

PFE
X 6-2 F Lewis

12 November 1957

(EXCERPT)Fulton Lewis, Jr. at 7:00 p.m. over WGMA (Washington) and the MBS Network:

"President Eisenhower had a luncheon party today at the White House with a group of government officials for the purpose of publicizing the so-called CRUSADE FOR FREEDOM and its coming fund-raising campaign, all of which was entirely innocent, I'm sure, but it does demonstrate how well-meaning people can become involved in questionable projects when they're not careful to check the facts before they go ahead.

"Crusade for Freedom is the organization that collects money every year under the slogan of Truth Dollars to spread the message of freedom supposedly behind the Iron Curtain in Europe by means of Radio Free Europe and the balloon propaganda program operated out of Munich, Germany. The purposes, as stated in their articles of incorporation, are very glamorous and very noble. In actual practice, however, the propaganda line which the whole Free Europe operation is taking, and has taken for a long time past, is to urge the people of the Iron Curtain countries to turn, not from their present Communism to democracy, but from their present Communism to national Communism.

"To support this activity, the Crusade for Freedom, which the President kicked off at the White House today with this luncheon, will spend the rest of this month soliciting so-called Truth Dollars, as you probably yourself will be solicited by your news delivery boy -- that is the method that is used.

"Several nights ago I read to you a directive issued to staff editors, executives and so forth, as to the Free Europe operation in Munich, instructing that from that time on the policy line would be to glorify Tito as a great national hero who has saved his country from foreign barbarians, and to go slow on criticism of Communism as such.

"I visited the office of the Free Europe Committee in New York last week, interviewed some of the officials, made certain specific inquiries through a very courteous and cooperative public relations representative by the name of (McInerney?). Among the questions I asked was what comment they had to make on this directive or guidance, as they call it, of March 1956. I had talked to leading members of the Free Europe Committee's Board of Directors at great length. They had confirmed to me that this was the policy, and even undertook to defend it very enthusiastically as a wise policy.

"With this I certainly do not agree, and I doubt that you do because it seems to me that any propaganda message that's beamed to the people of the Soviet satellite countries, supported by this Crusade for Freedom and the Truth Dollars it collects from you, should be a message of freedom and hope and inspiration to some day regain their own liberties, a message to keep alive in their minds the story of what freedom is in the outside free world.

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This, however, is a point of disagreement, honest difference of opinion, and it's aside from the point.

"The important thing is the reply that I got to my inquiry. It's a type-written reply from a young man by the name of Thomas H. Brown, Jr., who is Acting Director of the whole Radio Free Europe operation, with headquarters in New York. It bears his signature; it's addressed to Mr. Samuel S. Walker, Jr. -- everybody in the organization seems to be a Jr., which I suppose ought to make me feel at home -- from Thomas H. Brown, Jr., and the message reads as follows: If it is committee policy to reply to Fulton Lewis' inquiry about the alleged Radio Free Europe directive or guidance of March, 1956, the answer should be, quote, the purported directive passages which Mr. Lewis has quoted in various forms are not and have never been part of any policy directive issued by the management of Radio Free Europe or Free Europe Committee, and do not represent the policy of these organizations, past or present, unquote. That, despite the fact that the directors of the organization had confirmed to me the previous day that the directive does represent the policy of the Free Europe campaign out of Munich.

"Please not that I do not question in any manner, shape or form the sincerity of the backers of the Crusade for Freedom. I'm sure they believe that the cause they're supporting is actually spreading the message of the free world to the oppressed people of the Iron Curtain. Certainly the President would never have put on this luncheon today if he had had the slightest idea to the contrary. Unfortunately, however, there seems to be a decided short circuit somewhere between the good intentions of these fund collectors and the actual operation of the project at the grass roots, and anybody who has been to Europe and is familiar with the operation will verify that fact in full."