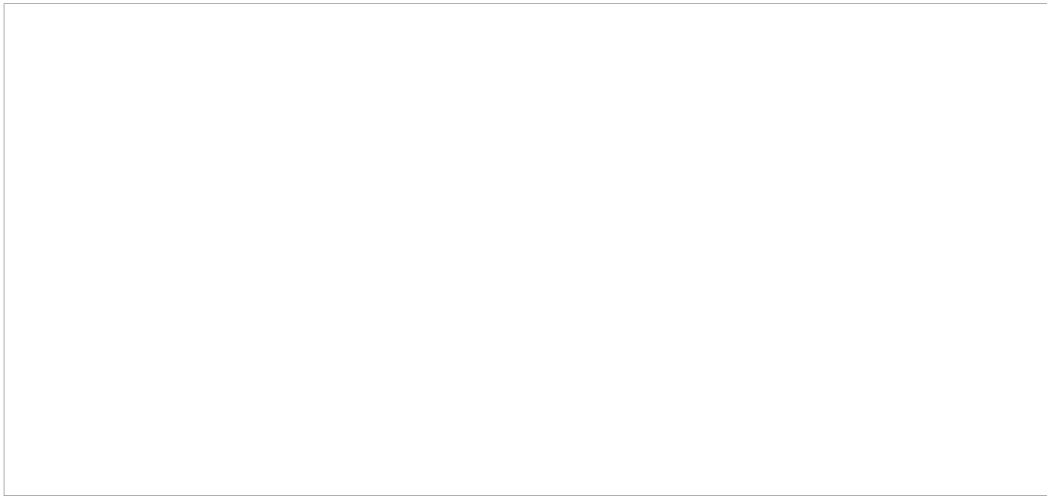


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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTORATE OF "THE VOICE OF AMERICA"

With regard to Ukrainian Language Broadcasts

Ukrainski Visti (Ukrainian News)

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## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTORATE OF "THE VOICE OF AMERICA"

## With Regard to Ukrainian Language Broadcasts

In writing this letter to so high an institution as the directorate of the "Voice of America" I have in mind the Scriptural truth that even the simplest and poorest mortal may be heard before the Highest Throne. All the more reason, then, why this mortal may hope that his voice [addressed] to the Voice of America may not be wasted as a "voice crying in the wilderness". The fact is, however, that all our voices up to now, the voices of all the Ukrainian emigre press, addressed to VA on the subject of the Ukrainian broadcasts, have been just "voices crying in the wilderness," and nothing more. Can it be that these voices have been unconvincing, misunderstood, or expressed from a point of view hostile to democracy? No; among them have been voices by no means anonymous, voices very outspoken, and completely in accord with the democratic position. In such a state of affairs, the letter of an individual person has very little chance [of being considered]. However, this does not prevent me from publishing this open letter (a private one would not produce the desired results), or from expressing some thoughts for your kind attention.

Two things give me the moral right to write this letter. First - I am a Ukrainian, recently a citizen of the USSR, a former political prisoner who has spent a large part of his life in Soviet prisons - in other words, one who belonged to that part of the Ukrainian people in whose name, and primarily for whose sake, was organized the Ukrainian broadcasts of the Voice of America. Secondly, VA has used my name as well as my works several times in its Ukrainian language broadcasts, and to some extent has used my humble authority in its relations with the Ukraine under the Soviets.

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This gives me the moral right to raise my voice regarding VA's Ukrainian broadcasts, and address it to the directorate of VA in the hope that it will receive a hearing.

It goes without saying that the sphere of American international relations is outside the sphere of competence of a simple individual. It is also obvious, however, that all the broadcasts of VA to the peoples enslaved by Moscow communism are within that sphere. And it is no less obvious that VA's Ukrainian broadcasts, as they have appeared so far, for some unknown reason have nothing in common with American policies as they are understood in the world, if American proclamation and defense of basic human freedoms is not pure propaganda. Therefore, without intending to intrude into the sphere of American policies, I only want to point out to the esteemed directorate of VA the strange situation which exists and which unquestionably compromises both America and all of western democracy in the eyes not only of the Ukrainians but of the other peoples who live in the USSR and listen avidly to VA--the strange situation which makes difficult, if it does not completely nullify, all the efforts of America morally to mobilize these peoples against Moscow communism. This strange situation consists in the fact that these broadcasts have become the megaphone of Russian imperialism, which in one way or another is connected with Stalinism. It may be impertinent, but let us consider how these broadcast appear to the Ukrainians and how they are received by them.

The directorate of VA cannot afford to ignore the thoughts of the Ukrainians themselves, and particularly of those who know very well the Ukraine under the Soviets, who have recently left it, who were and are political antagonists of Moscow communism, who know the inclinations, hopes, and level of political development of the Ukrainian people, and who know what the many millions of Ukrainians hope for from western democracy and to what extent they may or may not be on the side of the latter.

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The Ukrainian people hope at least for the moral support of western democracy in their ceaseless struggle against Moscow communism, a struggle in which they are making colossal sacrifices not only in their own interests, but in the interests of all mankind.

So the organization of the Ukrainian broadcasts was an event of tremendous political importance, calculated to include within the orbit of the anti-communist forces the second largest nation in the USSR. Everyone hailed this event, particularly there on the other side of the iron curtain where everyone listens with special eagerness to the defense of their interests and to ideological support of their many years of struggle against the Moscow communist totalitarianism. Considering this, the Ukrainian broadcasts of VA could play a truly [great] historical role.

However, on the basis of four months' study of the Voice of America Ukrainian broadcasts I can with complete confidence assure the directorate of VA that these broadcasts are actually achieving results in the Ukraine entirely contrary to those desired by America and western democracy; at best they are arousing contempt for the Voice of America, or, indeed, for America in general; at worst, they will destroy forever the faith of the Ukrainian people in America and in western democracy. Why? Because foremost in <sup>the</sup> minds of each Ukrainian must be such thoughts as these:

What can the Ukrainian people expect from democratic and freedom-loving America when that great power is incapable of organizing for them (for forty million people!) independent radio broadcasts, but only repeats for them the Russian broadcasts (alien to them and inimical to their aspirations) which are merely translated into Ukrainian - and that badly? What can the Ukrainian people under the Soviets expect from America when her voice propagandizes Russian imperialism, and this in the fiftieth year of the twentieth century?

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Such are the "Ukrainian" broadcasts of the Voice of America. I put the word "Ukrainian " in quotation marks, for the directorate of VA itself puts it in quotation marks, and so would anyone who listened to the Voice of America in the Ukraine; he would put it in quotation marks because, from the point of view of any politically literate Ukrainian on the other side of the iron curtain, these "Ukrainian" broadcasts in their general line follow in the path of the bolshevist broadcasts, in the path of the bolshevist policies against the nations seized by them.

The general line of the communist empire demands the stifling and elimination of the culture and history of the subjugated nations, reducing them to the ranks of "younger brothers", to a role of colonial subordination, of pariah-nations, who for any protest or attempt to break away from the empire of the bolshevist totalitarian machine are mercilessly punished, even to the extent of mass physical annihilation. Striving at all costs to keep the Ukrainian nation as a part of the communist empire, bolshevist Moscow makes use of the Ukrainian language for the ruin of the nation, for a self-contradictory grafting on to it of a complex of unity centering on Moscow, rooting out the Ukrainian democratic traditions and in their place grafting on the cult of Peter the First and Ivan the Terrible, grafting on Russian culture and its Russian imperialist world outlook, etc.

And is not VA doing the same thing with the Ukrainian language? It is surprising, but it is true. The core of the "Ukrainian" broadcasts of VA is that same "general line" which is provided in the so-called Calendar of Historical Events (Kalendar' Istorichnykh podiy) for the Ukrainian people behind the iron curtain from their history and struggle. It carries out this line in the following ways:

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1. Regarding Peter the First -- supporting the cult of the despot of the Ukrainian people, which cult Stalin, too, is building up by all possible means. Who in America knows that Stalin conferred all kinds of favors on the writer, A. Tol'stoy, for his glorification of this Tsar, and gave him a Stalin prize because he drew an analogy between Stalin and Peter? The Ukrainian people recognized the true nature of that analogy, for Peter I was the first organizer of a mass annihilation of Ukrainians, for punishment after the defeat of Mazepa at Poltava because they wanted to separate the Ukraine from Russia. Obviously, VA may speak from the rostrum about Peter I, too, for the Ukrainian people, but from what standpoint? VA speaks from the standpoint of the interests of the Russian empire.

2. Regarding "Iskra" ["Spark"]-- from which was kindled the "flame" of Lenin, with which now the whole world cannot cope, and which has burned in a cruel fire of terror for millions of sons and daughters of the Ukrainian people. Of course, VA can speak about "Iskra," too, for the Ukrainian people, but how?

3. Regarding "the peoples of Russia" -- constantly dinning this Vlasov-Hitlerite idea into the heads of the nations under the Soviets, when there are not and never have been any "peoples of Russia", if one considers their own desires, as expressed in the great revolution which destroyed the Russian empire of the Romanov dynasty. Even Stalin, seeking to fool all these peoples with his so-called democratic constitution, understands this. We fear that if the "peoples of Russia" had to choose between the phrase of the Voice of America and the Stalin Constitution, it would not again be as difficult for them to choose the latter as when they chose [it] at the time of Hitler. Hitler made use of this

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same phrase which now the Voice of America utilizes - "the peoples of Russia" - which strengthens and perpetuates the Russian prison of peoples.

4. Regarding Russian great men and writers -- as if there never were any great men and writers in all Ukrainian history. If VA does sometimes mention Ukrainian great men and writers, it seeks to transform them into Russians. Thus it was with the greatest poet of the Ukraine - Shevchenko; VA made a Russian poet of him. And this when even the Bolsheviks did not dare to encroach upon this giant of Ukrainian history!

5. Regarding the Kronstadt uprising. Evidently the Voice of America has to talk about the Kronstadt uprising, too, for the Ukrainian people. But the Ukrainian people have in their history of anti-communist struggle plenty of impressive uprisings of their own. And, most important, it must not be forgotten that Kronstadt has gone into Ukrainian history with other uprisings, uprisings which have strengthened and consolidated Bolshevism; they know more about this in the Ukraine than in America. So the cult of Kronstadt is very dangerous. I could cite other examples.

Why is there this marked Russian slant to the "Ukrainian" broadcasts? Why not base the Ukrainian Voice of America on Ukrainian history, or Ukrainian culture, or actual Ukrainian struggles against Moscow bolshevism?

Involuntarily one wonders just who is directing the Voice of America behind the back of American officials; who is it that is responsible for the cult of Peter the First, for the nullifying of all Ukrainian history and Ukrainian culture, and the malicious use of the Ukrainian language to the injury of the Ukrainian people?

Now we think that it must be clearer to the directorate of the Voice of America whose is the guiding hand in these "Ukrainian" broadcasts and who is responsible for their political course. Everyone knows that the whole Eastern European Section of VA is under Russians.

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Of course, we have nothing against the Russians -- against the Russian people as such. And of course VA is an American institution, and it is free to entrust the direction of this or that section to any hands it see fit. But it also goes without saying that every Ukrainian here on this side of the iron curtain is absolutely opposed to such Russians, who direct the Ukrainian broadcasts in such a way -- is opposed to the fact that these Russians speak in the name of the Ukrainian people, and is still more opposed to the fact that they speak in the name of America to the Ukrainian people, while undermining the authority of America with their policies against that people.

Now, just what kind of policies and what kind of Russians are these? We know that they are of the progressive circles of the Russian emigration in America. So, to find an answer to the question concerning the political line of the Russian emigre circles in America, and to the question as to why the "Ukrainian" broadcasts of the Voice of America follow such a course, I recommend that the esteemed directorate of the Voice of America get the February, 1950 (No. 1-2) issue of "Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik" [Socialist Herald], the leading journal of the Russian emigration in America, and turn to pages 19-20. This journal is published in New York by the most progressive elements of those circles which are connected with the Voice of America and into whose hands have been given the Ukrainian broadcasts. In it is published an article by I. Abramovich entitled "Enumeration of Enemies! And in it you can read between the lines why the "Ukrainian" broadcasts, directed by Russians, should have quotation marks around the word "Ukrainian", and why they follow the line they do. I. Abramovich, attacking the attempts to name Stalin as enemy No. 1 (along with Hitler), makes a great number of concessions to the Bolsheviks, and ends with the following, quoted verbatim [in Russian] :

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"They are despots, tyrants, dictators; they are guilty of many crimes against the people, but/they are not guilty; they have not dismembered Russia." (Underlining mine. I.B.)

Is not the political line of the Russian emigration clear from this? These gentlemen know very well that the "non-dismemberment of Russia" by the Bolsheviks is connected with frightful terror, death, concentration camps and frightful genocide against all the peoples who would like to escape from the Russian "prison of peoples". However, Stalin is forgiven all these crimes, for Stalin is attaining his own special goal - "the non-dismemberment of Russia". After these statements by Abramovich (and Kerenskiy expressed the same idea earlier in the slogan: "Better an evil dictator than a carving up of the living body of Russia") -- is it not clear that all their qualified attacks on the Bolsheviks are just a smoke screen? These false democrats and false socialists become aroused over terror only when it is directed against them personally. But where it is directed by Stalin against the "dismemberment" of Russia, they praise it. They praise it in contradiction to all their democratic declarations.

Moreover, they would oppose anyone who would think of applying the slogans of western democracy (proclaimed by America in its Atlantic Charter) to the peoples subjugated by the Bolsheviks. It is clear that if America should undertake to extend the theme of democracy to the "peoples of Russia", these gentlemen to whom is entrusted the Voice of America would oppose America. In fact, they did take part in the war on the side of Stalin only because the war itself threatened to "dismember Russia", by unleashing a popular centrifugal anti-imperialist movement. Likewise the gentlemen of Russian democracy in whose hands is the Voice of America have been playing the role of a fifth column

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for Stalin. And in this role they will oppose anyone; how they will do this may be discerned from the same "Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik" and from the same article:

"Therefore, they (the Bolsheviks) from the Russian (emphasis Abramovich's) point of view can by no means be compared with the gauleiters of the Third Reich who will (emphasis mine. I.B.) have the task of dismembering Russia." Note that he has written "who will". This is no typographical error. This is a threat and a declaration in the style of the statements of the communist leaders, among whom is the American, Wallace, [of the intention] to oppose anyone who starts a war against Stalinist Russia, against the Bolshevik ~~non-dismemberers~~ <sup>"non-dismemberers"</sup> ~~of Russia~~ of Russia". That this is not a typographical error, but meant just as stated, is evidenced by the whole content of the article.

[Translator's note: The term "Gauleiters of the Third Reich" is applied opprobriously by Abramovich to such Ukrainian separatists as Bagryanyy, the author of this article.]

After all, then, is it not clear why the "Ukrainian" broadcasts of VA, directed by the ideological comrades in arms of the Stalinist "non-dismemberers", follow such a course, and why VA provokes among the forty millions of the Ukrainian people only derision (glum) for the Voice of America and for America in general? It is because the Voice of America for the Ukraine is not the speaking trumpet of America nor of western democracy. It is the speaking trumpet of Russian imperialism, of the Stalinist ideological comrades in arms.

What is to be done?

Unfortunately, that does not depend on us. However, if the declaration of the rights of man, made in authoritative documents, to the whole world not so long ago, are not just a bluff, then let me be permitted in closing to offer some simple advice.

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The easiest thing would be to end the Ukrainian broadcasts, which is what is sought by the leaders of Ukrainian circles who are protesting, with complete justification, against the use of the Ukrainian language to the injury of the Ukrainian people. However, practically, this is very difficult from the point of view of world politics, for to end the Ukrainian broadcasts means to strengthen Bolshevism and Mr. Abramovich. Best of all would be to set up Ukrainian broadcasts which were really Ukrainian, both in form and content, after taking them out from under the Russians and putting them under Ukrainians. Then the Voice of America - the voice of western democracy - would reach the very heart of the Ukrainian people, striking Moscow communism a heavy blow, and the name of America would become a symbol for those forty million people in the struggle against the Stalinist despots.

The Ukrainian nation is the second in size and the most advanced in the USSR; it has its history, its culture, and its calendar of historical events, abounding in famous dates of victories and defeats in the struggle against Stalinist communism for the freedom of the Ukraine and for the interests of all mankind. Is this not sufficient reason for setting up independent broadcasts for the Ukrainian people?

If this is not possible - if it is not possible either to open up the Voice of America or to close it down altogether - then we, the whole Ukrainian emigration, exercising our human rights, will protest before the whole world in the name of our people against the use of the Ukrainian language to the injury of our people, to their ruin, and to the strengthening of Russian imperialism.

Such a Voice of America for the Ukrainian people as there has been up to the present time is destroying the remaining faith of this people in their liberation.

Respectfully yours,

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Ivan Bagryanyy  
Ukrainian writer and many years a prisoner of Soviet prisons.

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