

## Radio Free Europe

Set up in 1949 by the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE) in an effort to provide new, information and analysis to countries in Eastern Europe “ where the free flow of information is either banned by government authorities or not fully developed.” NCFE consisted of a number of wealthy and influential American anti-communist individuals (including Alan Dulles, the head of the CIA – who provided much of the initial funding). The station was to be a flagship of their organisation.



Initially the station was based around exiles but very quickly grew into a fully developed radio station. Information was gathered from defectors and exiles with a well developed intelligence system. Added to this was an extensive listening network on Communist media. Much of this material was shared with the CIA and other US intelligence agencies. Accuracy was prized, stories would only be broadcast if there were two independent witnesses or sources.

Interestingly in the McCarthy witch-hunts it was often accused of not being critical enough of the Communists. This ended in the 1960s when it was exposed as being CIA funded.

Broadcasts into the Eastern Bloc were often heavily jammed and were universally banned. Attempts to infiltrate the station (based in Munich) were mainly unsuccessful but some succeeded. Allegations of a bizarre failed attempt to poison the salt cellars in the station’s cafeteria by the Czechoslovakian Intelligence Service (StB) were made.

*“We used to listen to RFE all the time in the 1980s. Us Solidarity members would meet in small groups and try and find the station through the jamming. It wasn't easy but it was amazing listening to stories we hoped were true (even if we did have doubts). Every so often the secret police would burst in and we would claim that we were listening to something else. They said we weren't and confiscated the set. It was like a play when that happened, everyone knew the lines in advance.”*

*Anonymous quote in “Radio Free Europe – A light in the darkness.” by Harold Titan, Washington Free Press, 2012*

In 1972 the CIA stopped funding RFE and it’s sister station Radio Liberty (aimed directly at the Soviet Union), funding switching to Congress and in 1976 they merged and added three extra services aimed at the Baltic States.

In 1981 the renowned Carlos the Jackal was paid by Nicolae Ceausescu to organise a bombing of the station. \$2 million of damage was caused by no fatalities (although a number of staff were injured by the enormous bomb).

The ascendancy of Ronald Reagan again caused criticism of the station not being anti-Communist enough. This challenge to their policy which had stood since the criticism that they had either inspired the Hungarian revolt or caused the Soviets to crack down on it was still being debated when relations with the Soviets eased in the wake of perestroika and glasnost. Jamming was abandoned and many listeners heard the station clearly for the first time.

Gorbachev's policies were praised by the station and interviews were even granted by high level Soviet politicians.

With the August Coup, RFE managed to pull off a major news coup by being present at the Soviet Parliament when the fighting occurred. They carried an exclusive interview with a very tired Boris Yeltsin just prior to the assault and their correspondent Yuri Bagration was among those killed as he reported the KGB Alpha Group's attack live. In the aftermath of this, the situation returned to that at the height of the Cold War, jamming was reintroduced almost immediately and penalties for listening were increased in the Soviet Union. Other Pact countries generally accepted the Soviet lead in jamming but tended to avoid harsher punishments. RFE. The CIA used a black programme to increase funding for RFE and placed the emphasis on sowing discord between the Soviets and their Eastern European allies. In particular it pushed the status of the Soviet republics as sovereign states.

1993 saw the death of one of RFE's main Bulgarian language broadcasters Aleksandar Dimov in a hit and run accident. In 2010 the American author Simon Hand published "Truthful Lives." This claimed that the death was no accident and had been arranged by the Bulgarian CSS (Committee for State Security) and placed the blame on Gintrev Penev a clerk at the Bulgarian Embassy. Penev was



Illustration 1: Aleksandar Dimov (1934-1993)

*"We put some of our people (CIA) into RFE. One bright lad was given the job of creating fake phrases to broadcast. He had to submit them to me for checking just in case he used a real phrase by accident (I just had the list but not the meanings). One day he sent one up that read "John has a red moustache. That rang a bell but I couldn't find it anywhere on the lists. I eventually gave him a ring and asked him where I knew it from. He started laughing and told me it was one the BBC had used to let the French Resistance know D-Day was imminent, he thought it might panic the Soviets! Months later I was telling an analyst the story over a beer and he burst into fits of laughter and told me that the day we broadcast that the KGB cancelled all leave and increased jamming dramatically."*

*"Mr Smith" quoted in Paul Denham's "The US Intelligence Divide" Talon Press 2011*

interred in 1996 and vanished from historical records in 1998 in the chaos of war. Researchers believe that he died of dysentery in January 1998 although Hand argues that this was actually a change of identity citing a possible sighting in March of that year by a BnD officer.

In 1995 the station was highly critical of the Soviet requests to their allies for troops for China whilst at the same time being careful to praise the achievements of Soviet junior soldiers at the front (although senior officers were regularly criticised for heavy loss rates). When the Seven resisted call up RFE broadcast in their support. Indeed they went as far as managing to obtain an interview with two of them in a safe house "somewhere in Poland." In the interview they gave a very intelligent, passionate speech giving their objections to serving. This was subsequently picked up by many other networks and resulted in an official Polish protest at the actions of RFE.

Once the fighting in Europe broke out RFE started broadcasting a range of messages that included code words for anti-Communist networks in Pact countries at the behest of the CIA. In a similar way to the way the BBC had done in the Second World War these were short messages that gave details to the groups. Each group had a large number

of these specific to them and a few that were universal (although often three or four codes would be used by different groups for the same thing). Many of the broadcast messages were in fact not used by any groups but there to confuse the Pact technicians listening in.

On 17<sup>th</sup> June 1997 a car bomb detonated outside the Munich headquarters. This time the station was not so lucky, ten people died in the blast and three times that were injured. Disruption was however minimal and the damage quickly put right by CIA funding. The headquarters was however devastated by the nuclear strikes in December 1997 which finally put the station off air.

In mid 2000 however a new station calling itself Radio Free Europe started broadcasting in the former Yugoslavia in Serbo-Croat. This was however far smaller in scale and of limited scope due to a shortage of radio transmission facilities. It did however provide one of the few news sources in the area. By using a mix of music, medical and agricultural advice and what little news could be gathered, it was widely listened to in villages, often with the whole village gathered around a single radio. Run by two CIA operatives, Trevor Gaunt and Ron Foster with half a dozen local staff, it was wound up when CIVGOV withdrew.

## **New Career:**

### **RFE Journalist**

**Entry:** Eastern European ethnic background living in the West or previous career as a journalist

#### **First term skills:**

- Interrogation: 1
- Persuasion: 1
- Computer: 1
- Any East European language or German: 1

#### **Subsequent term skills:**

A total of two levels from one or a combination of the following:

- Interrogation
- Persuasion
- Computer
- Any East European language or German

**Contacts:** 2 per term (chance of foreign in brackets), government (5+) or intelligence (8+)

## **Sample NPC**

Pytor Yuraovich (Ivan Koniev)

Novice NPC

Speaks Russian (10), German (4), English (2)

Born in 1965, Ivan had a fairly typical upbringing in Kiev where his father was a minor party official. He served his time in the Soviet Air Force as a clerk. He avoided Afghanistan seeing service in East Germany (probably due to his father's influence). His best friend however came back paralysed from the waist down after service there and only because of Ivan's father's intervention got the facilities he needed. This caused the first doubts over the Party's supremacy in his mind. Ivan became a fairly

junior clerk in an import export firm. With the coming of Glasnost and Perestroika (which he welcomed) he managed to get a job working in West Germany. Unhappy with the reunification, he was horrified by the August Coup. Wondering what to do he accidentally tuned in to RFE on his car radio and on a whim drove to their Munich offices to offer his services. His timing was perfect and he was offered a job as a junior researcher which he loved. He still feels loyal to Russia just not the Soviet system. He is now making his way home using the false identity Pytor Yuraovich as he fears the KGB as all knowing and will treat him as a traitor.

3 key roleplaying points:

- He is very homesick and will often pause wistfully in mid sentence if it has anything to do with home
- He is very hesitant and timid. He can easily be intimidated. When nervous he combs his hair with his hands.
- His speech is short and hesitant with many umms and errs. This is less so in Russian where he is more confident of his grasp of language

Appearance

- 5'7"
- Slightly overweight (this has reduced as the war has gone on)
- Medium length dark hair with about a week's beard
- Walking shoes, jeans, a grimy (once white shirt) and a tatty suit jacket. Tucked into the waistband is a Makarov PM with a single magazine
- Carrying a sports bag that has been repeatedly repaired

Options:

1. Everything is as above.
2. Ivan is actually a KGB agent who was inserted at low level. He is trying to return with film of a number of RFE files (none of which are of importance now).
3. Ivan is actually Sean King of the CIA who is using this as an opportunity to infiltrate the Soviet Union in the chaos. Increase his English to 10 (but he acts as if he is at the above level). Alternatively he could be from any Western Intelligence Agency.