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RADIO FREE EUROPE

State Department Backs Limited Aid of Radio Free Europe

(This is the second of three articles on the controversy between radio commentator Fulton Lewis Jr. and the Crusade for Freedom, Inc. on the effectiveness of Radio Free Europe.)

By DONALD E. LARRABEE

Standard Times Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, April 10—Radio Free Europe was founded according to its sponsors, because a "hard-hitting instrument" was needed that would operate free of the restrictions placed on the official Voice of America in programs beamed behind the Iron

Curtain. The public fund-raiser for the shortwave stations is the Crusade for Freedom, a tax-free "charitable organization," whose board of directors reads like a Who's Who of American industry—names like Eugene Holman of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Harlow Curtice of General Motors, Benjamin Fairless of the American Iron and Steel Institute and Roy Larsen of Time, Inc.

The present board chairman is Gwylim Price, chairman of the board of Westinghouse Electric Corporation.

Appeals for Funds

Price sent a message to "the American business community" appealing for funds to help Radio Free Europe continue its work as "the messenger of truth and freedom."

Mr. Price said, "American business owes its success and its prosperity to the fundamental liberties granted under a free enterprise system. We are committed to furthering this system by every means at our command.

"One of the best ways is to publicize its strength to the peoples of the world, particularly to the captive peoples behind the Iron Curtain. In spreading truth, we proclaim democracy to be a practical, functional reality."

Radio commentator Fulton Lewis Jr. says such appeals and the "Truth Dollar" campaigns on a house-to-house basis throughout the country are pitched to one theme: That money will be used to spread the gospel of liberty and freedom to the people behind the Iron Curtain and keeping alive the torch of Democracy.

But, Lewis claims neither the thousands of small contributors nor the large corporate executives who sponsor RFE have any real knowledge of the philosophy and the content of the broadcasts. He says it is, in fact, a propaganda line to sell "Tito" Communism or national Communism to the people of the so-called nations south of the propaganda line of Western-style freedom.

Pitch Misrepresented

By telling the people to turn from Russian Communism to Tito Communism, RFE is misrepresenting its pitch to the American people that it broadcasts a message of "Freedom and liberty," Lewis charges.

RFE, in turn, asserts it does not and never has recommended the establishment of any form of gov-



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ernment in its broadcasts. RFE denies that it promotes Tito, Titoism, national Communism or Socialism. Finally, it states that RFE policies are "fully consistent with the U. S. policy objectives toward Eastern and Central Europe."

In view of this statement, the writer attempted to learn from the State Department whether, in fact, RFE was a mouthpiece for American foreign policy. A press spokesman said no one wanted to talk about it, either on or off the record. However, it turned out that the answer was a matter of public record already in a communication to Senator Ives (R-N. Y.) from Assistant Secretary of State William A. Macomber Jr. "The department," Macomber said, "believes that Radio Free Europe broadcasts are consistent with U. S. policy, which encourages peaceful evolutionary processes and trends in the countries of Eastern Europe looking toward freedom of action and independence in their internal and external affairs.

'Evolution' Fostered

"This evolutionary process," he continued, "is fostered by RFE, without recommendation as to the eventual form of government for the Eastern European countries to which RFE broadcasts, except that RFE insists that there be a representative Government freely chosen by the people."

Macomber prefaced his letter by saying the State Department

recognizes the right of American citizens to carry out private endeavors such as the mission of the Free Europe Committee and does not attempt to direct it or interfere with the management.

The State Department official did not comment on the charge that public funds actually are used to supplement the private contributions to the Crusade for Freedom and Radio Free Europe.

Fulton Lewis Jr. has said that RFE is supported in part by the Central Intelligence Agency. It is a charge that goes unanswered insofar as the Government is concerned. The CIA budget is not published and Congress gets no breakdown of its spending.

But, despite Macomber's suggestion that RFE is a remote private endeavor, RFE, itself, has stated that the board of the Free Europe Committee maintains liaison with the Department of State and the CIA to insure that "in all matters of broad policy, RFE is acting at all times in the best interests of the United States."

Dulles Quoted

Macomber's letter actually leaves no doubt on this point:

"The Department believes that the FEC and RFE have made important contributions to carrying out the message of freedom to the peoples of Eastern Europe and are decidedly significant Free World forces countering international Communism."

The State Department sent Senator Ives some excerpts from testimony and speeches by Secretary Dulles, which seem to state the same policies voiced by Radio Free Europe to which Lewis takes exception.

For instance, Dulles told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that while he would like to have things different in Yugoslavia and in many other nations that we assist, "nevertheless the target that we have, the thing that we keep our eye on all the time is—is this going to help the world wide defeat of international Communism?"

Last April, Dulles stated U. S. policy in this fashion: "We revere and honor those who as martyrs gave their blood for free civic violent revolt. Rather, we do not ourselves encourage an evolution to freedom."

While the United States would prefer it if the Yugoslav Government were capitalistic, Dulles told the House Committee, nevertheless, "it does exert an independence" from Moscow and an "independent influence which we think is beneficial."

According to Assistant Secretary Macomber, the principal em-

phasis of RFE broadcasts is on news and the advantages of democratic freedom over Communist imperialism. Factual reports and news commentaries recounting developments in the United States and the free world make up an important part of the broadcasts, he says.

In closing, Macomber told Senator Ives that the board of the Crusade for Freedom is composed of respected and distinguished figures in America—"men whose loyalty to the American way of life is beyond question." As late as last Nov. 29, 1957 he recalled President Eisenhower again personally expressed his wholehearted support of the crusade and the work of Radio Free Europe.

This White House support is no small factor in the tremendous backing given the crusade and Radio Free Europe by some of the nation's largest corporations, it seems. The present board chairman, Price, says he took that job "at the request of the President" and asserts that he has made a thorough investigation of its operations and objectives. His own firm has contributed \$50,000 to the endeavor this year.

But Price and his compatriots in the operation have been swarmed with letters by disturbed stockholders ever since Lewis began his critical analysis of Radio Free Europe. Many of the stockholders have sent Lewis copies of replies they have received from the American executives.

Replies Are Given

In many cases, these replies point out that the Crusade for Freedom has the full endorsement of the President and recall that Eisenhower and his advisers assured a meeting of corporation heads in Washington last Fall that Radio Free Europe plays a vital, necessary and effective part in the American policy in the struggle against Communism.

One irate stockholder was told by a well-known business leader: "As you know, the business world wide business community has had the highest opinion of people high in the government."

Another stockholder told the our representatives and other representatives of the American people.

vice is from Lucius D. Clay, close friend of the President, who is chairman of the Continental Can Company, Inc. Clay is a stockholder. "We know personally the high caliber of its crusade's board." At another point Clay said, "We believe Radio Free Europe, despite some mistakes, cannot be permitted to close shop in these troubled times."

Difficult to Refuse

An official of one of the nation's oldest and wealthiest corporations wrote, "What we shall do in 1958 has yet to be decided. However, should President Eisenhower ask this company to contribute, it would be very difficult for us to refuse, as I am sure you can understand."

An independent study of Radio Free Europe was made last year by a political science instructor at the University of Minnesota. Portions of this study by Robert T. Holt were inserted in the Congressional Record and they tend to confirm the philosophy that underlies RFE's political commentary.

Holt states, "RFE feels that for

a long time, 'liberation' can mean only a gradual evolution of these countries into independent but non-Western Governments."

Holt, incidentally, looked upon RFE as a definite "instrument of American foreign policy."

(Next: Radio Free Europe and the revolt in Hungary.)