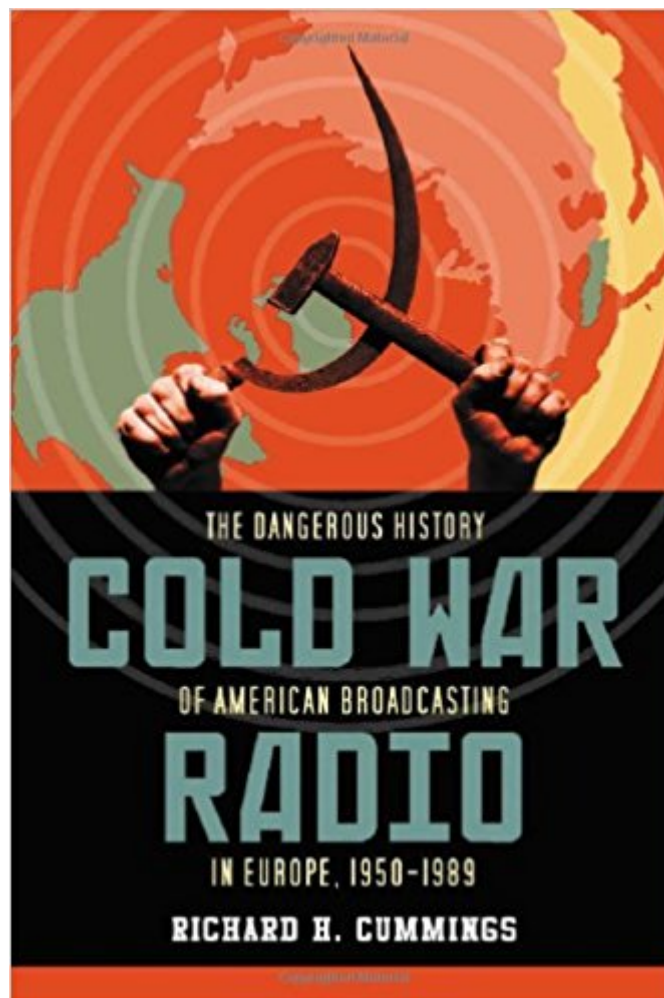




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Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History Of American Broadcasting In Europe, 1950-1989



Synopsis

During the Cold War, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty broadcast uncensored news and commentary to people living in communist nations. As critical elements of the CIA's early covert activities against communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Munich-based stations drew a large audience despite efforts to jam the broadcasts and ban citizens from listening to them. This history of the stations in the Cold War era reveals the perils their staff faced from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and other communist states. It recounts in detail the murder of writer Georgi Markov, the 1981 bombing of the stations by "Carlos the Jackal," infiltration by KGB agent Oleg Tumanov and other events. Appendices include security reports, letters between Carlos the Jackal and German terrorist Johannes Weinrich and other documents, many of which have never been published.

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Customer Reviews

An interesting Cold War account, but already the Product Description about Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty allegedly broadcasting "uncensored" news and commentary gives a false impression. Censorship has a number of definitions, depending on the viewpoint of its interpreter. First, it is certainly true that the US radio station during the Cold War broke through heavy-handed Communist media censorship and corrected gross distortions in the domestic media of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but censorship in its own ranks was not foreign to RFERL. It once had censors known euphemistically as "policy officers" whose legitimate efforts to stop violations of its own policy code

in programming also resulted many times in censorship, pure and simple. Egregious censorship in later years became rare, and the mechanisms of implementing it were subtler. Second, the backgrounds of employees from Communist countries without a strong history of a free press predestined them to accept censorship with ease if they believed it benefited the US Cold War cause, which they ardently supported. Many an international comment they felt put the US in a bad light was regularly watered down when they put it into their languages for broadcast. Their censorship worked overtime during the Vietnam War when leading democratically elected politicians in Europe and elsewhere blasted the US and American aggression in Southeast Asia. The book also too easily brushes aside Communist criticism of the fact that there were a number of World War Two war criminals working for RFE/RL. The culprits may have got hired undetected, but their slips of tongue over the years revealed their backgrounds to their coworkers and ultimately to their American employers. However, they kept their jobs.

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