

# *Radio in the*

# **RED**

*by*

**OLIVER CARLSON**



---

---

# Radio in the Red

by

OLIVER CARLSON

Born in 1899, Oliver Carlson was raised in Muskegon, Mich. Attended University of Michigan. Post Graduate work University of Berlin, London School of Economics, University of Chicago. Research Associate, University of Chicago 1930-32. Special Lecturer and Instructor University of California, Extension Division, since 1936. Public and Industrial Relations Counsellor for several years. Free lance writing in Europe 1921-1924. Contributor to many magazines and newspapers over a period of 25 years, including Harpers, American Mercury, Reader's Digest, Current History, New Leader, Nation, etc., etc. Published books include: "Brisbane; A Candid Biography"; "A Mirror for Californians"; "The Man Who Made News: James Gordon Bennett, Sr."; "Modern World Politics"; "How to Get Into Politics." Mr. Carlson is married, has two children, a boy and a girl, and recently became a grandfather. He is now completing a book for Duell, Sloan and Pearce, titled "Exploiters of Discontent."

This is No. 14  
in Pamphlet Series on Communism  
published by the  
CATHOLIC INFORMATION SOCIETY  
(Opposite Penn. Terminal)

---

---

See back cover for other titles  
in series by outstanding authors.

---

---

**JOHN P. CROWIN**  
**542 Broadway**  
**Fall River, Mass.**

**Copyright 1947**  
**Catholic Information Society, N. Y.**

**JAN 1 1949**

---

---

# RADIO IN THE RED

*by* OLIVER CARLSON

---

---

“The (Communist) Party has departed from depending upon the printed word as its medium of propaganda and has taken to the air. Its members and sympathizers have not only infiltrated the airways but they are now persistently seeking radio channels.”

This statement was made recently by J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI in testifying before a Congressional committee. It puts the case moderately.

Pro-Communist news analysts and commentators have been sounding off on scores of radio stations, and on the big networks for years. Some of them know precisely what they're doing — the rest follow master, taking their ideas uncritically from propaganda sources.

A number of the well known radio writers have been closely aligned with Communist-controlled “front” organizations. Several of the most popular

radio entertainers have endorsed Red enterprises. Others have given their time, talent and money to Muscovite causes.

Both in New York City and Los Angeles — the two centers of radio production — the Communists have gained a substantial hold within the Guilds and labor unions which supply writers, actors, directors, musicians, and technical help to the radio industry.

It is a revealing fact that special courses in radio writing, acting and directing have been and are being offered at Communist-operated schools in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. This keen interest in the field reflects the determination of the comrades to strengthen their influence on the air-waves.

Well-planned, well-financed attempts to obtain licenses for FM (Frequency Modulation) radio stations are being made by "front" groups set up for the purpose. The names on the list of organizers, as well as the fact that its efforts are being supported by the Communist *Daily Worker*, leave little doubt of the political coloration of The People's Radio Foundation, for instance.

The central body of CIO unions in

New York, which is notoriously under pro-Communist domination, is reported to be seeking an FM station. According to another report Earl Browder has put in his bid for one as well. Though technically Browder is no longer in the Communist Party of which he was until recently the head, he is still one of the most important Kremlin propagandists in America.

More dangerous than these known pro-Soviet applicants for radio channels to the American mind, however, are those which cannot so readily be identified. With the Communist genius for camouflage, it is certain that unless the Federal Communications Commission and the public are on the alert, FM broadcasting will become seriously infested by Stalinist propagandists.

In the crucial world-wide struggle between the ideologies of freedom and of dictatorship, radio is the most vital weapon. The Communists are using that weapon to capture men's minds and emotions. They are likely to win the struggle by default, in the global arena, because the other side is not fighting back, or doing so in a half-hearted fashion.

Organized pressure on radio stations and networks is a familiar Communist device to drive "undesirable" programs from the air.

Stations and program sponsors, as is generally known, are extremely sensitive to public reactions. Careful records are kept of phone calls, telegrams and letters evoked by every program. Those which seem to draw favorable attention are pushed; those which seem to arouse hostility are dropped.

A systematic drive for or against a given program by a small but active group can therefore achieve marvels. Commentators and programs which took a pro-Soviet position, which were persistently critical of the American and other democratic governments, have been given "audience" support by order of the Party leaders. Programs and persons defending the ideals of Western civilization have been systematically denounced.

This "audience reaction" is so synthetic that many station officials have begun to catch on. But in the long-run this Communist method is effective. Only when patriotic Americans form the habit of making their opinions of commentators known, through letters

and phone calls, will the Communist technique be cancelled out. To offset the artificial "public opinion," the emergence of a genuine public opinion is essential.

During the war years — and largely with government blessing — the Communists moved in *en masse* on the radio, as they did on the movies and the press, to help "sell" the American people on the virtues of our Soviet ally. The idea, officially projected through such organizations as the O.W.I., was to cure "misunderstanding" of Soviet Russia, which was suddenly discovered to be a "democracy" and a noble social experiment.

Tens of millions of radio listeners were deluged with streamlined and dramatic presentations to prove that any talk of Russia as a ruthless dictatorship was a "reactionary" plot. The Bolshevik regime, it turned out, was just a Russian version of our own War for Independence; Lenin a Russian replica of George Washington, Stalin a compendium of Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln.

Such crude propoganda, now that the war is over, has declined. The legend finds hard going against the day-to-day news of Soviet power politics and

terror; of Gromyko vetoes and Molotov diplomatic cocktails. But the "Party line" interpretation of the news, which gives the Kremlin every benefit of the doubt and impugns the motives of American foreign policy, is still familiar radio fare.

The pro-Soviet political orientation of commentators like Johannes Steel, Lisa Sergio, William Gailmor (who operate in the New York area) are so obvious that they tend to defeat themselves. At least the customers know what they are getting.

More nefarious, from the public standpoint, is the radio work of commentators who are not fellow-travelers yet tend to follow "the line." Knowingly or otherwise, men like William Shirer, Robert St. John, John Vandercook, Cecil Brown, Max Lerner, Frank Kingdon, J. Raymond Walsh, to mention a few, have given their listeners a generally pro-Soviet slant on events.

There is no implication that these men are anything but high-minded in their radio broadcasting. They have every right to express their pro-Soviet views. The fact that those views are in important respects an echo of those

voiced by the Communist press may be pure coincidence.

Yet there is no excuse for underestimating their aggregate effect on the public mind. The responsibility, in the final analysis, is with stations and program sponsors who provide the time and the facilities. The very least that the situation demands is a larger number of commentators without illusions about Soviet policies and Stalin's "democracy" to counterbalance the flood of Red-tinted opinion on the airwaves.

\* \* \*

Only the FBI has a complete record of the fifty or more pro-Soviet news analysts whose carefully slanted scripts were listened to by millions of Americans between 1941 and 1947. Many, perhaps most, of these have already been eliminated from the airways. The ruthless policies of the Soviet government since the end of the war have turned American sentiment against Communism to such a degree that the more flagrant Red propagandists find the going tougher.

But a few of them deserve mention.

Johannes Steel was on the air for ten years. At this writing he is off — a fact

that the Communist press bemoans as a blow to "liberalism." He is a reckless sensationalist whose pro-Communist ranting made him the darling of the comrades at home and abroad. Recently he was treated as an honored guest by the Soviet government, the Tito regime in Yugoslavia and elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain.

Steel is a familiar figure at Communist front mass meetings and his name has become almost standard on the sponsor lists of Communist-controlled enterprises. In 1946 he ran for Congress on the ticket of the Communist-dominated American Labor Party, with the vociferous backing of the *Daily Worker* and all other Stalinist mouthpieces. According to his autobiography, he once helped raise funds for the Hitler gang, but that does not diminish his standing with the comrades now that he is doing *their* chores.

The fact that a man of his calibre reached millions of listeners with the connivance of stations and sponsors is a pretty alarming measure of the problem. Thousands of his listeners accepted him as a "liberal" presenting unbiased views, when in fact his

“liberalism” is of the Moscow variety and his bias so thick you can cut it. His right to the airwaves on the grounds of freedom of the air would be defensible only if he, or his sponsors, frankly acknowledged the nature of his activities.

Another case in point is Lisa Sergio. Unlike Steel, whose English is crude and whose voice is unpleasantly strident, Miss Sergio talks a fine English in a mellifluous voice. For four years, 1933-37, she was called “The Golden Voice of Rome,” when she was broadcasting in that city with the blessings of Mussolini’s Ministry of Popular Culture. Her pro-Fascist sentiments are on record in a book she wrote, dedicated to “all the Black Shirts who, within Italy and abroad, have written in their blood the glorious dates of the Fascist Era.”

After coming to America in 1937, she began to broadcast for the NBC. Then she transferred to an influential local New York station, WQXR. Gradually pro-Fascism views turned into pro-Sovietism — the how and the why of this sea change are still a mystery. Listening to her, on WQXR, was like listening to excerpts from the Com-

munist press. In 1946 she lost out on WQXR and at this writing she has an outlet for her stuff on a smaller station.

\* \* \*

Men like Norman Corwin and Arch Obeler, top radio writers, are not Communists. Yet both have endorsed and been active in the Hollywood Independent Committee of Arts, Sciences and Professions, the Hollywood Writers Mobilization and the Progressive Citizens of America. The Communist control of these organizations is not exactly a secret. Corwin in particular is a favorite of the comrades; his name shows up repeatedly on the rosters of Communist-launched undertakings.

The president of Radio Writers' Guild, the dominant organization of radio writers in the country, is one Sam Wood, a script writer for the program "The Great Gildersleeve." He served as an officer of the Hollywood Independent Committee of Arts, etc.; is a member of the Hollywood Writers Mobilization; actively supported Herbert Sorrell and the strikes of the Conference of Studio Unions; served as a sponsor for affairs given by the American Youth for Democracy, the cover-up

successor to the Young Communist League.

The circumstance that a person with this background heads the radio writers is scarcely reassuring. It helps explain why so much of the "Party line" is reflected in programs of the most various kinds, even programs without any obvious political content.

The most serious danger of pro-Communist types of propaganda is to be found in a large number of so-called dramatic and educational programs. Presented as unbiased, those with a keen ear for the Red propaganda have no trouble detecting the "Party line."

In most instances the station officials are unaware of the subtle poison beamed at their listeners in the guise of "culture." Protests from competent authorities often suffice to put a stop to such infiltration. But in the meantime the damage has been done. It is to be hoped that intelligent network and station managers will develop techniques for discovering propaganda poison *before* it is disseminated.

An example of this type of program: During the winter and early spring of 1946-47, CBS presented from its Los

Angeles studios a series of Sunday programs designed to tell the whole truth of what went on "Behind the Iron Curtain." The script sounded so informal, so determined to present "both sides of the case," that untold thousands must have been fooled. In fact, by a careful selection of quotations from both pro- and anti-Soviet sources, the program conveyed the impression that:

1) Soviet Russia, thanks to the wisdom of Stalin, had abandoned the earlier idea of fomenting world revolution.

2) There was a great deal of democracy in Soviet Russia and more of it to come.

3) While the Soviet press is not free "in our sense," it did have a species of freedom of its own: just the kind the Russian people wanted.

4) The Iron Curtain idea, insofar as it affects the Soviet-dominated areas, was just a figment of the imagination, used by people who want to destroy the Soviet "experiment."

\* \* \*

The battle for the mind of America is under way. Unless the radio channels

can be kept clean of Soviet pollution, we shall lose that battle. A vigilant public must enforce vigilance upon those who control and operate those channels.

The Nazis and the Fascists knew the importance of radio. So do the Communists. The rest of us, who reject totalitarianism in any color, must also realize the significance of radio. We must use it to shape a strong, clear-headed nation, as the surest foundation for a peaceful world.



---

*For* **PLAIN TRUTH** *you need*

# **"PLAIN TALK"**

Make no mistake — America is in peril! The only tested way to fight Communism is with the weapon of balanced inside information. The magazine **PLAIN TALK** exposes the enemies of genuine liberalism and world peace. Read by people in-the-know — by opinion-makers and policy-makers — **PLAIN TALK** is A **MUST** for YOU.

*Only \$3.00 a year*

**PLAIN TALK, INC.**

240 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

---

---

# DON'T TURN THIS DOWN!

*The most fearless and factual exposé  
of Communism ever published.*

**A brief biographical sketch of author in each pamphlet. Face these facts, Mr. America, and act while you are still free.**

1. Everyday Life under the Soviet System. *By Eugene Lyons*
2. The Soviet Regime in Practice. *By Eugene Lyons*
3. Mind and Spirit in the Land of Soviets. *By Eugene Lyons*
4. The Communist Conspiracy Against the Negroes.  
*By George S. Schuyler*
5. Communism Means Slavery. *By William H. Chamberlin*
6. Stalin's World-Wide Fifth Column. *By Wm. H. Chamberlin*
7. Soviet Communism: The Record of Aggression.  
*By William H. Chamberlin*
8. Red Tyranny vs. Stepinac. *By Richard Ginder*
9. The Reds in Our Labor Unions. *By Richard Ginder*
10. The Red Terror and Religion. *By Richard Ginder*
11. The Soviet Caste System. *By Dr. Hermann Borchardt*
12. I Was a Teacher in Soviet Russia. *By Dr. Hermann Borchardt*
13. Communism and Fascism: Two of a Kind.  
*By Dr. Hermann Borchardt*
14. Radio in the Red. *By Oliver Carlson*
15. Red Star Over Hollywood. *By Oliver Carlson*
16. Spain and Wishful Thinking. *By Alice-Leone Moats*
17. The Enemy in Our Schools. *By Eugene Lyons*
18. Communist Strategy and Tactics. *By Liston M. Oak*
19. The Red Drive in the Colonies. *By George S. Schuyler*
20. "My Conscience is Clear." *By Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac*
21. How are Things in Tito-Slavia? *By Richard Ginder*
22. The Jewish Tragedy in Soviet Russia. *By Isaac Dan Levine*
23. Humanity Debased. *By Isaac Dan Levine*
24. How Communism Demoralizes Youth. *By Ralph de Toledano*
25. Why I Ceased to Be a Communist. *By Freda Utley*
26. Justice by Assassination. *By Suzanne La Follette*

Entire Series — \$1.00 postpaid

**CATHOLIC INFORMATION SOCIETY**

214 WEST 31st STREET

NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

---

Ex Libris

JOHN F. O'BRIEN



224