

Is Listening to RIAS Forbidden?

"Church and Radio," West German, February 13, 1950: "Despite contrary reports recently circulated in the West German press, we learn from Soviet Zone church authorities that no prohibition on listening to Western stations exists...,but having listened to West German or West Berlin stations plays a role when there are other charges against a man."

"Der Tag," West Berlin, February 12, 1950: "Kurt Frank of Roehmild, Thuringia, was sentenced by the Meiningen Criminal Court to four months in prison and a fine of 300 East Marks for having listened to West German radio stations."

"Saechsische Zeitung," Dresden, September 13, 1950: The paper reported that Frau Christa Wagner of Dresden had been sentenced to 18 months penal servitude for writing to RIAS. Although the Soviet Zone constitution guarantees secrecy of the mails, her letter had not reached RIAS, but was opened by the People's Police. (The case was reported in detail in the New York "Herald Tribune" of October, 3, 1950.)

"Die Welt," Hamburg, January 9, 1953: "The district court of Schwerin sentenced a farmer to seven years of hard labor for having repeated news which he had heard over RIAS He had stated that a 'Hero of Work' had fled to the West The verdict read 'libel and agitation against democratic organizations.'"

Despite the Risks, People Listen

(The newspapers quoted are all Communist-controlled.)

"Altenburger Nachrichten," May 31, 1950: "A cafe not far from Lunzenau offers its guests RIAS's reports on the FDJ rally. This is really too much."

"Maerkische Volksstimme", April 7, 1950: "People put up with it when radio dealer Kupiak daily and publicly lets RIAS shrill out its provocations."

"Freiheit," Wittenberg, July 26, 1950: "The Leuenburg, Schroeder and Beyrow families, Falkstrasse 16, Wittenberg, apparently still do not understand what is at stake. If they did, they would not let RIAS blare its commentaries into their ears far into the night. Not only that, they force the other tenants to listen to RIAS news by turning up their set to Volume 12."

"Neues Deutschland," December 17, 1952: Reports indignantly that RIAS was given free publicity at a radio and television exhibit sponsored by state HO (commercial monopoly) in East Berlin: "When our reporter visited the exhibit, she really heard the warmongering RIAS news coming out of a radio set. A HO salesman, who was playing around another set less than two paces away, paid no attention. He even showed signs of annoyance when his attention was directed to this. The representative of the State Director for HO Industrial Goods, Mr. Stiller, assumed an almost unbelievable attitude when this was pointed out to him. He claimed that the clients on their own tuned in to RIAS: "In testing a set they always want to listen to music." Another salesman displaying tape recording machines even stated: "We cut the best tapes by tuning in to RIAS or NWDR!" The laboring population of Berlin expects to be informed immediately on what is being done to put an end to those practises, and also what is done to those who are personally responsible for spreading RIAS war mongering."

Although there is constant agitation in Soviet Zone universities and colleges against listening to RIAS broadcasts, students and teachers tune in RIAS. Even at the so-called "Worker and Peasant Faculties" (special colleges for children of the "proletarian class"), centers of Communist indoctrination, students listen to the "warmonger station." This was acknowledged by the Secretary General of the SED, Walter Ulbricht, who declared in his guidance speech at the Second Party Conference of the SED in the summer of 1952.

"Those students who, at the Worker and Peasant College in Rostock, organized collective listening to RIAS broadcasts, should have been enlightened by a delegation of workers of the Neptune Shipbuilding Plant; maybe they would then have recognized sooner what the tasks of the Worker and Peasant Colleges are!"