

**May 16, 1958**

**Memorandum by Stan Ward, 'Mailing Books to the  
USSR'**

**Citation:**

"Memorandum by Stan Ward, 'Mailing Books to the USSR'", May 16, 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/290952>

**Summary:**

A CIA IOD officer asks AMCOMLIB President Sargeant for his views on mailing Western books to the USSR.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

2

16 May 1958

# 21 of 167 May 58

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President, AmComLib  
ATTENTION: Special Projects Officer  
SUBJECT: Mailing Books to the USSR

1. The Free Europe Press (CFE) has been engaged for some time in a book mailing operation which we have reason to believe has been quite effective. The Press has stringers located in various European cities and the U.S. who keep in touch with local publishing houses. When books appropriate for distribution in the communist bloc are published, the Press stringer requests the publisher to mail copies to selected addressees in the satellites in the publisher's own wrapper and to forward to F.E.P. any correspondence which ensues. The books selected have been of varied nature, usually describing democratic processes in an indirect fashion, and are non-inflammatory. Recently this type of operation was extended to the Baltic states and its success there has raised the question of its extension into the USSR. In one case, for instance, a Swedish publisher issued a brief book of Latvian folk songs. When the book was mailed to addresses in Latvia, a letter was sent to the publisher from a group of Latvian women censors through whose hands it had passed, requesting additional copies for their own use.

2. We would appreciate your views on the possible extension of such an operation into the USSR, including your ideas on what types of books (in what languages) and to what types of addressees.

STAN WARD

42/18-2715/5/18