

## **May 11, 1956**

### **Memorandum by Howland Sargaent**

#### **Citation:**

"Memorandum by Howland Sargaent", May 11, 1956, 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://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/290902>

#### **Summary:**

AMCOMLIB President Sargeant provides guidance on RL editorial policy, evaluation of broadcast content, and program series offering alternatives to the Soviet system.

#### **Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

#### **Original Language:**

English

#### **Contents:**

Original Scan

11/10/55

7

May 11, 1955

MEMORANDUM BY ROWLAND SARGENTI. Basic Policy Guidance for Radio Liberation

There are three papers that have established the basic policies of the station for the guidance of all staff members and writers. The first of these is the revised Basic Guidance No. 1 of April 1, 1954, in which the basic political line of the radio station is defined as follows: (1) Inflexible struggle against the Communist dictatorship until its complete destruction. (2) Putting into effect the principle of true self-government as the primary condition opposed to attempts to restore absolutism or to establish any kind of dictatorship. (3) Liquidation of the kolkhozes and of the system of forced deliveries. Transfer of the land to ownership by the peasants. In the second paper the mission of Radio Liberation is defined in part: to do everything possible to discredit Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism as the ideological basis of the Communist regime; to present representative government as an attainable and attractive alternative to the Communist dictatorship. The third paper defines the ultimate aim of the station as "the liberation of the peoples of the USSR from the Communist dictatorship and the achievement by them of a democratic order in its place." In order to do this Radio Liberation must prove that the inadequacies, injustices and failures in the Soviet Union are direct and inevitable results of the system. It must show how bureaucratic central planning squanders human lives and natural resources; how the tremendous dual superstructure of State and Party control cuts down productivity, imposing extra work and sacrifice upon everyone.

II. Evaluation of Content of Radio Liberation Programs

There probably is no single phase of the American Committee's work which over the past year has received a higher proportion and amount of time and resources than attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the content of Radio Liberation programs. Illustrative of this is that for May 1955 a block of scripts\* from all the 9 desks was submitted as part of an intensive program of review to 6 specialists drawn from the MIT and Harvard centers of studies of the Soviet Union. Following the careful study of these scripts by these 6 people, who included Max Millikan, Walter Rostow, Marie Fainood, Alex Inkeles, etc.,

\* This block represented a full week of Radio Liberation "as broadcast" program.

7 COPY  
 CIA 42 JOB 71 02824  
 BOX 1 FOLDER 7

two full days were spent in discussion of the themes and content of Radio Liberation. Based on this examination of the actual scripts as broadcast, the findings at that time, far from indicating a belief that Radio Liberation was promoting Marxism, were along these lines:

1. The main objective of all Radio Liberation programs is a complete overthrow of the Soviet regime.
2. The alternatives presented are a freely elected representative government, private ownership of land by the peasants and a restoration of civil rights.
3. The programs are directed to and appeal to non-Party members.

Subsequent to this major review of Radio Liberation output, both in Europe and the United States regular evaluation of a very wide variety of people with specialized knowledge of the Soviet Union has been developed. These vary from people who are recent defectors from the Soviet Union to American experts in the field of Soviet affairs. One man who audits the programs on a daily basis defected within the past year and represents a high technical managerial level of Soviet society. There is also a group composed of nine defectors with varied backgrounds working as instructors in the Oberassargau Detachment "R" who do a weekly review of the taped Russian program. Another man is Igor Gouzenko. The American specialists include such men as Dr. Frederick Barghoorn of Yale and Dr. Raymond Bauer, Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Stanford.

### III. Can an approved script be transmitted over the air in sabotaged form?

Beginning on November 4, 1954, Radio Liberation at the instruction of the President of the American Committee initiated the following procedure to give the most complete assurance that only approved scripts would be placed on the air -- that is, those conforming to basic policy agreed to by the American Committee -- and further steps were placed in effect which provided a possible audition of the broadcasts as actually recorded on tape at the time of transmission.\* These measures assure that there is very slight possibility that any broadcast would go out over the air which is not in conformity with American Committee policy -- but even if that slight possibility actually did occur, the post-audit would reveal this, within a matter of approximately two weeks. It should be noted that all Radio Liberation broadcasts are first committed to tape and that it is the

\* This audition since its establishment has not found any evidence of tampering with the scripts.

tape which has been auditioned by a U.S. citizen, which is subsequently transmitted over the land line from our studios in Munich to our transmitters in Lampertheim.

1. Scripts submitted for broadcast over Radio Liberation, either written by staff members or free-lance contributors, are first read, rejected or approved, and edited by the respective Desk Chiefs. The planned program is then submitted for approval to the American Program Advisor for the respective desks, who is responsible to the American Director, Radio Programming Division, for reviewing the entire output of his desk.

2. Approved programs are then recorded and produced under the over-all supervision of the Chief Producer.

a. Before putting the program on the landline to Lampertheim the tape is auditioned by the American Program Advisor concerned.

b. While the programs are being transmitted over the landline, they are constantly checked against scripts by the Deputy, Content Control Monitor.

3. Further content monitoring of the programs takes place when they are on the air at various check points in Europe. A full program is taped at a different time each day and later checked against the scripts.

#### IV. Alternatives to a Communist system of government

Since March 1, 1953, when Radio Liberation first went on the air until the present time, a major part of its programming has been directed towards the presentation of feasible alternatives in terms of political, economic and social institutions to the peoples of the USSR. For example, this week will be observed the 50th anniversary of the first Duma -- the first genuine parliamentary democratic body of Russia -- some of the leading parliamentarians of the free world including members of the United States Congress such as Minority Leader of the Senate William F. Knowland (Rep.-Cal.) and Braine, Conservative member of Parliament, have already recorded messages which are being transmitted by Radio Liberation to show the types of alternatives that are possible under a system of self-government which is freely elected by and responsible to the peoples themselves. A regular series "Our Democratic Heritage" has consistently presented alternatives that were in existence in Russia before the October Revolution, such as the duma, zemstvo, free cooperative movements, etc.

In other series, we have attempted to show the fallacies inherent in Marxism through specific examples in various fields. The series listed below, although not always under the same title but with the same type of content, have been part of our programming since the inception of the radio.

"Land to the Peasants" demonstrates that not until the land is returned to the peasants will the crisis in agriculture be solved. Alternatives are presented through examples of the American family farm, Danish cooperatives, etc.

"Problems of Soviet Economy" deals systematically with the large and small problems confronting the economy of the USSR, showing that these stem from the system of government ownership and state planning.

"New Horizons" is a program aimed at youth which tries to further their resistance against Marxism-Leninism through discussion of such questions as religion, poor attendance at courses of Marxism-Leninism, etc.

"Religion and Life" and "Sunday Talk", in addition to discussing ethical and spiritual matters, also consistently point out that religion and science are not incompatible.

"Our Century" discusses achievements of science and technology in the free world, pointing out that these were possible because of the free enterprise system.

"Life Abroad" presents achievements in technology, culture, living conditions and labor conditions throughout the free world with the objective of showing the tremendous progress that is possible without state ownership and planning.

In order to stimulate the writing of radio scripts by enigmas which would strike at the very root of Bolshevism by disproving Marxist theories, in February, 1954, we announced a contest for the best scripts on this subject. Not only were all the prize-winning entries broadcast over the radio but also many of the other scripts submitted.