

CAPITAL REPORT

More On RFE Fiasco

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By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 18—The Board of Directors of the "Crusade for Freedom" includes 12 distinguished public-spirited citizens, many of whom are friends of mine and some of whom are unhappy about the facts I have presented about Radio Free Europe, for which the Crusade is the fund-raising organization.

This surprises me because I consider my expose as a favor to them, not a criticism. Frankly, they are being had, and for me, I would want to know about it.

If criticisms come along, they are referred to the Radio Free Europe organization for answers, and the answers are pat.

One routine defense, for example, is that Radio Free Europe broadcasts must be effective, or the Russians would not be spending millions of dollars a year in efforts to "jam" them. On first glance, this seems reasonable. On second, it is hogwash.

IN THE FIRST place there is no evidence that the Russians are spending "millions of dollars" to that end and no possible way to prove it.

In the second, it assumes that anything that the Russians don't like is good, which is ridiculous.

The very objection to R.F.E. is that its propaganda line is to wean the people behind the Iron Curtain away from Moscow Communism by persuading them to establish their own national brand of Communism, the folly of which is demonstrated by the history of Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Obviously, this thesis is not to the liking of the Kremlin, any more than propaganda material toward complete independence and freedom would be. What "jamming" is done is therefore entirely understandable.

It does not prove, however, that the policy line of the Free Europe broadcasts are what they should be, nor that they are anything but what they are accused of being—in favor of national Communism.

The fact is, there is no reason to believe that the Free Europe broadcasts are being heard behind the Iron Curtain to any appreciable extent. Their transmitters are all short-wave, and shortwave receivers in satellite countries are very scarce.

THE ONLY RADIO sets available for purchase are standard "People's Sets," capable of picking up the frequencies of the Communist government stations on the regular broadcast band. These are useless for short wave.

One top Congressional investigator who has interviewed literally thousands of Iron Curtain escapees and persecutees, informs me that he has asked every individual about Radio Free Europe and less than one per cent of them have ever heard it, or heard of it. Most of these didn't care. The others reported that they had no way to get it, and wouldn't take the risk, anyway.

For these results, Free Europe is spending an estimated 10 million dollars a year in Munich alone, and Crusade for Freedom is collecting the "Truth Dollars" to support it.

If I were a director, I'd want to know what is going on, and for my money, I'm doing my friends a favor.

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