

December 30, 1970
Memorandum, John Ward to the President,
RadLibCom [Howland H. Sargeant], 'New Radio
Liberty Policy Manuea'

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Summary:

The CIA liaison officer confirms to RLC President Sargeant approval of the revised Policy Manual for Radio Liberty broadcasts while forwarding alternative views of two current Soviet developments

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The President, RadLibCom
ATTENTION: Assistant to the President
SUBJECT: New Radio Liberty Policy Manual

1. This memorandum will confirm, as you were informed through another channel previously, that the Policy Manual for Radio Liberty broadcasts has been reviewed and approved by the responsible officials. The Manual clearly reflects the product of considerable thought and we are in full agreement with its basic conclusions. To be more specific, we concur with the following essential points in the Manual:

- RL does not seek to establish any specific system or ideology in the USSR (p. 4).
- RL scrupulously avoids inciting, or appearing to incite actions which could bring reprisals, including particularly illegal and violent actions (p. 6).
- RL believes specific methods, proposals and programs will have to be worked out within the framework of Soviet society and by Soviet citizens themselves (p. 7).
- RL avoids taking any position as to what the future decisions of the Soviet people should be on nationality questions and avoids any stimulations of antagonism among the peoples of the USSR (p. 39).
- RL desires to maintain a tone of good will, avoiding condescension (pp. 45-50).

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- R.L.'s criticism of Soviet reality will be directed at constructive change (p. 56).
- R.L.'s replies to attacks on Radio Liberty in Soviet media will be the subject of prior consultation and approval (p. 62).

2. The officers who reviewed the Policy Manual are also in general agreement with the analysis of the current situation in the USSR. However, they point out that some doubts exist about two, basically subjective, judgments: that repression has increased in recent years and that the Soviet Union is now in a state of "stagnating standstill."

3. The following explanations of the doubts on these points are presented for your information and consideration, particularly in making future analyses of the situation in the USSR.

4. On the first point, the Soviet regime has always been repressive; in this connection, one can cite the executions of the economic parasites in the early sixties and our knowledge at the time of the severe repression of dissidents have become more courageous in their actions, thus forcing the same repressive regime to take an increasing number of better publicized repressive actions. Of course, the repression inherent in the system has not really changed and the dissidents would have been subjected to the same if not even more repression one, two or three decades ago.

5. On the second point, stagnation seems too strong a term to use for a country with an 8.3 percent industrial growth rate, according to the latest available figures. No society can be standing entirely still with that kind of rate of growth in the industrial sector. In fact, the Manual elsewhere points to changes in Soviet society which have occurred in recent years although modernization and liberalization have not taken place; for example, even without reforms the intelligentsia has increased in size. Thus a question for consideration could be whether the Soviet leadership will take the risk of seeking to maximize the use of Soviet resources, through modernization and liberalization, or continue to try to minimize the possible political threat to its control by blocking major economic reforms.

John Ward