

# Radio Liberty

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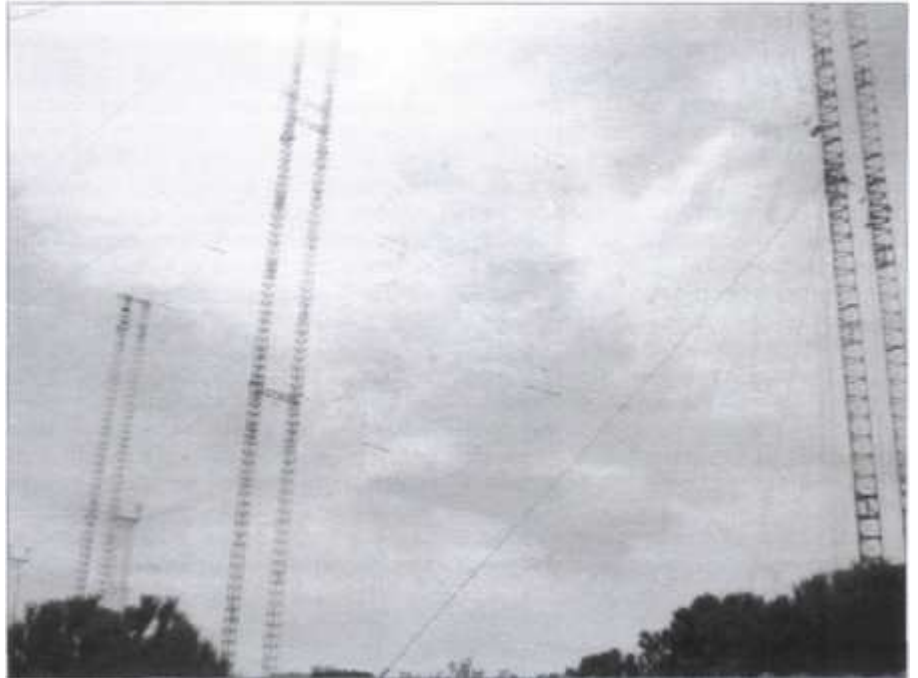
-translated using google translator-

*Radio Liberty was not just a great technical accomplishment at the service of a political project. Those who were professionally involved in it established relationships of affection with their teams and their environment that the author reveals in his writing.*

On Wednesday, May 22, in a spectacular way, in just fifteen seconds the penultimate symbols of the famous Radio Liberty on Pals beach disappeared: its imposing antennas. Gone are many years of that North American idea derived from the Cold War that spread what freedom is and especially freedom of the press and expression to an entire country, where its citizens lacked true information, since the media hid it or misrepresented what was happening. Not only in the world, but also and above all, in his own country, counteracting as much as possible the silences and lies that Soviet broadcasting spread in its official broadcasts. In the same way as in all of Spain -some of us included- we had to listen to the BBC broadcasts from London to find out the true Spanish news that the Franco regime hid or falsified.

Those of us who worked there practically did not know what Radio Liberty was broadcasting because of the general ignorance we had of the USSR languages in which they were broadcast, except for the few translators who informed us of what was interesting.

As a company. Radio Liberty in working conditions was exemplary. All requirements, regulations and labor laws were strictly adhered to. They were more a product of free America than of the Vertical Union, with which we had few relations. Together with the other radio stations in the province, we celebrated the patron saint's day. Saint Gabriel.



From the first day in 1958 (1959), in RL they already worked 40 hours a week, with two days off a week, a schedule that in the rest of Spain would not be reached until many years later. The salaries were also exemplary, although the difference was decreasing over time until in recent years it was comparable with foreign companies, especially with Radio Nacional de España, which caught up with us and in the 1990s surpassed us. In this sense, a certain rivalry between the American heads of RL and the Voice of America (VOA) was key to the detriment of RL, until the VOA completely absorbed the role of RL.

The iron curtain fell. The USSR fell apart and the free press gushed into their countries. From that moment RL finished fulfilling its mission. Circumstances emptied the content of the task for which RL was created.

Their agony heroically dragged on for a while, out of inertia, to protect jobs (particularly top jobs in Washington), and meanwhile the US Congress budgeted less and less, until the merger of the two companies. Its cost was lowered, leaving only the essential technical personnel. The Munich headquarters were moved to Prague, cheaper, and a lot of staff

dismissed for not accepting the transfer. Basically and as a main reason the original and genuine function for which it was created has ended. And since it had no reason to be, on May 25, 2001, its broadcasts ceased forever. Everything that existed: installations, antennas, workshops, machinery, generator sets, spare parts warehouses, laboratories, offices were the property of the Spanish State. What could Radio Nacional do with all this valuable and useless material? A broadcasting center for Radio Exterior de España? Impossible! the antennas are very specific, exclusive for the function for which they were designed: either it radiates towards the former USSR or it does not radiate. The transmitters? From the old Continental to the most modern General Electric or Marconi, they are not suitable for being disassembled and reassembled in

another broadcasting center, it is much cheaper to buy new and modern equipment and mount it where it is needed. Then only the junk dealer remained: and one fine day he came and destroyed what we technicians had been taking care of and repairing for so many years. It is reasonable, yes, but also cause for melancholy. That -no matter how much he was appreciated- was ineffective and useless.

The buildings and the land remained. The politicians came with their projects, some unfeasible, others hypothetical, all debatable and above all those suspected of speculation. But the big brake for any plan, be it urban construction, park

national reserve, museum or school of telecommunications, they were the antennas, their grandeur and magnificence stood in the way of any project. keep them? Impossible, its conservation is excessively expensive. Essentially, its design resulted in a complex architectural work based on exceptional scientific calculations, the most arduous and complex that the science of telecommunications and the laws of mechanics contain. The theoretical study of this commission cost 2.5 million dollars in 1948, apart from its mechanical realization, which was carried out by the best assembly companies, one from



*The author next to the remains of one of the towers. In the background, beach apartment buildings on the beach: the dream of urban speculators.*



*The delicate engineering work finished chopped up and sold for scrap.*



*On the ground you can appreciate the fineness and transparency of the structure of the towers.*

Germany and the other from Barcelona. Between the complicated theoretical calculation and the practical construction, the result was a model work, admired both by the public in general as even more by the connoisseurs. To dismantle them, it has taken five years to verify the true cost of knocking them down while respecting the natural environment as much as possible.

The fabulous speculative development price collides with the great virginal ecological value of some land where the original flora has remained intact for 49 years, now disappeared in the rest of Pals beach. Here is the true nostalgic feeling of those of us who were RL employees. Cradle of a large number of radio amateurs who gave rise to the province of Girona, the Radio Club del Baix Empordà and the Local Delegations of Palafrugell and Palamós. We still have time to carry out the project of setting up a School of Telecommunications with its Museum and natural park of botanical studies. Will it get rid of urban speculation or will it be defended for a National Park?