

Other Evidence of Effectiveness

The Police State (one example):

On June 29, 1950, RIAS warned Soviet Zone listeners that mills and grain storerooms would be subject to strict inspection the following morning. One listener wrote: "The announcement saved not only my father but a number of others in the same business from having their mills closed or perhaps expropriated. What RIAS means to us business people in the Soviet Zone is something only we can judge." Another listener sent the following report: "The message was a great success. Shortly after it was broadcast the mill owners of this county took the necessary measures."

"The Next Step to German Unity in Freedom:"

On July 16, 1950, RIAS announced a prize-letter contest on the theme "The Next Step to German Unity in Freedom." Prizes offered ranged from books to 1,000 DM. Soviet Zone participants were instructed to submit their letters under a code name and a five-digit number. Judges were Jakob Kaiser, Federal Minister for National Affairs (the Ministry offered a special prize of 1,000 DM); Ernst Reuter, Lord Mayor of Berlin; Herbert Wehner, Bundestag deputy and chairman of the Bundestag Committee for National Affairs; and Eugen Kogon, well-known Frankfurt publicist and author of "The SS State."

When the contest closed on September 18, the station had received 19,764 entries. Of these, 13,907 came from the Soviet Zone; 1,802 from the Soviet Sector of Berlin; 3,438 from West Berlin; and 617 from the Federal Republic. All but four of the 21 prize winners were residents of the Soviet Zone. One of the West Berlin winners was an unemployed worker, another a student and political refugee.

The Communist Collective Contracts

It is widely recognized in Germany that RIAS played the leading part in a major Communist setback in 1951. The Soviet Zone regime had planned to introduce factory collective contracts throughout the Zone with the apparent consent of the workers, although close examination of the contracts showed that they would mean a backward step for Soviet German labor. Largely because of RIAS's early and protracted intervention, the measure was delayed until almost the end of the

year and in the end had to be forced through against the open resistance of the workers.

The station began its campaign against the contracts early in March, 1951. The Communists expected to push through all contracts by June 30. When that date came, 25,000 contracts were still unsigned, and some of them were barely completed before Christmas. Meantime, the Soviet Zone regime was forced to change its tactics again and again, and to engage in open debate with the American radio station in Free Berlin.

RIAS first analyzed the contracts factually, in early morning broadcasts for workers and in evening broadcasts for the general population, pointing out all the specific disadvantages incorporated into them. Then it asked over and over who and what would benefit from the increased exploitation of the individual Soviet German worker. Then the answer was hammered home: ultimately and primarily, the Soviet Union and its armament effort. At this point the station was in close contact with Soviet Zone workers and could begin giving practical, detailed advice on ways to combat the contracts without serious danger.

As resistance appeared, RIAS publicized all examples of it heavily, to encourage factory staffs which had not yet been presented with contracts for their plants. The SED was forced to disown the methods of its own "trade union," the FDGB, and the terminal date for conclusion of the contracts was postponed from month to month.

A totalitarian regime is always able, in the end, to impose its will. The collective contracts were eventually imposed. But the important point is: they were imposed upon, not adopted by, the workers, as the Communists had hoped and planned. When the contracts for 1952 were drafted, the Communists issued a detailed guide to local functionaries charged with securing acceptance of the contracts. It offered specific instruction on how to prevent a second RIAS success in this field.

The World Youth Festival, 1951

During the month of August, 1951, the Communists staged the so-called World Youth Festival in East Berlin, with more than two million members of the Communist "Free German Youth" (FDJ) from all parts of the Soviet Zone