

The decision is now taken. My suspension is to last four weeks. Supposedly to hold an inquiry. Another one? Some questions are to be asked quite legitimately:

- 1) Is something being planned by the News Department (like the implementation of the "Memorial" whose copy we have in our hands)?
- 2) Is the SBS planning to replace Coordinators and Broadcasters (as had been tried two years before) and a diversion could be useful?
- 3) If an inquiry is desirable, how about the Committee of Review which should have been instituted in the first place as provided for by SBS Procedures?

The Association of Ethnic Broadcasters and Coordinators decides to take immediate action and to refuse the use of bulletins prepared by the News Room until the situation has been cleared.

16-18 ITEMS



N. Song

SPECIAL BROADCASTING SERVICE

5 ELIZABETH STREET, SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000. TELEPHONE 1021-232 7622

Office of
The Executive Director

12 March 1981

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Mr Pino Bosi
152 Victoria Street
BELLEVUE HILL NSW 2023

Dear Mr Bosi

I have received and given careful consideration to the report of interview between yourself and Messrs Stepan Kerkyasharian, Corbett Shaw and Ken Sievers in our offices on 5 March 1981.

On 4 March 1981 I received a letter from the Federal Executive of the Australian Journalists Association supporting the resolution passed by members of the AJA employed in the Special Broadcasting Service Central Newsroom protesting the handling of news by yourself in the Italian language program and claiming that there had been a violation of SBS news policy.

As you are aware, the issue related to a complaint received from a prominent member of the Italian community that the Italian program on 2EA had not used a news story of particular interest to the community.

The complaint was contained in a telex dated 9 February 1981 and was addressed to the Director of News.

Inquiries by the Director of News indicated:

1. That two news reports and a brief recorded interview in Italian on this story were supplied by SBS News to the Italian program.
2. That the broadcaster in charge of compiling news for the Italian program had been pleased with the report and interview and had intended to use them.
3. That the story and interview were not used at the direction of the co-ordinator of the Italian program.

Between 11 February 1981 and 4 March 1981 there was an exchange of correspondence on this matter. Upon receipt of the letter from the Australian Journalists Association dated 4 March 1981, I determined that Messrs Kerkyasharian, Shaw and Sievers be appointed as a management Committee of Inquiry to look into the issue and report their findings and recommendations to me.

Following your interview before this Committee on 5 March, you met them again on 9 March and you were shown a record of the meeting of 5 March. You stated that you wished to add some questions of your own. Mr Kerkyasharian wrote to you on 10 March 1981 and asked you to submit these questions for attachment to the record. This was done.

In evaluating your answers to the questions put to you by the Committee, it has taken into account the following SBS Guidelines and Policy:

SBS Guidelines

P.1.6 Co-ordinators are responsible to the SBS, as publisher, for the content of programs and shall observe the Codes, policies and standards determined from time to time by the SBS; and the requirements of the Broadcasting and Television Act.

News, Current Affairs and Community Information Services Policy

P.1. The SBS editorial policy that applies to all news, current affairs and community information services shall reflect: accuracy, impartiality, objectivity and responsibility.

P.2. The SBS will only be concerned with objective and full reporting normal to western democracies and in the Australian tradition of journalism; as opposed to the partisan journalism of some countries and the "official line" approach of others.

P.4. The SBS will maintain editorial supervision of all news and current affairs and ensure that there is a feasible screening process that monitors its policies and ensures there is a sufficient flow of news to satisfy all needs.

Basic Policy Objectives and Standards

The objective is to report news accurately, impartially and responsibly.

.....

Impartiality: All news judgements will be made impartially and objectively, free from commercial and other special interest pressures. Stories will be selected solely on their merits as news. If it is not news it should not be released for broadcast. If it is news people are entitled to know.

The Committee has found that having been asked to make a news judgement on a particular story on two successive days you failed to take all reasonable steps to learn of the facts of the story and to fully ascertain what other stories were available.

The Committee believes that both steps were necessary before an informed judgement could be made about the news value of the particular story and its comparative news value in the news then available for broadcasting. The Committee considers that you failed to carry out these standard news selection procedures and in consequence were prevented from making a responsible, objective and informed news judgement of a news story which the SBS considers was of significance and interest to Italian listeners of 2EA.

This failure was in breach of:

- i. Paragraph 1 of First Principles of SBS News Policy which says in part that news "shall reflect accuracy, impartiality, objectivity and responsibility", and
- ii. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of Basic Policy Objectives and Standards of SBS News Policy which say:

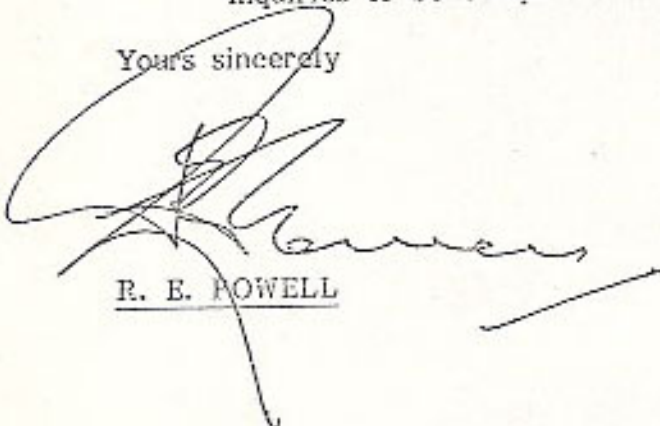
Impartiality: All news judgements will be made impartially and objectively, free from commercial and other special interest pressures. Stories will be selected solely on their merit as news. If it is not news it should not be released for broadcast. If it is news people are entitled to know.

The Committee noted that you defended your action asserting that you made a news decision not as a journalist but as a co-ordinator and that regardless of the individual responsibilities attaching to either of these positions your action was in breach of SBS News Policy.

I have accepted the Committee's unanimous recommendation as follows:

The Committee of Inquiry recommends that effective at once Mr Pino Bosi be suspended from preparing and broadcasting news for the Italian program on 2EA to allow further inquiries to be made into all aspects of the news and community information services provided by the Italian program on 2EA, such further inquiries to be completed within four weeks.

Yours sincerely



R. E. POWELL

ASSOCIATION OF ETHNIC BROADCASTERS & COORDINATORS (N.S.W.)

P.O. BOX 150
BALMAIN 20-11.
TEL: 8161169, 8272829

DATE: 12th March 1981

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ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION!

NEWS

NEWS

NEWS

Attention all news compilers.

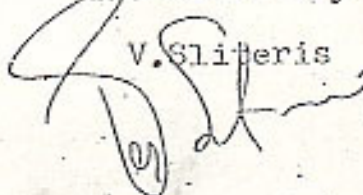
AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE SITUATION EXPLAINED IN THE ATTACHED RECOMMENDATION, NEWS COMPILERS ARE ADVISED BY THE EXECUTIVE NOT repeat NOT TO USE THE NEWS BULLETINS SUBBED AND BOUND BY NEWSROOM STAFF.

NEWSCASTERS CAN HOWEVER USE ALL THE USUAL MATERIAL AT THEIR DISPOSAL, AS PRESCRIBED BY THE GUIDELINES, AND LOOSE TELEXES AND ITEMS OFF THE TELEPRINTERS.

THE BAN REMAINS IN FORCE UNTIL THE PRESENT SITUATION IS RECTIFIED

The Secretary

V. Sliperis



URGENT

ASSOCIATION OF ETHNIC BROADCASTERS & COORDINATORS (N.S.W.)

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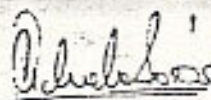
DATE: 12 March 1981

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THE EXECUTIVE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ETHNIC BROADCASTERS AND COORDINATORS TONIGHT CONSIDERED THE IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF THE ITALIAN COORDINATOR FROM COMPILING AND READING THE NEWS AND, AFTER DUE DISCUSSION, HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT

- a) the suspension is a provocative action, unjustified and excessively severe;
- b) such a decision has been reached without reference to the Association in spite of its request that it be allowed to have a representative present during the inquiry because of its far reaching consequences in relation to all other coordinators and broadcasters;
- c) as a consequence, the Association has no other alternative but to ask for the immediate withdrawal of the suspension pending the completion of the current inquiry;
- d) should the suspension not be lifted immediately, the Executive will advise its members to forego immediately and indefinitely the use of the news bulletins compiled by the newsroom staff; it will also call an immediate extraordinary meeting to decide what further action may be taken;

THE EXECUTIVE FOUND IT IRONICAL THAT THE ITALIAN COORDINATOR WAS SUSPENDED IN RELATION TO THE VERY ISSUE (the Italian earthquake) into which he put such an extraordinary effort to ensure that Italian-Australians listeners be kept informed with the most extensive and up to date news coverage. His efforts were publicly recognised by the Executive Director, the Head of Radio, 4EB (Brisbane) and the very Chairman of the Special Broadcasting Service when he handed the Premier of N.S.W. the cheque for the monies raised by 2EA.



N. Soos
Chairman.