

Granny Goose & Hanoi

Patriotism or Treason?

Art Kunkin

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Somewhere in Los Angeles this week, a small group of men and women are preparing the tenth in a series of weekly radio programs of news and critical commentary on America's foreign policy which they tape and send to Hanoi for broadcast to American troops.

Since it is very possible that the activities of Radio Stateside, as the group calls itself, are illegal (they are urging American soldiers to oppose America's role in Vietnam), everything is done in clandestine fashion.

The actual taping is done each week in a different location, sometimes in the bedroom (or even bathroom) of a private home and sometimes in a secret office in Watts where a poster portrait of John Brown is hanging on the wall.

Adhering to strict security procedures, the tape recorders and scripts are brought to the location and whisked away in less than two hours. The tapes themselves are wrapped in plain brown paper and air-mailed to Quebec with no return address on the package. From Quebec they are mailed to London, then to Prague and finally to Radio Hanoi in North Vietnam.

Most of the group is said to have had previous and extensive underground experience in revolutionary movements in Africa and Latin America. Over one-half are not American citizens. Drawing on this experience, the group has developed a code system in which, until last week, all communications of an internal nature were keyed to the pages and paragraphs in the 7th Dell edition of James Baldwin's novel, *Another Country*. Now, since revealing this information earlier this week to the Free Press and to *Newsweek's* local representative, they have, of course, changed their code to another book.

In the broadcasts and in their internal life members of the group use pseudonyms. The one who inspired the activity is called "Granny Goose" and sometimes "Joe Epstein." But if Granny Goose ever gets arrested, Bat Boy, Old Goldsmith, Long John, Popeye or Rubberman are prepared to continue the broadcasts.

The activities of the group first became known to the public several months ago when Bob Adler, station manager of Los Angeles KPFK-fm, revealed that Radio Stateside had been sending him their tapes for broadcast and were using the station as a place where American troops abroad could send letters for Radio Stateside. Adler said at the time that he had never told the group that he would re-broadcast the tapes and that the station never gave Stateside permission to use KPFK as a mail point.

In order to underscore his point that KPFK was not at all involved with, or sympathetic to, Radio Stateside, Adler further told the press that he had sent the first four tapes received directly to the FBI.

On January 22, Granny Goose mailed the *Free Press* a statement which was obviously a response to Adler's remarks. In a format similar to but not actually a broadcast, the statement said, "This is Radio Liberation, better known as Radio Stateside, coming to you from Watts, Los Angeles, California. It is an effort of a group of students and young working people to...periodically produce a radio program for broadcast to our soldiers in Vietnam via Radio Hanoi. We gather facts, news clippings and music... We attempt to editorially motivate our soldiers to peace,

to lay down their arms and to write the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam (in Madison, Wisconsin), for advice and assistance as to how they can individually disassociate themselves from Washington's psychotic war in Vietnam. (NCC or any other group or station does not have any association with Radio Liberation)...”

The *Free Press* did not publish this statement (to whomever it may concern: the statement is no longer in our possession) because we wanted more information and had no way to contact Granny Goose or no knowledge of who GG really was. It was only last weekend that he contacted us again and revealed that he had decided to make his identity known because he was leaving the area. And that is how I found myself last Sunday interviewing 27 year old Ronald Ramsey, alias Granny Goose. By that time he was no longer planning to leave the area but had already given a story to Newsweek and had come to some kind of realization that his group would be better off with a public spokesman. (Evidently his group—which still remains secret—thought so also because an internal division was thereby averted.)

I was very glad to get this opportunity to interview the leader of this clandestine group because I was very much concerned that they had done KPFK a considerable disservice by identifying the station with an attempt to get American troops to oppose the war. On this point Ramsey said that he had initially sent the tapes to KPFK only because he wanted someone responsible to have a library of the tapes. and that there were no conditions attached for broadcast, although Adler seemed interested in that, too. Ramsey further said that Bob Adler knew but did not originally object to KPFK's name being used in the Hanoi broadcasts “because we made very clear in the broadcasts that we had no connection with the station and, further, we were only asking GIs to write letters of protest which they could write as well to the Los Angeles Times or to any other public media.” (I have not been able to check with KPFK before publication time and get a statement from them on this.)

I asked Ramsey whether he considers his activities treasonous. He replied by saying that he is a super-patriot very much upset by America's foreign policy. He said that he is only asking American soldiers in Vietnam to examine their own consciences in the light of the facts presented by Radio Stateside.

Ramsey said that since there has been no formal declaration of war, he does not feel that his actions can legally be called treason. “In 10 years we will be considered the true patriots.” He said that there might be some unknown (to him) rules of the Federal Communications Commission on broadcasting which his group may be inadvertently violating.

Ramsey was born in Los Angeles and educated at Compton High School. He says that from the age of 15 he spent 8 years in Asia with frequent visits to the U.S. or Hawaii and has a degree from a Thailand university in psychology. He said that he received his first impulse to radicalism from the writings of Ghandi and Bertrand Russell. (As we go to press, the *L.A. Times* carries a story about a press conference Ramsey held today in which he is cited as having said that as late as 1960 he worked in Hawaii for the election of Richard Nixon).

More recently Ramsey has taught seminars in behaviorist psychology at the University of California in Berkeley. He then applied for a teaching position in Johannesburg, South Africa and was accepted after convincing the South African consulate here that he was pro-apartheid.

When Ramsey was in Nairobi, en route to South Africa, the South African government realized that he was actually going to work with the Pan African Congress and his entry visa was withdrawn.

Remaining in Nairobi, Ramsey was called to a conference with American Ambassador Bill Atwood after several months. Ramsey was told that he was a free American citizen but that he was interfering with the course of American foreign policy. Ramsey refused to break his association with his anti-government Nairobi organizing the International Congress of Social Psychiatry. Then he spent six months in Algiers doing radio broadcasts for Ben Bella.

Ramsey spent a total of a year and a half in Africa and claims to have had extensive contact with revolutionary elements in Egypt, Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika.

Upon returning to Los Angeles Ramsey organized a group known as Freedom Fighters, which attempted to pursue militant civil rights activities along the lines laid down by Malcolm X. At present he is listed on the faculty of the New Left School in Los Angeles as an instructor in “Practical Revolution.”

I asked Ramsey what effect his broadcasts were having. He said that he has heard from an American soldier recently returned from Vietnam that they are a constant subject of discussion in Saigon.

I then asked Ramsey if he has ever included any discussion in his tapes of errors in the foreign Policy of Hanoi, Peking, or Moscow. He said that was not the purpose of the broadcasts but that he was sure that somewhere along the way he has made statements in disagreement with Hanoi. However, when I asked him for an example of this, he was unable to be specific.

I then raised the possibility that Hanoi might tamper with the tapes. Ramsey felt they would not conceivably do that "because there is a broad political spectrum in Hanoi." However, I pointed out to Ramsey that he was not even sure what tapes had been used by Hanoi so how could he possibly detect tampering? Ramsey agreed that Hanoi was not under any obligation to use the tapes and firmly stated at this point that he was receiving no money from Hanoi and there were no obligations on either side. I felt, and told Ramsey directly, that he was being quite naive about this question of tampering and that he had involved himself in a situation beyond his present understanding. I pointed out that Hanoi was not only capable of deleting material but even of adding what they wanted. Ramsey disagreed. He insisted that he was dealing with fundamentally honorable people while I insisted that, regardless of the political merits of the North Vietnamese cause, the old-time communist Vietcong leaders were quite capable of treachery.

Politically, Ramsey probably stands closest to the Pro-Peking policy of the Progressive Labor Party but he says, and probably quite accurately, that his own personality would make it impossible for him ever to be Affiliated with a political party that had a firm dogma.

Since Ramsey had originally Identified himself to me as a behaviorist psychologist I asked whether he was carrying the principles of that mechanistic psychology into a political theory where a vanguard party would bu-reaucratically force a reluctant population, if necessary, into. doing the will of the party. I was not satisfied with his answer which consisted partially of a retreat from his statement that he was a behaviorist ("I really am not a follower of any school in psychology") and a long dialogue between he and I in which I finally [gap in print text—web archivist] friends and next day Ramsey's passport was stolen (he says by the CIA). After Ambassador Atwood refused to issue him a passport until Ramsey returned to New York, Ramsey hid out for three weeks but was finally put on a plane to the United States.

However, Ramsey jumped ship in Rome and made his way to London, where he spent four months with Bertrand Russell.

I left Ramsey with the sense that here is a young man whose sharp intelligence, organizational ability and ad-venturistic qualities will force the public spotlight upon him as an individual whether or not he ever finds a political home. But, then again, Granny Goose is a person who obviously assimilates experiences quickly, and if he could make the transition from a Nixon supporter in 1960 to Radio Stateside in 1966, who really can predict where he will be after the next six years?

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