

November 3, 1960

Radio Liberty Policy Position Statement: Free Exchange of Information and Ideas

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Summary:

Radio Liberty outlines the goal of the programming, which is to encourage Soviet listeners to advocate for freedom of information.

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POLICY POSITION STATEMENT

FREE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS

Assumptions

The relaxation of internal tensions in the Soviet Union during the post-Stalin period was welcomed by the Soviet population as a sign of continued improvements at home. A lessening of tensions abroad was viewed as a promise of fulfillment of the people's strong desire for peace and increased contacts with the outside world. Subsequent developments gave Soviet citizens a feeling of greater latitude and personal security in contacts with the non-Communist world as reflected in their listening to foreign radio broadcasts, access to foreign literature, direct association with western tourists, and, to a very limited extent, travel abroad. In spite of recent efforts by the Soviet government to convince them of the necessity for reversal of these trends, it is probable that thinking Soviet citizens resent more than ever the continued existence of censorship, travel restrictions, jamming of radio broadcasts and other barriers between themselves and the outside world.

While professing faith in the invincibility of Marxism-Leninism, Soviet leaders at the same time underscore their own lack of faith by frantic efforts to exclude ideas which they apparently fear could subvert a citizenry subject to the most intensive indoctrination in history. In contrast to this attitude, Radio Liberty believes that a genuine lasting peace can be achieved only by increased contact and mutual understanding among peoples of differing social, political, economic and ideological systems. Radio Liberty further believes that the Soviet regime's efforts to maintain barriers against the passage of information and ideas are an admission of fear of the consequences for perpetuation of the regime arising from such free exchanges.

Objectives

To persuade Soviet listeners of the vital importance of a free exchange of information and ideas throughout the world, including the Soviet Union. In persuading Soviet citizens of the importance of this, Radio Liberty seeks to encourage the people of the Soviet Union to bring indirect pressure to bear on the regime for a relaxation of control over information and ideas.

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