

THE PEOPLE OF FINLAND AND ENEMY PROPAGANDA

Picture caption: We are free unhindered to turn the dial on our radio. Alien propaganda is unable to strike a cleft in our convictions because we are rock solid with the fairness of our cause.

Picture caption: The gentlemen in the West could give up wasting their time and money on fruitless speeches.

Picture caption: The Finnish man knows his duty and stands on a firm ground. - Army media unit -Viitasalo.



The undersigned was able in a certain 'capacity' to follow the routines of a Finnish military hospital during the last days of the summer, day by day. Here we concentrate only on the patients' leisure time at the hospital. One of their top priorities to be mentioned is listening to the news broadcasts. The radio as a media enjoys large popularity. At the time of local Finnish newscasts one simply could not avoid hearing the announcer's loud voice echoing from the receivers. But equally eagerly were also the news and propaganda broadcasts of the Russkies, spoken in Finnish, listened to. Especially the young scoundrel speaking in Finnish on the Tallinn wavelength enjoyed a sort of favor: hardly his message went without anyone listening. Some fellow this traitor in Tallinn! He kept on chewing the messages using the same guaranteed jargon that Tiltu* cultivated but without even the slightest restraints. The repeated babble on the 'Tanner-Mannerheim dictatorship' was nothing new to anybody but what was felt most annoying was the tone and presentation of the announcer. The boy's mere voice was so brutal and irritating and his presentation so infuriatingly rude that even soldiers, who had lost their arm, told that they were clenching the fists with their safe hand and punched swings in their minds on the canine mug of the announcer.

But the boy was listened to despite everything. His irritating tone and bragging manner were met gnashing one's teeth but on the other hand, his lies brought out head off laughter. These lies stirred hot debates for later long evenings in the wards.

I was thinking, when watching how this all was met there, that everything this reflects the inborn power of the people of Finland. I was wondering, if in any other country, this enemy armory, generally known as propaganda, is given less value than we do. Probably, in no other warring country it is OK to listen to enemy broadcasts, openly, in military hospitals, with a full knowledge and the approval of those in command. We did that last summer, and it would have probably been still practised, if only the Russkies had not lost their the transmission stations.

I wouldn't be surprised if radio broadcasts from England, which now has declared for being an enemy country to us, would also be listened to in hospitals, the way it is now quite commonly practised in private homes across the country.

One asks openly: what made us to listen to those hostile broadcasts and why are we listening to them still now?

The answer is: we fully understand that it cannot do any harm to us. Our cause is so righteous, we are rock solid with the fairness of our cause so that no enemy propaganda can strike a cleft in our convictions. As free women and men we are used ourselves to make choices, what we read, watch or listen, and for that matter, we sometimes want to hear what our adversary says about us. Maybe it is mental curiosity, maybe it is a desire for information. We do sometimes want to have a glance at the world, how it is seen from the viewpoints of others.

We see in the very fact that we are not banned from listening foreign radio broadcasts an indication of political ingenuity based on a thorough knowledge of the Finnish mentality. But simultaneously, it is a confidence statement for the Finns. The state is convinced that we can interpret foreign radio transmissions correctly. We can recognize the enemy's deliberate distortions and lies and assign them their true value, and we don't let the enemy propaganda affect our own views, but instead of this we pursue without hesitation the national policy adopted by our state. This is a great confidence statement, and we have shown to be worth it. So we will do again.

One might ask, if we see it as we did during the winter war and the last summer's Russkie propaganda, when the enemy propaganda reaches again the Finnish listener via ether like it did earlier.

Let us talk openly about this matter, as the number of listeners to those broadcasts do not restrict to few odd ones but are many.

The Russkie propaganda was met calmly: its contents and tone was such that it had no opportunity to attain its goal, it was so senseless and vulgar that hearing it just increased hostility towards the Russkies. Its purpose - which everybody knew - was to undermine our will to defence but it worked the other way by strengthening our determination on defence.

The propaganda they now are sending, is not psychologically as goofy as Tiltu's speeches were but neither it will fall on a fertile soil here. The reason for this is that this propaganda tries to persuade us of something that has completely lost its credibility long ago, arguments that the Bolsheviks are those, who guarantee freedom, independence and self-determination here. Over the years and especially since November 30, 1939, we have learned to know the Russkies so well and the hard way so that even if laudatory words were spoken by angels and by the archbishop of Canterbury and then echoed here, our firm belief could not be altered. Tens of thousands Finnish homes bear testimony of Russia's deception and annihilation planned for the people of Finland when spouses, fathers, brothers and sons were forced to sacrifice their lives in defense of the independence of Finland. No evil propaganda can gain a foothold in a people of realities like the Finnish people, who during the winter war earned the admiration of the whole world, because we knew what kind of lot will be waiting for us if we abandon our national line and would give away our destiny either into hands of those, who want to destroy it, or to those, who cannot protect it from the previous, even though they might wish to do so.

Of course, a civilized propaganda is always more dangerous than a clumsy or loutish one, namely more dangerous for the educated people. They wouldn't buy an openly senseless lie. Therefore, for example, the propaganda directed to us is almost regularly, well, but sparingly, dealing with truth. It patters along the borderline of truth pretty decently, but touches on the truth in a so well-planned way and skilfully that even those, who are well aware about the facts, cannot immediately see, whereto the actual truth reaches and from where the deliberate propaganda begins. But despite propaganda is considered an impressive weapon and in regard to its significance by sacrificed money and work, it still fails to achieve its goal, if its objectives are completely unjustified. Therefore, the propaganda to make the people of Finland to abandon the safeguarding of their independence and freedom against the Soviet Russia and Bolshevism, is surely doomed to fail, how ever cleverly this might be presented and how many old past sympathizers they might ever find in this country.

But what is the point of listening to this sort of propaganda at all, at least there is nothing useful in doing so. Of course, this is right, there is no need to listen to it, and there are good reasons to drop it off. Yes, nobody will find anything useful in it. But it is not reasonable for the state to punish for it, or try to say 'no' to it here, as we well know that the forbidden fruit tastes sweet. If

turning the dial on radio would become forbidden by the law, the less-clever among us might believe that the state wants to forbear the citizens from hearing the truth, and the result might be that those useless broadcasts just will win even more listeners - and what is worst - just because of this someone might begin to believe them. Man is simply such a thing, and a Finn especially is an even more puzzlingly assembled creation. You have to know him down to his inner core, if you might try to put his do's and do not's under control using legal decrees and punishments.

The unmistakable advantage, difficult for others to understand, emerging from this our unique nature, is that external measures, intended to destroy us, are not capable to harm us. A stranger can never, even if he has some former Finn as his help, approach us or treat us the way our nature requires, and therefore he resorts to believe that the way that is fine for the stranger himself, must work as well with us, the Finns, too. But that is not the case, and therefore we stand firmly also against an alien radio propaganda, so strongly that we could say to its practitioners: do give up wasting your money. Put them rather for the reconstruction of your decimated navy. It is up to you to judge, what sort of benefit it is for you, but what is certainly true is that radio propaganda for the advancement of Soviet Russia against Finland will be useless for you and everyone else.

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* translator's explanation: the well-known Finnish speaking propagandist of the Soviet radio