MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Criticism of Radio Liberty Russian Language Program.

This memorandum is for information only, particular reference is made to paragraph 1.

1. In a letter of 15 March 1958 to Mr. Levine, Mr. Isaac Ben Levine cited forty-five items out of fifty complete daily Radio Liberty Russian-language programs for the period October 1957 - February 1958 which he termed "harmful, pernicious, pro-Soviet items which follow a definite pattern of appeasement of Red imperialism and which show an unmistakable pattern of infiltration by elements set upon subverting from within the purposes and policies of Radio Liberty." The Division has analyzed the same original script material reviewed and commented upon by Mr. Levine. The text of this analysis is attached (Tab A). The Division's conclusions, based on this analysis, follow:

a. No substantiation of Mr. Levine's charges of appeasement or subversion is found.

b. None of the items to which Mr. Levine objected display errors of judgment and impropriety in detailed treatment.

c. Whole categories of programs attacked by Mr. Levine follow a basically sound line, although some errors in the detailed implementation of that line were committed.

d. Mr. Levine has given an erroneous impression of the spirit and content of a large number of the scripts he cited, as well as

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as well as of RL's over-all handling of a given subject.

2. Mr. Levine was fully justified in objecting to some poorly conceived programs and to errors in details of others, although many of his generalized conclusions were unfounded or based on mistaken premises. Outstanding among the poorly conceived programs were the two MSS scripts (p. 1, Tab A), the new report of Rep. Gellis's harsh criticism of Secretary of State Dulles (and the error concerning the Congressmen's party affiliation) (p. 3B, Tab A), and the broadcast in substantial part of the Haas lectures (pp. 31-35, Tab A). Concerning the latter, it should be noted that, although the last three lectures were condensed for broadcast by RL, although RL disassociated itself from Haas's foreign policy views and carried material opposing these views, RL nevertheless very evidently overplayed the lectures. Objection properly could be taken also to errors of omission or omission in the detailed handling of other RL programs. Thus, for example, greater care should have been taken in some reports of strikes in the West, both to avoid creating the impression of serious social discontents and to point up the rights and achievements of free labor (pp. 9, 29-35, Tab A). The misquoted references to U.S. publication of the Russian book was a grievous error (p. 6, Tab A). Also, RL's dissent with State Department's action in the Breslau passport case, while permissible in principle, should have been more restrained in its criticism (p. 27, Tab A).

3. RL operates on the basic premise that it must often report events, the immediate impact of which may be unfavorable to the U.S. and the West, so that, having displayed its "objectivity" to its listeners, it could effectively place these events into proper perspective. This was the approach followed in the cases, for example, of Spontak and its resultant repercussions in the re-evaluations of American life and MI70. It is quite probable that RL may have gone too far to condition its audience in some cases. Nevertheless, progress such as these dealing with Spontak and other significant world happenings clearly attempted to win the maximum propaganda advantage from their subjects.

4. The methods employed by Mr. Levine in analyzing RL's scripts led, in the majority of cases (66 out of 84), to a significant distortion of their character and of RL's handling of individual subjects. This became evident when whole sentences, instead of fragments of sentences, when complete paragraphs, instead of parts of paragraphs,
when whole scripts, instead of random passages, and when a number of related programs, instead of isolated programs, were examined. Among the materials thus shown to have been misrepresented were the programs on the Moscow and Warsaw demonstrations (pp. 1 - 3, Tab A); on Gorbachev and the U.S.-Soviet re-evaluations (pp. 4 - 6, 11 - 12, 19 - 22, 29 - 32, 41 - 43, 54 - 55, Tab A); the dialogue on the Berliners Resolution (pp. 5 - 10, Tab A); the feature on the October revolutions and Stalin's trial (pp. 10 - 11, Tab A); the Fact and Fable interviews (pp. 14 - 16, 19 - 20, Tab A); the programs on the U.S. embassy strike (pp. 19 - 23, Tab A); the Egypt-Syrian merger (pp. 19 - 20, Tab A); the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Agreement (pp. 19 - 20, Tab A) and the Summit Conference (pp. 21 - 22, Tab A). Even on the matter of the Russian biography, Mr. Levin's quotation of only part of a sentence created a seriously misleading impression (p. 26, Tab A).

5. It is not clear whether Mr. Levin's real quarrel is with the notion in which EL consistently tries to implement its assigned role, as recently formulated in the official paper 'New Broadcasting Policy toward the Soviet Union,' or with that policy itself. He is aware generally, however, that in place of the former purpose of fostering a violent, revolutionary overthrow of the Soviet regime, with its consequent vilifying demagoguery and pernicious propaganda approach, EL now follows the concept of supporting and stimulating those actual and latent forces in Soviet society which can weaken the fabric of totalitarian Party control and prepare the ground for the eventual elimination, in one way or another, of the Party dictatorship. Carrying out this "revolutionary" mission means that EL attempts to stimulate the thinking of the Soviet people, and primarily of the power elite groups, in a calm, reasoned manner. EL's criticism of Soviet domestic and international policies must be serious and thoughtful; the Soviet audience must be presented with a variety of thought-provoking material. To win the confidence of its listeners and to communicate better with them, EL tries to appear as an independent representative of their legitimate interests, using their outlook and frame of reference. This mission and its implementation are much more difficult than was EL's former role, and the possibility of error is greater. All the more stringent, therefore, must be the pre-broadcast control and post-broadcast review. EL is working harder in this direction.
concentrating the letter function in a single individual of senior rank with an established reputation as an able anti-Soviet propagandist, it is hoped to prevent a recurrence of errors of judgment and lack of skilled professional treatment which some of the programs have reflected. Additionally, the Radio Liberation management in New York is now negotiating with a likely candidate to replace the present head of the News Bank in Munich.

8. Also appended is an analysis of Mr. Levine's charges by a committee of members of IL's supervisory staff in Munich (Tab B). This analysis was undertaken independently of the IL study, with which it is in basic agreement. As a further refutation of Mr. Levine's charge of a delineate pattern of subversion, Munich points out that the sources and circumstances under which the programs were prepared were much too varied to permit such a pattern.

9. A copy of Mr. Levine's letter of 19 March 1958 to Mr. ______________ also is attached (Tab C).

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Chief
International Organizations Division

Attachments: 3
Tab A, B, C

Distribution:
2 - Address
1 - DIA w/o att.
1 - RFI w/o att.
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