

The Soviet Zone Listeners

(At the beginning of October, 1950, RIAS was receiving about 5,000 political letters a month from the Soviet Zone. This figure had decreased considerably by 1952 because of internal controls and pressures in the Soviet Zone. The following excerpts are chosen almost at random from the files of the station's Political Department.)

General:

Fraeulein W.K., Refugee Camp Hof-Maschendorf, Bavaria, October 15, 1949:

"RIAS is like a beloved son of America whom America has sent to Germany to pour consolation and hope into troubled, discouraged hearts."

Frau A.A., Eberswalde, December 12, 1949: "It is like being in church when we hear something from RIAS that consoles us."

Anonymous, Mecklenburg, May, 1950: "Listening to you, I feel less isolated and brought closer to all of you. It delights me to hear how well informed you are on conditions here."

R.F., no address given, May 21, 1950: " I can say without intending to flatter you that the entire Soviet Zone population listens to RIAS."

E.E., Anklam, July 8, 1950: "We listen to your broadcasts gladly because they keep us in touch with the spirit of the West."

Anonymous, Potsdam, August, 1950: "We regard RIAS as our station, though the Soviets may call it the station of monopoly capitalism and so forth."

A woman of 70 from the Sovzone, March 5, 1951: " We are so glad and thankful to you for the service you render us day by day. We only wish that you keep on with your work, remain superior to your enemies on the air and keep contact with us as the 'big friend', I mean the real one (not the one of 'Eastern' origin), for us who are barred from the West. You are the only one informing us of the truth and of world events!"

A businessman from Dresden, June 12, 1951: " Your broadcasts are a blessing for our tormented hearts. We are on your side and we are extremely thankful for your enlightenment, warnings and hints."

C.V.E. from Erfurt, August, 1952: "Your broadcasts fill the spiritual needs of Sovzone listeners and are listened to with eager and vivid interest."

Anonymous letter from Halle, November 1952: "May I thank you for many unable to do so, for the fact that your station continues to be the bridge connecting us with the free world. What would the Sovzone be today without RIAS? Only the future will show how RIAS has strengthened the resistance and the community spirit."

Anonymous, November 13, 1952: "What should we Soviet Zone residents be without RIAS? We are indebted to RIAS for learning the truth. We are longing for West Berlin and its place of culture." -

Soviet Zone resident, November 22, 1952: "As a Soviet Zone resident I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your daily broadcasts, which are on such a high level and have become really indispensable for us. Your broadcasts constitute the daily bread for all Soviet Zone residents, since they keep us informed on everything that is really happening in our Zone. If you did not inform us we should never find out what is going on and our resistance would soon crumble."

Comments from Occupation Groups:

Dr. Winand Lanzrath, senior government counsellor, Berlin, February 13, 1950: "I have been asked by many residents of Weida, Thuringia, to express to RIAS their deepest gratitude for the broadcasts that have given them the courage to hold out and continue the struggle."

Anonymous businessman: "Dear RIAS: Am in Berlin today from Thuringia and must take this opportunity to express my thanks for your wonderful news and commentaries.... I am a businessman and meet many people every day. All of them are fed up with SED economy. Tell this to the Americans."

W.Z., District director in Riesa: "This is a welcome opportunity to thank you most heartily for your political broadcasts. I do not exaggerate when stating that it is mainly for your broadcasts that life appears to me worth living."