

April 17, 1967

Memorandum from Howland Sargeant, 'Basic Briefing on Three Key Programs of the Radio Liberty Committee'

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Summary:

RLC President Sargeant outlines the operations of Radio Liberty, the Institute for the Study of the USSR, and the Soviet book program. He discusses alternative organizational and funding possibilities for RL and attaches a draft paper on "The National Council for Freedom of Information"

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MEMORANDUM FROM: Howland Sargeant

SUBJECT: Basic Briefing on Three Key Programs
of the Radio Liberty Committee

1. Radio Liberty: Radio Liberty, Ltd. exists in London as a non-profit company with broad powers. In fact, its powers are so broad that it looks as though Radio Liberty, Ltd., with the agreement of the British authorities, is capable of executing every kind of program now supported by the Radio Liberty, Inc. Radio Liberty exists in Paris as a Membership Association under the Statute of 1901. It also has broad powers. Elsewhere, Radio Liberty has no corporate being of its own but exists only as an element of the Radio Liberty, Inc. (The Radio Liberty Committee, Inc. is a Delaware corporation, non-profit, under the provisions of the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware.) Radio Liberty, Inc. is now exempt from Federal taxation under Section 501.c.3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The original exemption was granted April 8, 1952. This exemption is granted to "corporations...organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational purposes, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals, ...". (The agreements and franchises enabling Radio Liberty to broadcast from Spain and probably from the Federal Republic of Germany) are agreements running specifically to the Delaware Corporation and are not unilaterally transferable to any other entity.)

and

2. The Institute for the Study of the USSR: The Institute is a German Corporation, enjoying de facto recognition as "an educational facility" by the Bavarian Ministry of Education and Culture. Because of the composition of its General Assembly, the primary governing body of the Institute, there is an international sponsorship associated with the Institute. A number of Western European scholars as well as American are members of the General Assembly.

3. The Book Program: Now in its seventh year, the book program is designed to place Western books in the hands of the influential Soviet elite and is carried out from ten Western countries by a variety of organizations through three major channels. American participation has been extremely important and has been carried out primarily through the International Advisory Council, a profit-making organization. Participants in the program include a number of leading Soviet area specialists in major universities of the United States. They receive no funds in any way but send books and periodicals of their own selection to their professional opposite numbers, friends, and acquaintances in the USSR. Some of them do this directly, obtaining the books from the International

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Advisory Council, while others supply the names and addresses and ask the IAC to carry out the mailing for them. The most important and potentially the most effective part of the book program is this kind of personal mailing. The books are also distributed by a program of regular mailing in which carefully chosen books are mailed to the Soviet recipient from appropriate Western organizations, but where personal acquaintance between the sender and the recipient is not normally the case. Regular mailing takes place from the United States as well as from Western European countries, and a variety of organizations perform this mailing, including book clubs. There is a third channel of distribution through personal distribution of books by Western travelers to their Soviet contacts and to Soviet citizens visiting the West.

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Discussion. Continuation of the program of the Institute does not seem to present technical problems. Relations with Radio Liberty Committee, Inc. could rather quickly and easily be modified to permit a different type of support for this German corporation. Relationships with the University of Oklahoma, now in their fifth year, do not present apparent problems since the Institute is not providing funds to the University of Oklahoma in its sponsorship of either the summer session or the fall session for some forty Americans and Canadians now drawn from around twenty major universities on the North American continent. These programs are sponsored by the University of Oklahoma, and the visit made to the Soviet Union by the participating students is under the auspices of the Council on Student Travel. In recent years, as will be the case in 1967, Dean John Eriksen of the University of Oklahoma plans to accompany the students as the senior escort officer.

The book program also seems to be relatively free of actual technical problems since the main operational agency is established as a profit-making organization -- The International Advisory Council. Although a most significant and important part of the program as now operated consists of mailings and hand-outs by American scholars to Soviet citizens, the program could be operated successfully outside of the United States. Participation by American citizens as actual sponsors of mailings could be eliminated. Present successful programs in Canada, England, France, and Italy could be expanded, and smaller programs in other Western European countries could be given greater support.

Accordingly, it seems most important to concentrate our current attention on Radio Liberty.

Alternative Formulas for the Continuation of Radio Liberty

1. Conversion of Radio Liberty Committee, Inc. to a profit-making corporation. Under the Delaware General Corporation Act, this could be accomplished successfully and easily. This would give temporary advantages in eliminating the necessity for filing various types of reports now required of non-profit, tax exempt, charitable and educational organizations. This would also keep intact the franchises and agreements which run to Radio Liberty Committee, Inc. The primary disadvantage, however, would be that it would be hard to demonstrate

a year from now that sources of income to such a profit-making corporation were substantial enough to constitute bona fide support. Commercially sponsored broadcasts would be implausible and unlikely and major sources that could be claimed for support would be the sale of Radio Liberty's research and analytical products and the execution of contracts with research groups or with governmental agencies of the United States or of other countries, primarily Western European or Japanese.

COMMITTEE

2. Transfer of Radio Liberty, Inc. to a jurisdiction other than the United States. Radio Liberty could be operated from jurisdictions entirely outside the United States although it would have to maintain a certain amount of physical presence in the USA, such as a bureau for gathering news and covering special events of prime interest to its listening audience occurring at the United Nations or within the United States. Two major difficulties are immediately apparent.

- A. The agreements and franchises with countries like Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany would immediately require ratification and consent by the other contracting parties since they could not be transferred to a new entity located outside the USA.
- B. Since Radio Liberty has been careful in developing its policies not to establish advisory boards or participation in its policies and programming by the nationals of other countries in which Radio Liberty has programming or transmitting operations, it would require a building up of some type of international participation in order to give a firm foundation and a plausible type of international sponsorship to Radio Liberty.

3. Support by the proposed public-private mechanism. Such support in a perfectly open way from appropriated funds through such a mechanism would, in the opinion of the President of the Radio Liberty Committee, have no effect in lessening the confidence of the Soviet listener in Radio Liberty's broadcasts. The listener in the USSR is not very sensitive to differences between public and private support and has been educated by his own media to feel that such private institutions in the United States as the Ford Foundation or large corporations are, in fact, the ruling circles and the government of the United States. The difficulty to be anticipated, however, would be the reluctance of educational institutions and their spokesmen to have the same public-private mechanism providing funds for them and their interests and programs and associations as would stand in sponsorship of what they would regard as "propaganda". In more than two postwar decades, Congress has demonstrated a great sensitivity to these views of the educators and the churches and the President of RLC at least, believes that these pressures would be present still in the current scene.

4. Support by a public entity specifically designed to foster public broadcasting. After reviewing the history of the International Broadcasting Foundation proposal of 1946 (which was never actually introduced as a bill in the Congress because of the opposition of the leading networks at that time) there does seem to be merit in the development of a draft proposal of this kind for rather rapid study. This should be separate from any similar body established for the support of educational television. It should clearly exclude a governmental entity such as the Voice of America. It should enable radios like Radio Liberty or Radio Free Europe to make an open case for support from appropriated funds. It should consider the probable needs and requirements of other American radio interests, whether in the international

field or in domestic educational broadcasting, that might warrant public support.

It might be appropriate if on review of a draft of such a proposal this seemed worth exploring further, to put it in the hands of one of the members of the newly appointed Dean Rusk Committee. Herman Wells, Chancellor of Indiana University, an old friend of the President of ELC, might be a sponsor within the Committee to see that such a proposal was carefully considered.

The National Council for Freedom of Information

Basic Premise: One of the basic human rights in the Twentieth Century is the right to know. The United Nations General Assembly, in adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, included in this statement of principles a specific Article recognizing this.

Article 19. "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

The United States voted in favor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and supported the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights when the General Assembly unanimously adopted this Covenant on December 16, 1966. The Covenant contains essentially the same provision on freedom of information as the Universal Declaration in its Article 19, and will become legally binding when 35 states have become parties to the agreement.

The United States is therefore publicly on record in its support of the right to know. Actions taken by successive administrations have shown this American conviction in a number of different ways. Through its participation in the United Nations and its specialized agencies American governments have strongly supported programs designed to wipe out illiteracy, to establish technical means of communication in developing countries, to develop better schools and train teachers to man them, to remove obstacles to communication across national boundaries. Within recent months the United States has ratified important conventions designed to make easier the free flow of educational, scientific, and cultural materials (the Beirut and Florence agreements).

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Official governmental voices such as the Voice of America have helped through their broadcasts to reduce the isolation from the rest of mankind suffered by too many peoples in the world. The one mass medium today which cannot be censored or controlled by a government which wishes to deny its citizens' right to know is radio, communicating across national boundaries. Radio Broadcasting has already proven its ability to enable private citizens to speak directly to their counterparts living behind Iron or Bamboo Curtains. The American Government should now provide the authorization and the means to continue such broadcasting to areas where the effectiveness of the concept of peoples speaking to peoples has been so clearly demonstrated, and to open opportunities for similar private broadcasts to other areas where it is in the interest of the American people to establish a true picture of the intentions, hopes and desires of all of us who seek "a shift from the narrow concept of coexistence to the broader vision of peaceful engagement."