



E-ASIA

university of oregon libraries

<http://e-asia.uoregon.edu>

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE STUDY NUMBER 37

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS BRANCH

R & A 3355S
31 AUGUST 1945

RADIO BROADCASTING IN JAPAN

The Japanese radio broadcasting system is a powerful instrument for influencing the political and cultural outlook of the Japanese people. The privately-owned but state-controlled Japan Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) holds a monopoly of radio transmission. A single network with regional branches serves all of Japan. Programs not only are planned with Government supervision but are Government-censored previous to the broadcast and monitored by Government censors during their transmission. Moreover, radio audiences in Japan are large and faithful. Conservative estimates suggest that over 24 million Japanese listen regularly to radio sets in homes. Many others hear broadcasts through the numerous public address systems located in small villages, parks, and department stores. Furthermore, Japanese listeners have been conditioned to expect more information than entertainment from their radios. Control of the JBC will give the Allied Military Government an extremely efficient medium for both the issuance of current instructions to the Japanese people and the implementation of long-range educational and cultural goals in Japan.

Although the JBC is nominally a private corporation, in actual practice it is a direct agent of the Government. Stock in the corporation is owned largely by leading businessmen; the Japanese Government owns only 11 percent. Stockholders elect a Board of Directors who in turn elect from their number a President, an Executive Director, and two Managing Directors. These officials theoretically hold broad administrative powers, but in practice each decision concerning the appointment and dismissal of officers, the planning of programs, financial affairs, and amendments to the rules of the organization must have the approval of the Communications Board of the Japanese Government.

All of the 43 radio stations in the Japanese domestic broadcasting system are owned and operated by the JBC. Broadcasting operations are managed through seven regional central stations located in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Sendai, and Sapporo. Each of these "centrals" has approximately six local stations connected to it. Through this system, programs for national consumption may originate in any one of the centrals and be relayed to the other 42 stations. Programs of only regional interest can be sent out by the central to the half dozen stations serving that region. The administration of the JBC is also conducted through this system of centrals. The main office of the organization, located in Tokyo, sends out all policy directives. The centrals are charged with the implementation of these directives for the local stations in their area and with minor policy matters pertaining

Copy No. 30

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JAN 2002

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

to these stations. Both operationally and administratively the JBC combines efficient centralization with flexible regionalism.

Government supervision of program planning for the JBC is accomplished through the presence of Government officials on the two main committees charged with the formulation of program policy. On the Broadcast Investigation Committee in 1940 there were six Vice Ministers of the Government. The other seven members of the Committee were men prominent in education and public relations. The Committee on Program Composition, which directly supervises program policy, usually includes representatives of the Communications Board, the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, and the Education Ministry. Government representatives are also included on a host of lesser committees such as the Youth Broadcasting Committee and the Family Broadcasting Committee.

In addition to its participation in program planning, the Japanese Government maintains a rigid system of program censorship. All radio scripts and music selections must be passed by the censors before they are broadcast. Furthermore, this material must be reviewed if for any reason it is not used within the 24-hour period for which it was approved. JBC program directors are not even allowed to fill in short periods of time with Japanese patriotic music unless previous approval of the censors has been obtained. Consequently, there are numerous three and four minute gaps in the daily output of the JBC. All programs on the air are monitored by Communications Board censors. If the broadcast deviates from the pre-censored script the monitors can cut it off the air immediately.

Not only the programs but the mechanics of audience reception are carefully supervised. Each owner of a radio set in Japan is required to pay an annual licensing fee ~~to the JBC~~ to the JBC. ~~Since~~ It is estimated that there are currently between six and seven million radios in Japan, ~~the JBC receives an estimated \$100 million annually from these fees.~~ Besides providing revenue, the system of licensing also provides a method for checking on the number and kind of sets in operation. Except for a small number of shortwave sets owned by foreign diplomatic personnel and government officials, all radio sets in Japan are required to be longwave receivers. Operators of illegal or unlicensed sets are subject to severe penalties. Close supervision is maintained through radio repair shops and through JBC repairmen and "consultants" who travel throughout the country checking sets.

The estimated number of radio sets in Japan—between six and seven million—does not accurately indicate the size of the listening audience. Communal listening is widely practiced, and it has been estimated that on the average four persons listen regularly to each radio set. In addition, public systems in small villages, urban parks, schools, and other public places bring radio reception to thousands of Japanese who do not listen to home receivers. Probably well over a third of the population hears radio broadcasts regularly. Furthermore,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the distribution of radio sets is such that a very high percentage of the population is able to obtain reception at any given time and could manage to do so during an emergency.

When the average Japanese turns on his radio, he expects to hear accounts of the news, lectures on a broad range of serious subjects, and a sprinkling of music and entertainment. The JBC is primarily a purveyor of information. In prewar Japan less than 18 percent of the broadcast time was given to music and entertainment. More than half the time was devoted to informational programs such as news broadcasts, stockmarket reports, Government announcements, and lectures on current affairs, politics, industry, and various cultural subjects. The remaining program time was taken up by broadcasts for school audiences and accounts of sporting events and scientific developments. Dramatic serials and quiz shows were nonexistent. Since the war an even greater amount of time has been allotted to news bulletins and lectures. In addition, disrupted communications within Japan frequently have forced the Government to take over the JBC network to broadcast instructions to people and officials in regions outside Tokyo. Finally, the radio has been regularly used as part of the air raid warning system. In the mind of the average Japanese, the concept that the Government stands solidly behind any broadcast information has been thoroughly established.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~