

July 3, 1952

State Department Views on Radio Liberty

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Summary:

Responding to Frank Wisner's June 2 request ["Office of Policy Coordination Requests State Department Views on Radio Liberty"], the State Department Office of East European Affairs provides Robert Joyce with its views of proposed RL broadcasts, stressing a policy of "self determination for the nationalities when conditions are such as to permit them freely to give expression to their will" [a formulation which would be known as non-predeterminism].

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To: S/P - Mr. Joyce

From: EE - Mr. Barbour

Subject: Comment on Proposed Basic Policy Guidance Paper for the Russian Language Radio of the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, Inc.

1. Reference is made to the memorandum of June 2, 1952, requesting the comments of the Department of State on the proposed basic policy guidance paper, sent you on June 2 by the Assistant Director for Policy Coordination for the Russian language radio proposed under the project supporting the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, Inc.

2. The Department has given careful consideration to the proposed basic policy guidance paper and has prepared certain comments which have been transmitted informally to the Agency. It is understood that the Agency is in general agreement with these observations, and that they will be considered in detail when the final guidance paper is drafted after consultations with persons in Europe who will be directly concerned with operation of the radio station.

3. Certain additional comments regarding basic policy guidance for the radio, particularly the political aspects thereof, are set forth in the enclosure hereto.

4. For your convenience there is also attached a memorandum dated May 29, subject: "Comments on Proposed Basic Policy Guidance Paper for the Russian Language Radio of the American Committee", which contains preliminary comments of the Department on this paper and which was previously transmitted informally for your information.

5. The attached comments have been cleared by all interested officers of the Department.

6. The Department would appreciate an opportunity to express its views concerning the final policy guidance paper for the radio before it is issued definitely.

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The radio station sponsored by the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, Inc. will be serving the ends of two groups, the Government of the United States and the anti-Communist Russian emigration, whose interests and objectives are not identical. In supporting this station, the United States Government aims:

1. To increase the rate of defection from Soviet occupation forces;
2. By exploiting weak spots in the Soviet armor, to deter Soviet aggression;
3. To stimulate internal disaffection which can be turned to United States advantage in case of war;
4. To modify the Soviet attitude toward the non-Communist world in the direction of greater co-operation.

The aims of the anti-Communist Russian emigration, whose members will be staffing the station and, under American supervision will be responsible for the programming, are simpler and more specific:

1. To overthrow the Soviet regime;
2. To establish a new regime (or regimes) in which the emigration can participate.

The divergence of aims between sponsors and emigres will inevitably produce differences of opinion regarding the content of programs and the treatment of themes. In formulating guidance to meet this situation, the following factors should be kept in mind:

1. The station is to be a Russian, not an American, voice. It must maintain this character if it is to achieve credibility and accomplish maximum results.
2. United States direction and the advancement of United States aims must be achieved subtly and without doing violence to the essentially Russian character of the programs.
3. The dual interests of the participating groups require flexibility and imagination in the guidance provided to those responsible for the operation of the station.

The Department considers that the basic policy guidance should include the following points:

1. The station must develop a positive idea around which the diverse elements in the emigration will rally, which will appeal to the anti-communist forces within the Soviet Union, and

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which will serve as the central theme around which programs can be built. It is suggested that this theme be LIBERATION. This slogan permits a richness of variation - Liberation from Bolshevik tyranny, Liberation from police rule, Liberation from hunger and fear, Liberation from regimentation, etc. It is positive in seeking amelioration of a specific evil or group of evils, yet it does not constitute a direct challenge to the regime nor automatically inspire listeners to make useless sacrifices. Without such a positive idea the station will risk scattering its shot on multiple and unrelated themes and falling prey to sterile preoccupation with the minor issues which divide the emigration. If, on the other hand, the theme of LIBERATION is persistently and intelligently exploited, it may have an impressive cumulative effect on the target audience.

2. Ideological issues offer one of the most fruitful fields for development. Russians are by nature disposed to theoretical discussions, but the present system frustrates their inclinations in this direction. The history of the Soviet regime is a baleful record of the steady abandonment of lofty humanitarian goals and constant modifications of ideology to meet these shifts. The target audience has lived through most of these ideological zig-zags and will react to their exposure much more feelingly than would a western audience. They cut to the heart of Soviet ideological control and should be exploited to the maximum.

3.

4. The question of the future organization of Russia is one which can hardly be avoided on a station of this kind and which can well create friction between the American sponsors and the emigre staff. It is suggested that this problem can best be met by a categorical directive to the programming staff to avoid anything which could be interpreted as promising or advocating any specific arrangements for the settlement of individual issues. This directive would still allow wide leeway for the discussion

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on the radio of specific ills in the Soviet system and various measures which might be adopted for their relief.

5. The foregoing considerations apply with special force to the question of the eventual treatment of the national minorities within the Soviet Union. This is the issue, of course, on which it has been most difficult to reach agreement among the emigre groups, and the clash of viewpoints on this subject may be expected to reflect itself within the staff of the radio station. It should be the firm policy of the station to hew as closely as possible to the line of self-determination for the nationalities when conditions are such as to permit them freely to give expression to their will, without in any way prejudging the issue of national independence. Any other course is certain to antagonize either Great Russian or nationality elements among the listeners and will promptly be exploited to the utmost by Soviet propaganda. The treatment of the nationality question in the platform of the projected political center seems likely to follow closely the self-determination formula, and all programs, whether in Russian or in minority languages, should conform rigorously to this line.
6. The history of the Russian emigration is replete with fierce internecine strife between conflicting groups over both ideological and political issues. The importance which individual groups attach to their particular viewpoints and the tenacity with which they defend them has been manifest in the long and difficult negotiations to bring the principal groups together in a political center. It is imperative that this infighting not be reflected in the radio programs and that every effort be made to present the emigration to the Soviet audience as a unified anti-communist force. This in essence is the primary aim of the planned political center. In furtherance of this aim the radio should eschew all discussion of political controversies between emigre groups, should limit mention of the groups themselves to a minimum, and should introduce them into programs only when such a course clearly contributes to the prosecution of the anti-communist struggle.

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