (It may be that this kind of treatment is controversial, but the intent behind the decision was completely in keeping with the station's goals.)

29. Dec. 9, 1957.

Liberation of Eastern Europe: A phrase about U.S. and British aid, both economic and military, could have been included; the words "with the aid of its wartime allies" could have preceded the phrase "The Soviet Union liberated Eastern Europe from Hitler." On the other hand, it should be noted that when the quote is put back into context the words immediately following "Hitler" are as follows: "...only in order to lay its own hand and begin imposing communism upon it."

The second sentence quoted represents a true report of Kennan's views, whether one approves or disapproves of them. ✓

As to the third quotation, the fact is that Kennan's lectures attracted worldwide attention and one of the important functions of Radio Liberation is to serve as a sounding board for issues of the day that trouble the world and presumably most of our most intelligent listeners.

30. Dec. 9, 1957.

The critique of this broadcast does not present a complete picture. In addition to the examples cited by Mr. Levine, the broadcast contained outright condemnation of the one-party system; at one point the conversation runs as follows:

Pratley: ...We cannot at all agree that a one-party system in a country is right.

Correspondent: Could you then personally remain in this (the Labor) party if it became the only political party in England?

Pratley: I would then immediately leave the Labor Party.

At another point Mr. Pratley indicates that there are only twelve communists at Cambridge out of a total of 7,600 students -- a very important refutation of Soviet propaganda claims concerning the influence of communists among European students and intellectuals. Mr. Pratley further indicates in this interview that the students are free to send critical resolutions to the Executive Committee of the Labor Party and that they are financially independent of the Labor Party Executive -- another important object lesson for student listeners in the Soviet Union. Mr. Pratley further indicates that visiting students from the Soviet Union could not be contacted by his organization in spite of the fact that they spent six days in Cambridge -- another exposé of the insincerity of the Soviet authorities in implementing contacts between Soviet and English students.

It was felt that such points, made by a member of the Labor Party Club at Cambridge, would sound more convincing to the Soviet listener than similar criticisms made by either a Liberal or Conservative club member.

31. Dec. 13, 1957.

Subway Strikes: RL gives regular coverage to strikes in the Western world for two reasons:

- 1) We counter Soviet propaganda by providing the listener with much more objective reporting than he gets from one-sided, communist-slanted stories in the official press and radio where Western labor strife is of course given heavy play.
- 2) We are able to use strike stories to show that in the "Capitalist" West workers are able to press their interests without being mowed down by tanks, as is the case in the Communist "workers' paradise." (We also report gains made through strike-action by Western workers.)

In view of the arrest of four union-leaders by New York City authorities, this particular item might better have been left alone. Still, it did accomplish the purpose of showing that despite the arrests 2,500 subway-workers were able to strike without facing military or police repressions.

32. Dec. 15, 1957.

NATO Commentary: This NYPD commentary attempted to show how the NATO partners, despite Soviet claims that they are puppets of the United States, meet to solve their problems on a basis of equality. Unfortunately, history caught up with the writer, who obviously expected that the Paris Conference would have a different outcome. It can be agreed in the light of what did happen that his emphasis on "crisis" and his evident advocacy of change in the character of NATO did not help him to accomplish his objective.

It should be noted that this commentary was run side-by-side with a correspondent's report from Paris which stressed positive aspects of the NATO situation.

33. Dec. 18, 1957.

**Bethe Statement:** At the time this item was broadcast, the Soviet press was full of accurate quotes from responsible American and other Western sources admitting the Soviet lead in rocketry. RL could hardly ignore this fact, but it was able to soften it by quoting Dr. Bethe to the effect that the U. S. was nevertheless ahead in nuclear development.

Using only the positive part of Bethe's comment would have done little to offset what the Soviet public already knew about achievements in the field of rocketry, but it might have damaged the objective appearance of RL's newscast.

34. Dec. 21, 1957.

**"Soviet News:"** In this item the Soviet scientists' predictions of achievements in the next century were not limited to their own country, but dealt with world science as a whole. Thus, their statements constituted an admission that future progress is not the exclusive domain of "socialist science," but will be achieved through international community of effort -- a striking contrast to the customary Communist line.

**Soviet News** is designed to butter up British readers, not for the Soviet public. The advisory staff felt that by playing this story back to Soviet listeners RL would demonstrate the hypocrisy of their government.

In addition, the scientists' forecasts (a cure for cancer, pocket television sets, new sources of nourishment) were considered to be legitimately newsworthy. They are not out of keeping with similar predictions made by responsible Western scientists.

35. Dec. 21, 1957.

**Biographies:** It is true that the biographies of these three men were based on information from Communist sources. There was very little significant information on them available from Western sources, and the amount of digging which would have been required to obtain it would have made it impossible for RL to respond quickly to their appointments. (The "New York Times" in printing biographical information on such secondary Soviet personalities, is also obliged to use Communist sources.)

The facts used in these biographies, although taken from Communist sources, were essentially neutral and certainly did not reflect praise of the individuals.

C06768086

Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

It is not true that "these sketches differed in no respect from the official Soviet 'Who's Who' accounts of the three Khrushchev appointees." In two cases (Ignatov and Mukhitdinov), RL was able to bring out the compromising fact that their careers had had a setback when Stalin died, thus identifying them with the particular excesses of his era. Following are quotes from the broadcast:

Ignatov's further upward progress along the Party ladder was halted by Stalin's death....

Mukhitdinov's career was somewhat retarded by Stalin's death....

The major purpose of this broadcast was to show that, in keeping with RL's image, the station takes special interest in Soviet internal developments. It was felt that the information itself would be of interest to the many people who do not have ready access to reference libraries in the Soviet Union.

36. Dec. 29, 1957.

Gaither Report: This script attempted to point up one of the essential democratic freedoms: the right to discuss and criticize government policies and actions in the press and elsewhere. Aside from the Alsop quote, we included a statement by Vice-President Nixon to the effect that the people must be informed about the facts on which the Gaither Report was based. The script concludes: "It is inevitable that in every democratic country the government is obliged to take public opinion into account, even in questions concerning defense." Public discussion, the script says, provides one of the best means of correcting mistakes and developing policies which are in the best interests of the country and the people. ✓

37. Jan. 4, 1958.

Langston Hughes Interview: In this NYPD script, the effort was made apparently to face communist charges as forthrightly as possible. Radio Liberation cannot achieve the authority and confidence it courts among its listeners if it shirks issues, especially those that concern the mores of the United States. It must perforce face the facts of life about the position of the Negro in the United States and demonstrate to its audience that it has the courage to do so by asking the kind of questions that trouble the Soviet listener who is under the constant pressure of Soviet propaganda. Radio Liberation's function is to face such issues and deal with them forthrightly. It must create the impression of objectivity, especially on such issues as the treatment of Negroes in the United States, to counteract the constant charge in the Soviet press that RL and the American Committee are mere instruments of the United States Government.

Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

38. January 29, 1958.

"Evolution": The meaning of "mighty internal evolution" is quite clear in the context of this commentary. It refers to the retreat which popular unrest since Stalin's death has forced on a Soviet leadership weakened by the continuing struggle for power. RL does not attribute this evolution to any change of heart on the part of the remaining Communist leaders, but to the fact that they have been put on the defensive by increasing popular awareness that the regime is neither infallible nor invulnerable to public pressure. RL sees as the underlying reason for this the way the regime's power to take arbitrary action has suffered from attrition of the Party and State apparats, and above all, of the terror organs.

RL is not only swimming with this tide, but is doing everything in its power to accelerate it. The station does not oppose the concept of "forced evolution" to the idea of revolution, but it has been unable to find evidence that a revolutionary situation now exists in the Soviet Union. Its policy is based on the assumption that, in the absence of a major war, evolution is necessary to pave the way for a democratic revolution.

David Lawrence is not banned by RL. Neither are Vice-President Nixon, Senator Knowland and a host of other distinguished figures commonly associated with the so-called "right wing" who have honored the station by contributing specially to its broadcasts.

39. Feb. 3, 1958.

Cultural Agreement: It should be clear from the full context of the weekly review that RL was making a distinction between real coexistence, i.e. lowering of the Iron Curtain from the Communist side, and the phony brand of coexistence offered by Khrushchev. If this broadcast admitted that concessions made by the Soviets in signing the cultural agreement were a step in the right direction, it did so in order to whet the appetite of listeners for more such concessions on the part of their government.

True, the quoted excerpt was somewhat sloppily worded, so that taken out of context it could appear to coincide with the Communist line. This happened by accident, not by design.

Approved for Release: 2019/09/25 C06768086

40. Feb. 4, 1958.

Manchester Guardian quote: The phrase "Soviet scientists can achieve enormous successes in every field" assumes a totally different significance when restored to the context in which it was broadcast by RL:

"Soviet scientists can achieve enormous successes in every field on which the Soviet leadership will concentrate the necessary resources even though it may become necessary for people to live in earthen-huts."

The rest of this Manchester Guardian comment, as quoted in RL's press review, made two other telling points:

1) The American people have every reason to rejoice in the launching of the "Explorer" satellite. Although "Explorer" weighed only a fortieth as much as one of the Sputniks (a fact already known to the listener who had read Pravda or heard any Western broadcast describing the American satellite), it was just as valuable from the scientific standpoint as the heavier Soviet satellite.

2) From the standpoint of mankind, advances in the peaceful harnessing of nuclear energy, such as those made by British scientists at Harwell, are far more important than the development of long-range rockets.

41. Feb. 4, 1958.

South Pole: The point of this item was to contrast living conditions of Soviet scientists in the remote Antarctic wastes with those of average citizens at home. Certainly very few ordinary people in the Soviet Union have washing machines, and many do not have central heating and electricity. (These were among the comforts enumerated in the item.)

42. Feb. 5, 1958.

Oil pipelines: It is natural for the West to be concerned about what irresponsible Arab leaders may do to hinder the flow across their territory of oil which is used to develop the Western economies.



42. Feb. 5, 1958. (continued)

Correctly translated, the last sentence reads: "This gives the Western countries grounds for fear" (not "this is what gives..."). Thus, there is not intended implication that oil is the only concern, or even the major concern, of the Western countries in their relations with the UAR.

43. Feb. 9, 1958.

Kishi Speech: Prime Minister Kishi's reference to anti-American feeling on Okinawa was given heavy play by Soviet media. If RL had reported his speech without mentioning his remarks on Okinawa, this might have seemed to the Soviet listener to be a deliberate act of falsification.

In actual fact, the RL item gave much more balanced treatment to Kishi's Okinawa reference, than did Soviet propaganda, thus helping to offset Radio Moscow's picture of hysterical anti-American feeling on the island. But the real advantage in reporting the speech was that RL brought out other statements by Kishi which had been omitted in Soviet coverage and which shed a somewhat different light on Japanese foreign policy:

- 1) Japan would not recognize the Chinese Communists because of its treaty ties with the Formosa government.
- 2) Japan was ready to cooperate with the U.S. in developing the economies of Southeast Asia.

Thus, RL's news item put the Kishi speech in its proper perspective and threw the onus of falsification on the Soviet press and radio.

The Japanese ambassador's comment on Okinawa was not thrown in gratuitously by RL. It had been quoted by Kishi in his speech.

44. Feb. 12, 1958.

Summit commentary: We are puzzled by criticism of the line: "Briefly stated, not even the most solemn pact guarantees by itself any kind of peace..." This happened to correspond exactly with the position of the U.S. State Department that any East-West agreement would be worthless unless enforcement machinery were provided.

44. Feb. 12, 1958. (continued)

The other passage quoted ("In order to answer the question, it is necessary first of all to draw a line between the genuine aims and aspirations of the governments of the great powers and the propaganda which accompanies their declarations in this regard...") served to introduce a page-long indictment of the Soviet government for its history of broken promises and abandoned treaty obligations (the 1939 partition of Poland, attack on Finland, seizure of the Baltic countries, repudiation of the UN disarmament subcommittee). If the Anglo-British attack on the Suez Canal was also mentioned as a violation of treaty obligations (i.e., the UN Charter), this was done only to strengthen the commentary's appearance of objectivity and thus to reinforce its condemnation of Soviet policy and practices.

This commentary is in fact one of the most vigorous defenses of Western policy ever broadcast over RL (or any other radio station), as should be evident when read in full. In this case, RL vigorously sought to expose the phoniness of Soviet propaganda and to discredit the Moscow campaign for a summit conference.