

January 17, 1957

**Letter to Khrushchev from Radio Moscow Service
Urging Creation of Warsaw Pact Radio Station**

Citation:

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Summary:

The following letter to Khrushchev in 1957 by members of the German Service of Radio Moscow proposed establishing a Soviet international broadcaster structured along the lines of Radio Free Europe, with formal independence from the government. Indirectly it acknowledges the effectiveness of RFE broadcasts.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Dear Nikita Sergeevich!

We ask you to forgive us for contacting you directly, but the question we would like to raise is outside the competence of any specific department.

Counterrevolutionary revolt in Hungary has showed the effectiveness of the radio station Free Europe, especially in launching propagandist air balloons and an underground network of informants and provocateurs.

The effectiveness of Free Europe, in our opinion, can be explained by-besides socio-economic reasons-the following factors:

1. The scale of propagandist activity.
2. Formal independence from any kind of state power.
3. Wide involvement of political émigrés and refugees from European countries of People's Democracy.

The scale of propagandist activity of Free Europe can be judged on the basis of the following data. The radio station Free Europe alone, which covers only the European People's Democracies, employs around 1,300 people, which is almost as many as our Main Broadcasting Directorate that broadcasts to nearly all countries of the world.

It should be noted that the scale of our radio propaganda abroad is nothing in comparison with that of the West. Americans, for instance, in order to spread propaganda in just one country, relay several programs of the Voice of America and maintain a special radio station called RIAS in Western Berlin, which has up to 1,000 employees, consisting primarily of native Germans. to appreciate these numbers, consider that the German broadcasting team based at Moscow radio has only 30 people, none of whom has come from Germany within the last 20 years.

England, while suffering from a chronic budget deficit which obliges it to reduce even military expenses, is not reducing appropriations for radio propaganda. Approximately 14,000 employees work at the BBC at this time. Around 4,000 work in foreign broadcasting alone, which is many times higher than foreign broadcasting in Moscow radio.

The formal independence of Free Europe from any kind of state power provides it with unlimited discretion, and gives it the air of being objective and impartial. Our radio is at a disadvantage in this respect as well.

Counter-revolutionary émigrés from socialist countries have many opportunities for delivering inflammatory propaganda to those countries through [Radio] Free Europe, [Radio] Liberation, and other propaganda institutions. Our friends in the underground and emigration, for example, Greek, Arabic, Spanish and Iranian Communists, do not have such opportunities. In contrast to Free Europe or liberation, Moscow radio, being a state-run radio station, does not meddle in the internal affairs of other countries in conducting its propaganda. This deprives us of many opportunities to influence the formation of public opinion in those countries.

It is in our interest to provide our friends and other elements of opposition in capitalist countries with the opportunity to conduct propaganda on the radio and by other means in their countries.

Taking this into consideration, we consider it expedient to establish under our unofficial leadership an organization on the territory of the Soviet Union and several other People's Democracies, which in its functions, purpose, and methods would be, to a certain extent, analogous to Free Europe. We are convinced that, with the help of

such an organization, which would have at its disposal radio stations formally independent from the government, and which could launch propagandist air balloons (when living with the wolves, howl as a wolf), it would be possible for us to achieve great success in our propaganda efforts. If, for instance, a powerful radio transmitter was installed near the Greek border with several dozen Greek and Cypriot propagandists assigned to it, an atmosphere similar to that which has prevailed in the [middle] east for the last few months could affect England and the rest of NATO. The same can be applied to a number of other weak spots of the capitalist world.

In order for such propagandist centers to be formally independent from the Soviet government, it could be announced that they are funded by private donations from separate individuals and nonpartisan organizations (exactly the way it is done by Free Europe).

The activity of such radio stations and the adoption of the methods of Free Europe would, undoubtedly, elicit protests in the West, but to rebut these protests would not be much of a problem. In a worst-case scenario these radio stations could be closed down. Even in that case we would be on the winning side.

With Communist greetings,

Members of the CPSU:

I. Romantsov - Editor-in-chief of broadcasts to Germany
[signed]

A. Turtushkin deputy editor-in-chief of broadcasts to Germany
[signed]

A. Zholkver secretary for Party organization of the editorial staff
[signed]

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