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To control the world's information flows – Soviet Cold War broadcasting

The radio journalist James Wood has described the high power shortwave transmitter as *the* weapon of the Cold War.[1] There is a reason for this: both superpowers sought constantly throughout the Cold War to expand their transmitting power to reach even the most distant places and provide ever more language services to nations they wished to influence. Radio broadcasting became the way to contact foreign populations and convey the message of the foreign government. Yet, while messages never went through in such a mechanistic way, radio broadcasting emerged as an extremely important part of Cold War strategy for both warring parties. However, while there have been numerous studies about western Cold War broadcasting to the Soviet Union, there are practically no studies that would tackle the issue of Soviet international broadcasting.[2] Surprisingly the subject has remained almost completely unstudied both in Russia and in the West, despite the fact that for many decades, the Soviet Union was the most active and largest international

[1] James Wood, History of International Broadcasting, vol. 2 (London: Institution of Electrical Engineers, 2000), 104.

[2] The majority of studies that examine US Cold War broadcasting tackle the issue from the administration's point of view: how broadcasting was arranged, who participated and how administration behind them worked. See e.g. Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice. The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (New York: Praeger, 1983); Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An insider's memoir of Radio Liberty* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Alan L. Heil Jr. *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Already fewer are studies that estimate the impact of western broadcasting, such studies are Michael Nelson's *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997); Maury Lisann, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union. International Politics and Radio* (New York: Praeger, 1975); Cold War Broadcasting. Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: collection of studies and documents. Edited by Ross A. Johnson and Eugene Parta (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010); Simo Mikkonen, Stealing the Monopoly of Knowledge? Soviet Reactions to U.S. Cold War Broadcasting. In *Kritika*, vol 11, 4 (Winter 2010), 771-805. A comparative approach to several international broadcasters during the Cold War can be found in Julian Hale, *Radio Power: Propaganda and International Broadcasting* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975). Statistical overview of different international broadcasters is offered in Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*. On US operative plans to use radio against the Soviet Union and an example of US efforts to overcome Soviet jamming, see Timothy Stoneman: A Bold New Vision: The VOA Radio Ring Plan and Global Broadcasting in the Early Cold War. *Technology & Culture* 2, vol 50 (Apr. 2009), pp. 316-344. Furthermore, there are also studies about BBC, the most important western broadcaster not controlled by the US. In the Soviet Union, for example, BBC was the most popular and trusted foreign broadcaster. On BBC and Cold War, see e.g. Alban Webb: Constitutional niceties: three crucial dates in Cold War relations between the BBC external services and the Foreign Office. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 4, vol 28 (Oct. 2008), pp. 557-567; Alban Webb: Auntie goes to war again. *Media History* 2, vol 12 (Aug. 2006), pp. 117-132.

broadcaster in the world, matched only by the United States during the Cold War. However, it seems that while several western countries had research centers that monitored and even transcribed Communist broadcasts, they were for internal use only. Scholarly publications are, and remain, extremely scarce.[3]

Subversive international broadcasting as such was not a new phenomenon when the Cold War started. Ever since public broadcasting first got under way in the 1920s, the Soviet Union sought to master radio propaganda, both within and beyond its borders. The Soviet Union had been a pioneer in harnessing radio broadcasts to serve government needs. Radio broadcasts to foreign audiences became especially important with the rise of the Nazi Germany and eventually with WWII. Only Hitler's Germany had come anywhere close to Soviet capacity in foreign broadcasting.[4] It is therefore not very surprising that both during and after WWII, the Soviet Union used international broadcasting to assert its point of view all around the world and win sympathy towards Soviet foreign policy. Soviet leaders did not expect to be seriously challenged by international propaganda, and especially not in their own territory. However, from the beginning to the end of the Cold War, Soviet leaders had to cope with hostile propaganda coming from abroad over the airwaves. Yet, while Western broadcasting sometimes violated international laws, strong protests from the Soviets would have forced them to alter their own activities abroad. They had international objectives that required extensive use of radio and they had no intention whatsoever to hinder their own broadcasting activities.

This paper focuses on Soviet foreign broadcasting especially during the first decades following WWII. The two decades that followed the devastating war saw the beginning of the Cold War, death of Stalin, and finally rise and fall of Khrushchev. All these were events that significantly affected the Soviet foreign policy, but also the foreign broadcasting that played an important part in it. Furthermore, Soviet radio broadcasting itself went through important changes in late 1950s and

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[3] Rare exceptions include Harold Mendelsohn, Werner J. Cahnman: Communist Broadcasts to Italy in *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* vol. 16, 4 (1952-1953), 671-680; Don D. Smith, Some Effects of Radio Moscow's North American Broadcasts. In *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* vol. 34, 4 (Winter, 1970-1971), pp. 539-551. Major monitoring institutions were created for example for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty which monitored and examined Communist media in order to enhance their own broadcasts to Communist countries. Of the few Russian publications that examine development of Soviet radio include T.M.Goriaieva, Radio Rossii. Politicheskii control sovetskogo radioveshchaniia v 1920-1930kh godakh. Dokumentirovannaia istoriia (Moscow: Rosspen, 2000); T.M.Goriaieva, "*Velikaia Kniga dnia…" Radio v SSSR, dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2007). Latter consists of archival documents and radio articles, illuminating the development of Soviet radio broadcasting. However, foreign broadcasting is practically extinct in both publications.

[4] Comparitive approach to propaganda during the WWII can be found e.g. in Philip M. Taylor, ***Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda*** (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 208-248.

early 1960s, transforming its contents and conduct in a way that endured for most of the remaining Cold War. Therefore, this paper will concentrate on the years when Soviet radio broadcasting emerged as part of the Soviet Cold War establishment and became settled as an important feature of that establishment. Through selected examples, the principles, typical contents as well as objectives of Soviet foreign radio broadcasting will be examined. While Soviet foreign broadcasting was allegedly most efficient in the Third World, the majority of examples provided are from broadcasts directed to the western world, not merely Europe, but also to North America: in short the 'capitalist world' from the Soviet point of view. Yet, as this paper aims to provide an overview of Soviet foreign broadcasting that so far has been missing, I aim to make comparisons between different language desks, and to provide a general overview of the scope and development of Soviet broadcasting over time.

Radio in Soviet foreign policy

International propaganda merged with the foreign policy in the Soviet Union very early. Right after the revolution and with the establishment of the Comintern (1919), its agents were included in Soviet diplomatic missions worldwide.[5] Although radio was not involved in foreign propaganda in the early 1920s, radio broadcasts would play very important role in foreign political objectives of the Soviet Union later on. Lenin had already envisioned that radio broadcasts abroad would occupy a central role in the expansion of communism outside the Soviet Union. In 1921 he more than once referred to expansion of radio work for this purpose.[6] Thus, in 1929, Radio Moscow started broadcasting on shortwave. By the end of 1929 broadcasts to Europe, North and South America, Japan and the Middle East existed. Languages used were English, French and German.[7] While European languages are often mentioned as the first international radio project of the Soviet Union, some five months earlier in Khabarovsk, bordering China, broadcasts were launched in Chinese and

[5] Taylor, ***Munitions of the Mind***, 204.

[6] G. Kazakov, Leninskie Idei o Radio (Moscow: Politizdat, 1968), 191.

[7] Wood, History of International Broadcasting, 110. It is noteworthy, that I have not been able to find mention of when Soviets exactly started foreign broadcasting. Few works that discuss the early stages of the Soviet broadcasting all but bypass foreign broadcasting. One obvious reason could be restructuring of radio broadcasts that pinnacled in 1933 with the establishment of the State Radio Committee, which was the predecessor of Gosteleradio that dominated the scene from the post-WWII era until the end of the Soviet Union. See e.g. Iz protokola No 47 zasedaniia Prezidiuma TsIK Soiuza SSR ob organizatsii Komiteta po radioveshchaniiu, 7 September 1932. GARF f. 3316, op. 12, d. 511, l. 2. See also Goriaieva, *Velikaia Kniga Dnia,* 81.

Korean in addition to English.[8] From the beginning, then, Soviet ambitions were not limited to Europe.

Yet it was in Europe where we can see immediate responses to Soviet broadcasts. Already the first broadcasts evoked waves of protests in newspapers and in postal offices from citizens. For example, the British Post Office had to set up a special unit to monitor programmes from Moscow due to the avalanche of mail they had received inquiring about it.[9] Although the content of Soviet broadcasts was not especially revolutionary, each programme ended with the sentence: "Workers of the world: unite!" This was apparently too much for many people, as was the general idea of socialistm to countries where bourgeois parties feared Soviet assistance to domestic socialists. Radio Moscow was most active, however, in addressing the rising fascist movements which emerged as the biggest threat tp Communist movements in the 1930s. Its biggest task in the 1930s and during WWII was to support anti-fascist organizations and anti-fascist struggles in general. Radio provided verbal ammunition for persistent and vocal critique of the Nazi government and was partly successful in this. The information it provided was partly factual, partly disinformation, but it nevertheless gave anti-fascist oriented people something to fall back on in the face of Nazi propaganda.[10] Thus, Radio Moscow helped to keep up the spirit of resistance, and even if this happened below the surface, it was believed this would help build trust in the Soviet Union inthe postwar situation.

It is important to note that already in the fight with Nazi Germany, and later especially in Western Europe, foreign radio broadcasting was not a one-way street. Indeed, as Germany became the most important target for Soviet broadcasting, Hitler and Goebbels had at first been impressed with Soviet broadcasts, and then followed the Soviet example directing their own broadcasts to the Soviet Union. As a result, the 1930s saw the first propaganda war waged in the airwaves between the two nations. This merely escalated during the actual war between the two, the amount of Soviet broadcasts in German rising to some eight hours a day.[11] This same pattern of response and escalation was repeated during the Cold War. Radio Moscow did not operate in a vacuum, but it often responded to actions of western broadcasters, commented on Western broadcasts, and sometimes even imitated them and learned from their contents and form.

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[8] Bernard Bumpus and Barbara Skelt, Seventy Years of International Broadcasting (Paris: UNESCO, Communication and Society 14, 1984), 12.

[9] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 12-13.

[10] Tim Kirk, "Nazi Austria: the Limits of Dissent." In Tim Kirk, Anthony McElligott (eds), *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe* (West Nyack: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 142.

[11] Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 206-207; Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 34; Lorna Waddington, *Hitler's Crusade* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 98-101.

During the Stalin era, however, Soviet foreign broadcasting followed the aggressive line of political propaganda it had used in the 1930s and during WWII. Still, changes started already in the immediate post-WWII era which saw a notable increase in international broadcasting, making Soviet broadcasts truly worldwide in coverage. Especially from the late 1940s, the number of broadcasts boomed.[12] As to the content of broadcasts, perhaps a bit surprisingly, Soviets were not especially creative in using radio for international propaganda at this point. It seems that for a long time their foreign broadcasting mostly followed the guidelines set for propaganda within the Soviet Union. Only during the latter part of the 1950s were new ways of conducting foreign propaganda introduced. Until that point, the majority of all Soviet foreign broadcasting had been conducted via Radio Moscow. While it produced national programming for different countries and areas, the same programmes were mostly circulated over different desks and lots of it came from domestic broadcasting. Still, the sheer size of Soviet foreign broadcasting was truly immense. And yet these programmes should not be examined in isolation, but rather must be seen as a part of a larger of Soviet repertoire of foreign political efforts, as had been the case since the days of Comintern. Typically, Soviet officials combined numerous different elements when trying to achieve their goals.[13] Therefore, it is important also to examine Soviet broadcasting side by side with the developments in Soviet foreign policy.

While Soviet propaganda was perhaps at times uncreative, it was also simplistic in purpose, which helped to integrate radio to other foreign propaganda measures. Soviet propagandists relied mostly on language, using certain concepts over and over again, aiming at reinforcing their message through repetition. Soviet propaganda did not appeal so much to reason as to the emotions of recipients.[14] Soviet foreign broadcasting was never discontinued like Comintern was during the WWII, although tone of broadcasts to Allied countries was substantively softened. But in 1947 when Cominform replaced Comintern, radio again participated in carrying on pro-Soviet propaganda work all over the world. As before, although on a larger scale, print and broadcast propaganda kept on repeating same messages. Terms such as peace, disarmament, friendship, independence and liberation were repeated and the Soviet Union depicted as their guarantor. American imperialism, another basic concept in Soviet propaganda, was in turn presented as the

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[12] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 43.

[13] Very good recent example of this is offered in Peter J. Schmelz: Alfred Schnittke's *Nagasaki*: Soviet Nuclear Culture, Radio Moscow, and the Global Cold War. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 2, Vol. 62 (Summer 2009), pp. 413-474. Soviet was striving to improve their relations with Japan and simultaneously drive a wedge between US-Japan relations. Radio was used to amplify other messages and reinforce the message in general.

[14] Barghoorn, *Soviet Propaganda*, 17-20, 28-30

oppressive force which aimed to deny freedom to new nations as well as Western Europe. Whenever US got itself involved in conflicts such as those in Greece, Iran, Guatemala, or the Philippines, Soviet foreign propaganda treated it as new proof for the propaganda they had reiterated for years, making it more credible. The aim was naturally to control the terms of the international debate. Such messages were especially effective in former colonies, but found some resonance in Western Europe, too.[15]

After the war, Soviet foreign broadcasting became known primarily as Radio Moscow, although was not the only service. But as Radio Moscow remained the primary international service of the Soviet radio throughout the Cold War, it was virtually synonymous with Soviet foreign broadcasting. Furthermore, throughout the Cold War it was also the station with the best audibility in all wavelengths. The Soviet area had some 300 high-power transmitting stations plus a great number of low power stations, which made it the most widely heard foreign radio station beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.[16] Yet it also needs to be acknowledged that while Soviet foreign broadcasting can be approached from a number of angles, one important feature will be missing. While Radio Moscow is said to have had a wide and stable listening audience all around the world, it is very hard to make accurate assessments estimation of its size and nature. I have not encountered Soviet estimates of the audience, and there are no existing scholarly studies of the audience. We can only conclude that reasons for people to listen might have been ideological, genuine respect for Soviet achievements, willingness to hear the other side of the story (meaning the Soviet version of world events), or sheer accident. But the lack of studies makes any far-reaching conclusions about the audience are impossible to make.[17]

However, it is possible to make generalizing arguments about the expansion of Soviet foreign broadcasting power in the decades following WWII, which help us to understand Soviet strategy and emphases in the Cold War. Before the Soviet Union entered WWII in 1941, they were broadcasting to the world in 21 languages.[18] In 1945, Soviet radio they were up to 32 languages. Their main focus of attention at this point was still in Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe. Yet, there were also broadcasts in Arabic and Persian, in Bengali and Hindi to South Asia, Mandarin, Indonesian and Japanese to East and South East Asia, and Spanish and Portuguese to

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[15] Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 255; Paul Kecskemeti, The Soviet Approach to International Political Communication. In *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* vol. 20, 1 (Spring 1956), 299-308; Barghoorn, *Soviet Propaganda*,28-29.

[16] James Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, vol. 2 (London: Institution of Electrical Engineers, 2000), 104-105.

[17] Wood, History of International Broadcasting, 111.

[18] Wood, History of International Broadcasting, 110.

South America. North America and Sub-Saharan Africa were not included at this point and nor was Central America considered especially important. Attention towards the Third World quickly developed: in 1951 there were 80 different languages in the Soviet arsenal. Yet, further underlining the need for additional research on Soviet broadcasting, Wood calculates Soviet weekly output as 2094 hours of programme, while Bumbus and Skelt put it at 1015 hours.[19]

It would seem that while language services were increased, the major increases in broadcasting hours to the Third World Third Worldtook place along the 1950s. Language services were introduced first and then expanded as soon as proper staff could be found. Thus, from 1946 to 1959 Soviets picked up languages that ranged from Korean and Uighur to Urdu, Pashtu and even Catalan.[20] It can thereby safely be stated that Soviet broadcasting was truly global and aimed as broad audience as possible. Yet, while the Third World Third Worldbecame increasingly important and saw the largest growth, Europe remained an important area and broadcasts to Western Europe were increased in the 1940s and 1950s. Still, the biggest changes in output occurred in Asia, Latin America, and Africa in particular, where Radio Moscow was easily the dominant foreign broadcaster. Africa‘s struggles for freedom from the colonial powers made it a crucial target ground for communist propaganda.[21]

By 1962, Soviet radio was broadcasting 1200 hours a week to foreign countries, of which only 250 were directed at Western Europe.[22] Simultaneously, combined Soviet output to Near East, South Asia and Africa rose from 14 to 30 per cent between 1948 and 1959.[23] It should be be taken into account here that Soviet broadcasts to Eastern Europe satellites decreased considerably as they stabilized politically in the mid-1950s. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, the division of labour in foreign broadcasting between Soviet and its satellites freed Soviet capacity to broadcast beyond Europe, as satellites took their share of European broadcasting. In 1959 the primary target in Europe had not changed: it was still Germany, with 55 hours of programming a week, Britain came second with 38 hours and French with 28, and Italy with 24½. A small language such as Finnish came in close with 22 weekly hours, while other European services were much smaller. By

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[19] Wood, History of International Broadcasting, 110 cf. Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 117. Counting is made hard due to a number of broadcasters, which are sometimes hard to tell apart from each other, and Soviet government hardly provided detailed information about them.

[20] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 48-49.

[21] Spravka o rabote Goskomiteta po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu posle Postanovleniia CK KPSS ot 29 Ianvariia 1960 g. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 675, l. 53; According to this document, chief editor’s office for African broadcasts was to be established in 1961. About African broadcasts, see also Festus Eribo, *In Search of Greatness: Russia's Communications with Africa and the World* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 88; Julian Hale, *Radio Power*.

[22] Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 266; Barghoorn, *Soviet propaganda*, 280.

[23] Barghoorn, *Soviet propaganda*, 280.

1959 the United States (with Canada) had also become an important target, with 84 hours of English language broadcasts per week.[24] The growing importance of the US is linked to the new foreign political reality as experienced by the Soviet Union. They felt the need both to compete with the United States, as well as to offer its citizens alternative news sources and the Soviet viewpoint.

One of the few languages with decreased services in the Soviet repertory during the 1950s was Chinese (Mandarin) which followed the changing situation in China and its stabilization after a long civil war. Similarly, as the relationship with China improved later on, Chinese language broadcasts were drastically increased along the 1960s.[25] In general, the trend of increasing international broadcasting activity carried on throughout the 1960s. In 1960 the US led the USSR with some 50% more broadcasting hours, but by 1970 the Soviets had erased the gap. In the meantime, while in 1960 both were essentially tied in the number of languages they broadcast in, in 1970 the Soviets were using 83 to the 49 languages used by the US. Especially Africa and Latin America were new important areas of activity although output was increased all over the world.[26] The Soviet Union seems to have taken smaller languages better into account, for example, on the Indian subcontinent alone, Soviets used 15 different languages in broadcasting by 1970.[27] The enormous effort and attention the Soviet Union devoted to its foreign broadcasting was directly linked to Soviet foreign policy and its emphases.

Radio in Soviet Cold War policies

During the latter part of the 1950s, Soviet foreign broadcasting gained such importance to the Soviet leadership that domestic broadcasting came often in second in place. As radio transmitters were turned to foreign broadcasting resource limitations led to a situation in which some areas of the Soviet Union had very poor reception while in many foreign countries Soviet radio could be heard better than some domestic broadcasts.[28] This was especially problematic as western anti-Soviet broadcasts had been increasing their transmitting power and in some areas could be heard

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[24] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 49-50
[25] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 49.
[26] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 55.
[27] Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 56.
[28] "Zapiska otdela propagandy i agitatsii TsK KPSS po soiuznym respublikam," 13 December 1958, in *Ideologicheskie komissii TsK KPSS. 1958–1964:* dokumenty, ed. E. S. Afanasieva and V. Iu. Afiani (Moscow: Rosspen, 1998), 136-38. This might be at least partly due to optimism about the consequences of the recent Soviet-American treaty on cultural exchanges. It also coincides with several Soviet achievements in the international arena, like the launching of Sputnik and the encouraging results emanating from the Brussels World Fair earlier in 1958. See for example: Reid, "Who Will Beat Whom?", 861.

even better than Soviet broadcasts.[29] Developments in US-Soviet relations in the late 1950s such as the signing of cultural exchange treaty between the countries, and especially the visit of Khrushchev might have led the Soviet leadership to believe that peaceful coexistence was possible and that US broadcasts to the Soviet Union would soon decrease or stop. Therefore, even when western broadcasts increased, the Soviets concentrated on their own foreign broadcasts rather than improving their domestic services.[30] This would change by the turn of the decade, and the early 1960s became years of major restructuring of Soviet domestic broadcasting, which would have implications in foreign broadcasting as well, as I will discuss below.

The motives for Soviet authorities to use radio in their international propaganda were often related to aims of the world revolution, and attempts to topple bourgeois governments in the West, especially before WWII. Especially after Stalin's death, these aims gave way to a more modest approach, especially towards the West. Outright hostile broadcasts to the West found little response from audiences other than ardent Communists. Rather, Soviet authorities felt that their voice was poorly heard in the West and radio could be of use in changing this. During the Cold War, the Western press was mainly unanimously anti-Soviet and there was little room for Soviet viewpoints in the mainstream media. Western media relied mostly on western news services, resulting in western audience being cut off from the Soviet version of international events. While situation in the Third World and in Soviet satellites was better, there, too, they felt radio represented important way of asserting the Soviet agenda to them as well.

While the latter part of the 1950s saw the intensification and restructuring of Soviet international propaganda, this was also reflected in the leadership of the Party. Typically, high-level structural changes in the Soviet Communist Party and government also signalled changes in emphasis or policies. In this case, both structural changes in international propaganda institutions and Khrushchev's foreign political aims called for new measures in radio. While the Ideological Commission of the Communist Party supervised the international radio work in the late 1950s and early 1960s, its collections also reveal that two other powerful State committees were also responsible for foreign broadcasting. While Soviet domestic broadcasting was controlled and

[29] Mikkonen, *Stealing the Soviet Monopoly*.

[30] Rósa Magnusdottir, "Be Careful in America Premier Khrushchev!" Soviet Perceptions of Peaceful Coexistence with the United States in 1959. In Cahiers du Monde Russe, vol 47, 1-2 (2006), 109-130. Soviets also felt that they needed to propagate further their achievements after their positive experiences in international arena, like those from the Brussels World Fair in 1958. See for example: Reid, "Who Will Beat Whom?", 861.

administered by Gosteleradio (formerly the Radio Committee)[31], it had to compete with a new organization for the highest authority over international broadcasting. Khrushchev had created the State Committee for Overseas Cultural Ties, which oversaw the use of soft power abroad. Its authority was even higher than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in many occasions, not to mention that of the Radio Committee. It was just the dynamic organ Khrushchev had sought for to implement new policies and practices in the international arena. Its active period was limited to the Khrushchev era, however, and in 1967 it was discontinued.[32] Yet, at this point radio and foreign broadcasting in general had gone through major restructuring, making the GKKS even more important in Soviet foreign policy.

The primary area of GKKS activity was maintaining international ties in several areas and supervising international broadcasting was among these.[33] It constantly advised the Radio Committee, arranged foreign opportunities for the radio and generally took care of most of its foreign relations. In certain features, GKKS was the PR arm of the Soviet Union. Yet while its task was to polish the image of the Soviet brand, it was also a propaganda institution, aiming to control any and all information flows that were related to the Soviet Union, whether produced by foreign national media, émigrés or anti-Soviet actors of any kind. Thus, GKKS effectively made Soviet foreign broadcasting an integral part of other coordinated efforts of reaching foreign countries by a number of means, of which radio was just one (important) element..

In the Soviet Union, administration changes often followed practical changes. This was the case in the use of radio as well. In Italy, which was one of the primary European battlegrounds between capitalism and communism, there was strong backing for both ideologies. Thus, in the early 1950s US scholars were worried that while Voice of America and BBC broadcasting amounted to 23 weekly hours combined, Soviet and other Communist broadcasting reached over 78 hours a week. Furthermore, as they targeted lower middle and laboring classes, Soviet broadcasts were believed to play significantly to Italian Communists' advantage. In general, their analysis of Soviet broadcasts to Italy also reveals important themes that persisted in their broadcasts for decades all over the world. In them, Soviet Union was presented as the champion of world peace and US in turn as

[31] The Radio Committee was established in 1931, in 1957 it was restructured as the State Committee of Radio and Television, while foreign broadcasting was transferred to GKKS until 1959. While name of the organization experienced minor changes several times over the years, in 1970 television finally overtook radio as the first mentioned medium, earning its acronym Gosteleradio, by which name Soviet radio and television are perhaps the best known.

[32] Nigel Gould-Davies, The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy. In Diplomatic History, vol. 27, 2 (April 2003), 193-214. This article contains thus far the best account of the importance of GKKS, rarely mentioned in most accounts of Soviet administration.

[33] O faktakh bezotvetstvennogo otnosheniya k podgotovke radioperedach, 3 June 1958. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 14, ll. 7-8. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 58-59.

aggressor and threat to world peace. Furthermore, there seems to have been delicate distribution of labour between Radio Moscow and broadcasters from East European satellite countries. Broadcasts from the satellite states were typically more aggressive than Radio Moscow, which tended to speak in more general terms, but also introducing especially Soviet life and Soviet issues. Furthermore, the tone of propaganda was changed according to the situation in Italy and different levels of propaganda altered according to Soviet propaganda aims.[34] In these overall foreign policy efforts, radio broadcasts formed an important part of the Soviet efforts in Italy very early on.

As another example of how Soviet radio broadcasting supported Soviet foreign policy objectives is the case of Canada. Special broadcasts to Canada were arranged in connection with visit of a high-profile Canadian delegation to the Soviet Union. One had the typical title "Common Interests of the Soviet Union and Canadian Peoples," in which Radio Moscow stressed the "improvement" in Soviet-Canadian relations and paid tribute to the visitors.[35] Later on, Canada would also receive warnings via Radio Moscow. In connection with U-2 incidents in 1960, , became a target of suppression by the Soviets for having allowed the US to use its air force bases as launching sites for U-2 flights. “What happens next is a matter for the Canadian government’s conscience to decide.”[36] Apparently, the conscience Radio Moscow was talking of was the average Canadians, the electorate. By posing itself as the guarantor of peace, and US and Canadian governments as aggressor, Soviets hoped that Canadians would make pro-Soviet choices.

The Yugoslavian case also highlights the intersection between the foreign policy purposes of Soviet international broadcasting. Up until Tito broke with Stalin and resigned from Cominform in June 1948, weekly broadcasts from the Soviet Union and other Cominform countries to Yugoslavia hadamounted to a modest 22½ hours. By late 1948, this almost doubled to 35 hours. In 1949, the Soviet Union tripled its output in Serbo-Croatian and Slovene, and introduced Macedonian broadcasts. By the end of 1949, broadcasts from Cominform countries to Yugoslavia amounted to 113½ hours- a fivefold increase after relations broke down. Then, after relations with Tito’s Yugoslavia were mended by Khrushchev in the mid-1950s, weekly broadcasts lowered to 68 hours

[34] Harold Mendelsohn, Werner J. Cahnman: Communist Broadcasts to Italy in The Public Opinion Quarterly vol 16, 4 (1952), 671-680.

[35] Jamie Glazov: Canadian Policy Toward Khrushchev's Soviet Union. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 42. Glazov refers to Canadian government memo citing Radio Moscow broadcasts to North America in English.

[36] Glazov, *Canadian Policy*, 96. Glazov refers to Canadian newspaper Globe and Mail’s citing of Radio Moscow broadcast to North America in English.

by the late 1950s.[37] Links to foreign political needs were thus apparent. At times, these needs would be very practical in nature and manifest themselves in ways unimaginable in the West.

There were cases in which Radio Moscow transmitted Soviet leaders' personal messages to Western leaders even before these messages had been received by them via traditional diplomatic channels. The Suez crisis is said to have been the first such occasion. During the heat of the Suez crisis (1956), Radio Moscow had transmitted messages from the Soviet leadership to the British, French and Israeli leaders even before they had reached their intended recipients via conventional diplomatic channels.[38] Radio Moscow's role was even more crucial during the Cuban missile crisis (1962). Perhaps never in the world history has radio helped in such a way to bring the world back from the brink of nuclear destruction.[39] Indeed, the whole occasion illustrates some important features of Radio Moscow's role in the Soviet system, but also of its international importance.

Although the situation between Cuba and the USA had been deteriorating for a long time, it needs to emphasized that the actual crisis between the US and Soviet governments built up very quickly. As soon as U-2 flights over Cuba revealed that the Soviets were building a missile site capable of a rapid nuclear strike on the US, the crisis deepened on an hourly basis. Khrushchev was taking a big gamble and was not willing to back down without major concessions from the US. However, the problem was that he was running out of time, as US Navy was preparing to intercept Soviet ships carrying missiles to Cuba. The major problem for him was that there were long delays in exchanging messages with the Kennedy administration via the normal diplomatic channels, partly due to need for translation. There had been delays of some 12 hours in transmitting messages. Thus, Khrushchev's message from Friday October 26th had been received by White House only the following Saturday morning, when it was already Saturday evening in Moscow. Because of the twelve hours it had taken to translate and deliver Khrushchev's Friday message, it reached the White House too late for the president and Ex Comm to prepare a response that day. According to the US government, a few hours of delay from the Soviet side in practice multiplied the delay on their side.[40] Thus, on Sunday, to speed up the response, Khrushchev created two task forces in the

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[37] Bernard Bumpus and Barbara Skelt, Seventy Years of International Broadcasting (Paris: UNESCO, Communication and Society 14, 1984), 44-45.

[38] Philip M. Taylor, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 1997), 39.

[39] Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushcev's Cold War. The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: Norton, 2006), 488, 498; Bertrand G. Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy at the UN* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 107.

[40] Michel Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev to Kosygin* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 265; McGeorge Bundy, Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years (New York:

Party leadership; one was to draft a message to be delivered to the American embassy and the second to write a message for immediate broadcast over Radio Moscow. Kennedy was supposed to go on television that night and Khrushchev wanted to secure he acted well before that. He worried that a message sent through official channels might not arrive before what he considered to be the deadline in Washington for preparing a speech.[41] Eventually, a few minutes before the deadline, Washington heard via Radio Moscow that a message of special importance would be broadcast on the hourly news, in few minutes. As a consequence, the American media networks that monitored Radio Moscow would either broadcast the message live or rebroadcast it to their audiences. The message was forwarded to Kennedy within an hour.[42] The message was delivered in time and as a result the conflict was resolved. But this was also the last occasion when Radio Moscow was needed for such high-profile communication as a direct link; the so-called 'red phone' a direct line between the White House and the Kremlin was established to ease communication in the face of future crises.

These two examples of high-profile communication over Radio Moscow reveal some important aspects of Radio Moscow. First, it was politically controlled by the Party and whenever they so wished they could override its programming in any way they chose. Second, and perhaps even more important, Radio Moscow had wide following in the US media. Even if Radio Moscow's audience in the US had not been extensive (and, as we have noted, there is very little data on this), the US media followed closely what was said and broadcast on Radio Moscow. The Soviet leadership was also apparently aware of this. Otherwise it would have been too risky to let Khrushchev's message rely on Radio Moscow's broadcast. Furthermore, during the six years that had elapsed between Suez and Cuban crises, the Soviet Union had continuously increased its presence on the world stage, but Soviet foreign broadcasting had also considerably developed and extended its coverage.

Taylor has suggested that the humiliation of the British and French in the Suez crisis and the rift it caused in NATO, combined with the world-wide emergence of Communist-inclined nationalist movements further encouraged the Soviets to step up their international propaganda efforts.[43] In this effort, the radio was first in line. Soviet officials understood that decolonization processes were taking place all over the world, and Soviet broadcasting was used to bolster up the wave of nationalism. Along with educational programmes to the Third World ("agitation" in Soviet

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Random House, 1988), pp. 443-444; Richard N. Lebow, We All Lost the Cold War (Ewing: Princeton University Press, 1995), 136.

[41] Oleg Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis: A View from the Kremlin," In *International Affairs* 4– 5 (April– May 1992), 149– 50; Lebow, *We All Lost the Cold War*, 141-142.

[42] Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, 406; Taylor, 446n205.

[43] Taylor, *Global Communications,* 39.

vocabulary) leaders of national movements were tempted to Moscow where courses on the history of national liberation movements were offered side by side with Marxism. Soviet officials sought to marginalize western economic and political influence in decolonizing areas even if there was no prospect of genuinely Marxist governments in these areas. The Soviets were happy with pro-Soviet governments and the control of information flows played an important role in this.[44]

Contents and audiences

It is interesting to explore the general content of Soviet broadcasts, especially given our argument here that they supported Soviet foreign policy aims beyond occasions such as Suez or Cuban crises. Furthermore, as noted above, while Soviet foreign broadcasting is typically associated with the Radio Moscow brand, there were also other Soviet broadcasting operations beyond Soviet borders. Radio Peace and Progress, Radio Volga (to Soviet garrisons outside the Soviet Union), Radio Voice of the Homeland (for Soviet émigré audiences), and a number of Soviet national broadcasters such as Radio Armenia or Radio Kiev were among such operations. The aim of most of these radios differed from Radio Moscow in that their target audience was not average foreign nationals, but either current or former Soviet citizens. Furthermore, while Radio Moscow dropped its outright anti-western tone soon after Stalin's death, these other projects remained typically very anti-western and pro-Soviet. Nor did Radio Moscow give up the agitprop content in its programming completely. But along with the political content, less obviously propagandistic features like language lessons, radio contests, and quizzes along with music were introduced. Programmes also featured speeches by internationally acclaimed scholars and artists who were benevolent towards the Soviet Union and its policies. Typically, these people would market the peaceful nature of Soviet foreign policy in the name of the international peace movement.

Frederick Barghoorn has presented an analysis of Radio Moscow's broadcasts to North America in early 1960s in which he identiried certain recurring features. The most important of these was presenting Soviet foreign policy in a positive light and revealing the "true" motives of Western foreign policy. Others included presenting Soviet domestic life favorably and connecting this to socialism, and presenting socialism and the socialist state positively.[45] The majority of programming time, however, was consumed by music and news items, rather than of outwardly political content, while features such as *Moscow Mailbag*, where letters from the audience were answered, were prominently present. While news items were seemingly neutral in tone, they were

[44] Barghoorn, *Soviet propaganda,* 60.
[45] Barghoorn, *Soviet propaganda,* 283.

presented from the Soviet point of view, and sometimes with lacking argumentation. Interviews with Soviet people on everyday issues were also featured. Barghoorn also notes that Radio Moscow's staff spoke excellent English and were in command of American idiom.[46] Like with many other international broadcasters, this was thanks to numerous émigrés employed by Radio Moscow.

Just like US broadcasters had Soviet émigrés as workers in broadcasting, the Soviets, too, sought suitable émigrés to hire. With Radio Moscow growing in importance, some of these émigrés were given elite status and privileges that came with it. Thus, Heinz Braun, who had moved with his family from Hamburg to Moscow, and was working at the German desk of the radio, secured a proper apartment for his family in the center of Moscow with the help of the agitprop section of the Party.[47] Similarly, when the Arabic service was expanded, three Armenian repatriates who knew Arabic were called to Moscow and given apartments that were came free when foreign specialists returned to their home countries.[48]

In general, Radio Moscow preferred hiring foreign Communists to fill the ranks of Radio Moscow's foreign desks. In 1961, when Radio Moscow's leadership gave statistics of its leadership and creative work, 5% of the 3000 employees were members of foreign communist parties. These people were heads of foreign desks, programmers and key advisers to the foreign desks.[49] But as early as in the 1930s, when foreign specialists were otherwise undesirable in the Soviet Union, they were considered necessary in foreign broadcasting. Thus, Mary Burroughs, a US Communist Party member arrived in the Soviet Union in 1937, she was placed at Radio Moscow and worked there for the next seven years. She was accompanied by a select cadre of Communists from the English-speaking world, all serving Radio Moscow's English desk.[50] Burroughs, a black woman, however, was not given elite status, either due to the harsh war years, or to other issues. But she was denied exit back to the US until 1945 when she was already terminally ill.[51] In later years, as the example of Braun suggests, however, such foreign specialists were considered too valuable to be wasted in such a way.

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[46] Barghoorn, *Soviet propaganda*, 283.

[47] Pismo F. Konstantinova i A. Romanova v tshentralnii komitet, 11 January 1958. RGANI f. 5, op. 33, d. 72, ll. 5-9.

[48] Pismo Ilicheva i Kazakova v tshentralnii komitet, 23 December 1958. RGANI f. 5, op. 33, d. 72, l. 214-215.

[49] Spravka o rabote Goskomiteta po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu posle Postanovleniia CK KPSS, ot 29 Ianvariia 1960 g. Not before June 1961. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 675, l. 53.

[50] Gleason Carew, *Blacks, Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 86.

[51] Carew, *Blacks, Reds, and Russians,* 177-178.

As Soviet foreign policy interests became global along the 1950s, broadcasts to different countries became increasingly important and radio helped to implement propaganda measures in target countries. Such important occasions were foreign fairs and festivals, in which radio was always prominently present. In connection with such events there were both broadcasts concentrated on marketing the Soviet presence in them, but Soviet officials also took care that Soviet radio receivers and broadcasters were prominently on display at the events: frequencies of Soviet broadcasts, showcases of programming content and everything else that was believed to increase the audience of Soviet broadcasts in the target country. GKKS officials insisted that Soviet radio experts had to be present at such fairs and festival exhibitions, and they even arranged special broadcasts which would showcase Soviet radio technology and prowess.[52]

In general, Soviet Radio's task was to enhance Soviet messages whenever Soviet presence on the world stage gained momentum. Indeed, when Khrushchev became the first Soviet head of states to visit the US in 1959, it was prominently covered in Soviet foreign broadcasts. Although Western media naturally covered the visit, their coverage was not always to the liking of the Soviet leadership in either amount or stance. Radio Moscow thus aimed to give more information about the event for those who wanted more information, and thereby to increase its audience. Broadcasting hours were stepped up and more care was given in creating the broadcasts.

The large amount of letters received by Soviet radio from foreign audiences has already been mentioned. If the amount of letters is indicative of the size of the audience, then Khrushchev's visit to US and the increased presence of Radio Moscow really paid off. While in 1959 there had been some 6000 letters from US listeners, in less than three months of 1960 there had been over 3000 letters, more than doubling the amount received the previous year. To further engaging those who had already taken the step of writing a letter, not only were letters answered in broadcasts, but if they had given their addresses, were sent printed materials in reply. Furthermore, in order to secure the growth of Radio Moscow in the US, the Radio Committee requested dollars to be used in ads in US publications. It deserves to mention that foreign currency was a commodity that was extremely valuable and always in short supply in the Soviet Union. Yet, Radio Committee even wanted to establish a permanent post in New York that would develop contacts to local US radio stations,

[52] Pismo s Kaftanova v Iu Zhukovu, 2 February 1960. GARF f. 6903, op. 2, d. 227, ll. 22-25. Original letter by Zhukov asking Kaftanov to make the necessary measures was dated 28 January and can be found in ll. 26-27.

study frequencies and audibility of Soviet broadcasts, as well as answer questions about Soviet broadcasts to US media.[53]

The Soviet leadership confidence in their broadcasts to US is best illustrated in by a new and daring departure for them: freeing up broadcasting equipment previously reserved for jamming Voice of America and BBC programmes to broadcast Soviet radio to US.[54] This was actually proposed to the Central Committee.[55] The proposal made economic sense: the Central Committee report from 1958 had mentioned that the sum Soviets spent on jamming was *greater* than the sum they spent on domestic and international broadcasting combined.[56] Thus, jamming of VoA and BBC as well as numerous other smaller broadcasters, was partly discontinued. But this confidence soon diminished and KGB hardliners had their way toward the late 1960s, and jamming of many foreign broadcasters returned. Jamming would continue, with fluctuations in intensity for various stations, throughout the remainder of the Cold War. Only in 1988 did Gorbachev give up jamming for good, with the same reasoning as in 1958: free up the immense resources consumed by jamming for foreign and domestic broadcasts.[57]

Another important use of Soviet foreign broadcasting was international commentary, also including direct challenges of arguments put forth in western broadcasting. This was essentially Cold War in the airwaves. Indeed, Radio Moscow actively used to counter Western interpretations of world politics. In connection with Geneva peace accords in 1955 Soviets aimed at strengthening their message about the Soviet Union as the champion for peace. But around Christmas holidays of 1955, Western radios had broadcast Christmas messages by American leaders (Eisenhower, Duller, Harriman and others) directed to "captive peoples" referring to Hungary, Poland and other Soviet satellite states. The Soviet responded to this "crude interference in the domestic affairs of free and sovereign states – members of the United Nations" via a wide spectrum of its media, Radio Moscow included. Khrushchev stated that "some western statesmen display a strange understanding of the Geneva spirit". His speech of 29th December was published in *Pravda* and circulated over

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[53] Spravka o kulturnom obmenon mezhdu SShA i SSSR, 24 April 1960. GARF f. 6903, op. 2, d. 227, ll. 93-97.

[54] Spravka o kulturnom obmenon mezhdu SShA i SSSR, 24 April 1960. GARF f. 6903, op. 2, d. 227, ll. 93-97.

[55] "Resolution of the Secretariat of the Communist Party regarding active measures to counter hostile radio propaganda," 19 July 1960 (RGANI f. 89, op. 46, d. 14, ll. 53-54).

[56] "Memorandum to the TsK KPSS from L. Il'ichev and G. Kazakov regarding the jamming of foreign radio stations," 6 August 1958 (RGANI f. 5, op. 33, d. 75, l. 164).

[57] "Memorandum to the TsK KPSS from I. E. Ligachev and V. Chebrikov on terminating the jamming...," 29 September 1986 (RGANI f. 89, op. 18, d. 105, ll. 1-2); it took two years to enforce the decree with the actual cessation of all jamming taking place 21 November 1988. See *Cold War Broadcasting*, 19.

other media. Western broadcasters replied with US President Eisenhower's voice that "the peaceful liberation of the captive peoples has been, is, and, until success is achieved, will continue to be a major goal of United States foreign policy." On 31st December Radio Moscow reported that Khrushchev's 29th speech had been a major subject in US press.[58] This was essentially superpower conflict and mutual bickering that happened to be carried out primarily in the airwaves. But it also highlights the pressure felt by the Soviet Union to control its world image and information flows it relied upon. It is further noteworthy that Radio Moscow followed domestic media at this point. Typically, TASS and Izvestia had reported on the event before Radio Moscow.[59] Thus, before restructuring of Soviet radio took place, Radio Moscow seemed at times more like a foreign outreach for Soviet media rather than international broadcaster.

This problem is illustrated most strongly by the fact that Radio Moscow often commented on allegations of western media by referring to Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL), US broadcasters that directed their broadcasters to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, respectively. These radios did not even broadcast to western audiences, and especially RL was essentially unknown to them. Radio Moscow repeated attacks made in thedomestic press, often simultaneously, pointing out that this was planned well in advance. One such example from 1959 was an article that was simultaneously published in domestic media and broadcast by Radio Moscow. The article denounced RFE and RL as independent radios and alleged the whole "American way of life" was a mere utopia.[60] It is more obvious why such attacks were common in Soviet broadcasts directed to Germany, since Germany was where these radios operated. But the fact that Radio Moscow's English service participated in the campaign against RFE and RL seems to suggest that services of Radio Moscow had little autonomy over their programming. They could not adapt their programming to local conditions, giving one more reason to start the overhaul of broadcasting in the late 1950s.

Despite such obvious problems, Radio Moscow was important in the fight against Western propaganda. All important Western provocations against the Soviet Union were featured in its broadcasts. For example, on 6 February 1957, at 6pm and 8pm the English service of Radio Moscow broadcast a TASS report about the press conference held at the Central Journalists' Club in Moscow that day. The primary target was Western media, but in the middle were again RL and

58 RFE/RL Inc. Corporate Records. Box 523, file 2. "EEAAOR special report # 1 – 1956" January 4, 1956.
59 RFE/RL Inc. Corporate Records. Box 523, file 2. "Supplement to EEAAOR special report # 1 – 1956" January 13, 1956.
60 Strongov, B. "The Radio Liars' Union" in Sovetskaya Kultura, May 7, 1959; Radio Moscow in English, May 7, 1959, 12:00 GMT.

RFE, described by Leonid Ilichev, the head of Soviet Foreign Ministry's Press Department, as "propaganda and espionage centers in Europe". Testimonies from recent repatriates that had worked for these radios were also presented as part of the programme.[61] This occasion followed many others taking place throughout the late 1950s, being part of the Soviet Union's new strategy to use people emigrating from the West to provide testimonies of hardship and shortcomings of Western capitalism. This was already easier to understand from the viewpoint of foreign broadcasting: the Soviets could present themselves via their citizens, as victims of US aggression and foul play. By presenting how the US treated Soviet DP's in the West and how they now were returning voluntarily to the Soviet Union after years of suffering, they had a point to make that was considered powerful both for potential repatriates and neutral audiences in general.[62]

Radio and Soviet foreign policy

Toward the late 1950s, criticism within the Party of both domestic and foreign broadcasting was mounting. The Ideological Commission of the Party, which had supervised the conduct and practice of propaganda (among other things) during the Khrushchev era, considered international radio work poorly organized for its important responsibilities. They found that, contrary to clear orders, Gosteleradio and GKKS were not aware of all the contents that were broadcast. Especially broadcasts prepared in the Soviet Republics were problematic.[63] Indeed, although Soviet Union was centrally governed, broadcasts to foreign target audiences were not necessarily prepared and fully controlled by Moscow, where heavy bureaucracy and overlapping control instruments made complete control wishful thinking. For example, there was often the know-how for Persian or Arabic broadcasting in southern republics of the Soviet Union and in some cases these republican studios had more autonomy than the central Party apparatus would have preferred. More than once, Moscow was left to clean up a mess caused by uncontrolled broadcasts. For example, a flood of protests and close to a diplomatic incident was caused by an insulting song being broadcast by Radio Moscow to Pakistan and Afganistan. The text of the song had not been cleared, nor translated into Russian until after it had already been broadcast.[64] The majority of problems, however, were related to general contents of broadcasts, which were often considered dull, uninformative, and often days behind Western reporting of current events. Broadcasts were not inspiring enough, did

61 Radio Moscow in English. February 6, 1957, 20:00 local time.
62 Radio Moscow, English language broadcast to Europe, April 2, 1957, 16:45.
63 O faktakh bezotvetstvennogo otnosheniya k podgotovke radioperedach, 3 June 1958. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 14, ll. 7-8. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 58-59. VELIKAYA KNIGA
64 Zapiska otdela propagandy i agitatsii TsK KPSS po soyuznym respublikam, after 23 May 1958. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 268, ll. 22-23. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 59-60.

not deter bourgeois propaganda or present Soviet life with concrete enough examples.[65] Time was ripe for a major overhaul of Soviet radio.

One of the major problems was that Soviet broadcasts were slow. Western newscasters, by contrast, reacted quickly to world events and were free to use any sources whether Soviet or western. The Soviets, on the other hand, still had strict orders to stick with input from the Soviet telegraph agency TASS, , and Soviet media in the 1950s. Their access to Western quality media was restricted. Before such sources could be used, a censor had to be consulted, and decisions made at the manager-level. In addition, TASS provided information too slowly.[66] After such consultation rounds, days might have passed before news items could finally be broadcast, making the effort mostly futile. The swift development of television and the simultaneous changes in national radio broadcasts in the West posed new challenges to Soviet broadcasts to these countries and underlined the need for changes. Even the timing of Soviet broadcasts was something that had inherent problems. Programmes were not aired when most people listened to the radio.[67] By contrast, a report submitted to the Central Committee stated that the Americans broadcast their latest news to the Soviet Union with much better planning, exploiting prime spots for Soviet citizens' radio listening .[68]

One of the primary goals for restructuring foreign broadcasting was to speed up the process to the level of western broadcasting. This proved difficult as the West had no censorship while the Soviets not only had to clear bureaucratic procedures of censorship but also their organization's levels of hierarchy before any news item could be broadcast. One solution was to make the best of time zones: the head of GKKS, Yuri Zhukov, insisted that foreign broadcasting ought to receive Soviet newspapers' materials before they went to print at 23:00. This would enable broadcasters to put forth central news items during the evening prime time hours in Europe, since Central and Western Europe were 2-3 hours earlier than Moscow.[69] Until then, what they had broadcasted was practically yesterday's news. The problem was that doves like Zhukov had to face hardliners in the censorship and KGB who opposed all such relaxation. Censors had already complained that, in

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[65] Ob uluchenii radioveshchaniya dlia naseleniya Sovetskogo Soyuza i na zarubezhnye strany, 12 December 1959. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 457, ll. 27-41. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 212-220.

[66] "Draft Resolution of TsK KPSS regarding measures to improve the work of TASS," 6 January 1958 (RGANI f. 5, op. 33, d. 71, ll. 2-7).

[67] Ob uluchenii radioveshchaniya dlia naseleniya Sovetskogo Soyuza i na zarubezhnye strany, 12 December 1959. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 457, ll. 27-41. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 212-220.

[68] "Memorandum to the TsK KPSS from L. Il'ichev and G. Kazakov regarding active measures to be taken to counter hostile radio propaganda to the Soviet population," 15 July 1960 (RGANI f. 89, op. 46, d. 14, ll. 2-3).

[69] Pismo Iu. Zhukova v tshentralnii komitet, 18 September 1958. RGANI f. 5, op. 33, d. 72, l. 174.

practice, radio programmers had many times circumvented strict censorship by submitting radio programmes for the censorship only after being broadcast.[70] Yet, as long as Khrushchev was at the helm, hardliners were on the losing side when it came to foreign broadcasting.

In January 1960, after few years of preparations, the Central Committee gave an order for "improving Soviet radio broadcasting and further development of television". As regards to foreign broadcasting, one of the targets was to pay attention to news items that were of international interest. For this aim, a new office of foreign information was established within the Soviet radio. Apart from controlling foreign information flows, it was given wide powers to collect information from foreign media, something that was very limited in domestic broadcasting due to censorship.[71] Special attention was given to occasions considered to have wide interest in the world such as the space flights of Titov and Gagarin.[72]

Another attempt to circumvent the stiff bureaucracy in broadcasting was to hire more freelance commentators. Earlier, radio programmers had been loath to give microphone to outsiders, but now it was seen as one way to bring fresh and interesting views to listeners. Thus, in the spring of 1960, the head of Gosteleradio, Kaftanov, consented to the establishment of a group that would supervise and control the expanding work of freelance commentators.[73] While freelance commentators were an improvement, creating livelier reportage also demanded that Soviet reports move to where people and events were. Thus, more interviews had to be incorporated into Soviet broadcasts, especially with Soviet people like leading workers, well-known social figures, writers and other such exemplary Soviet citizens. Even leading politicians were asked for interviews, something Party officials were mostly unused to. Furthermore, radio programmers sought to expand further the question and answer sessions with listeners.[74]

The aesthetic sphere, mostly referring to music, was also to be expanded. Music was already prominently featured as part of Soviet foreign political aims in the realm of cultural exchange, and

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[70] Pismo P. ROmanova v tshentralnii komitet, 25 December 1958. RGANI f. 5, op. 33, d. 73, ll. 78-80.

[71] Spravka o hode vypolneniia postanovleniia CK KPSS "Ob uluchenii sovetskogo radioveshchaniia i dalneishem razvitii televideniia" ot 29 ianvaria 1960 goda, February 1961. GARFf. 6903, op. 1, d. 734, ll. 4-5.

[72] Spravka o rabote Goskomiteta po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu posle Postanovleniia CK KPSS ot 29 Ianvariia 1960 g. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 675, l. 19.

[73] O sozdanii gruppy po rabote s vneshtatnymi kommentatorami, 18 April 1960. In GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 2321, l. 54. Also in Goriaieva 2007, 151.

[74] Ob uluchenii radioveshchaniya dlia naseleniya Sovetskogo Soyuza i na zarubezhnye strany, 12 December 1959. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 457, ll. 27-41. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 212-220.

it is likely that broadcasts included a lot of Soviet music. However, it seems that music had perhaps previously been used in unsystematic manner, given the orders now to restructure it as a key part of foreign broadcasting. Perhaps the best documented example of this approach is offered by Alfred Schnittke's oratorio *Nagasaki* that became an important propaganda tool for the Soviets from 1960 onwards.[75] Indeed, in the plans for improving Soviet radio, high quality performances were mentioned as an important area for development. In addition to recordings, top ranking musicians were asked to give special performances for radio broadcasts.[76]

The 1960 the Party resolution for restructuring Soviet radio mentioned several familiar concepts as the basis for radio broadcasts: further emphasis on the idea of peace and friendship between peoples, of communist ideology, of the advantages of socialism over capitalism and so on. These were all issues that had existed in broadcasts well before the Central Committee mentioned them as a crucial part of foreign broadcasting. However, this meant that their role was now cemented as basic part of broadcasting. Furthermore, these earlier Soviet attempts to portray themselves as the sole forces for peace and present the US as the aggressor in world politics had been perceived by the US as a threat. .[77] Now these aims were absorbed and hidden within more general themes that were mentioned in the restructuring of Soviet radio.

The basic themes of Soviet foreign policy aims were not directly presented but incorporated into broadcasts with a range of themes and motivations.. One example is broadcasts that presented the humane Soviet way of life, illustrated with concrete examples of Soviet citizens' lives. Radio was also to show how Communist Party and Soviet government paid continuing attention to the material and spiritual needs of Soviet citizens. At the same time, broadcasting was also meant to reveal concretely how capitalism neglected people's needs and that the change from capitalism to more progressive socialist production was inevitable.[78] Indeed, radio was to strengthen the message that the Soviet system was best able to deliver modern life to the world. For this purpose, foreign broadcasting was advised to pay attention to the American way of life, which was a central

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[75] Schmelz, *Alfred Schnittke's Nagasaki*.

[76] Ronald R. Krebs: *Dueling Visions : U. S. Strategy Toward Eastern Europe under Eisenhower* (Texas A & M University Press, 2001), 53.

[77] Ronald R. Krebs: *Dueling Visions : U. S. Strategy Toward Eastern Europe under Eisenhower* (Texas A & M University Press, 2001), 53.

[78] Ob uluchenii radioveshchaniya dlia naseleniya Sovetskogo Soyuza i na zarubezhnye strany, 12 December 1959. In RGANI f. 11, op. 1, d. 457, ll. 27-41. Also in Afanasiev, Ideologicheskie Komissii, 212-220.

spearhead of American foreign propaganda. This needed to be attacked most forcefully and rebutted.[79]

But interestingly, while they felt that American broadcasts needed to be countered more effectively, Soviet broadcasters were simultaneously encouraged to learn from these very broadcasts and their methods. The Central Committee of the Party had ordered a detailed report on how VoA and RFE worked, how they directed their programmes to local audiences, exploiting their culture, religion and history. The report stated how American broadcasters had daily contacts with the US Information Agency, sharing knowledge and experiences in a way that greatly impressed Soviet observers. This was held up as an example from which Soviet radio ought to learn.[80] Soon enough, not only was information collected from foreign broadcasts, but foreign programmes were also followed by Soviet broadcasters in order to learn their techniques. This was not not optional, but rather considered as part of their duties.[81] As part of the overhaul, the resolution underlined the use of post from the audience, which was seen as crucial for better answering the needs of the target audience, but also gave Soviet officials a chance to reply to questions from their point of view.[82]

But did the efforts at restructuring broadcasts pay off? It seems that Radio Moscow became more credible at least in the ears of western listeners. For a long time, the general assumption in the US was that the majority of US citizens rejected Soviet broadcasts as mere propaganda. In this respect, rare experimental study by Don Smith from the early 1970s is of interest. In this study, Smith had groups of university students to listen to Radio Moscow's broadcasts and afterwards evaluated their reactions and possible changes of attitude towards the Soviet government. One interesting finding was that those who regarded broadcasts suspiciously before were positively impressed by broadcasts' non-belligerent tone. Although they still perceived broadcasts as propaganda, they already oriented more positively towards the Soviet government and the Russian people. Qualitative answers featured comments like: "You begin to see that the Soviet Union is not a monster…" and "…I felt they really did seem to want world peace…" or "It makes you feel they are people just like

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[79] Sluzhebnogo zapiska glavnogo redaktora Glavnoi redaktsii propagandy N.N.Kareva predsedateliu Komiteta po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu pri Sovete ministrov SSSR N.N.Mesiatsevu o razoblachenii amerikanskogo obraza zhizni, not before 21 July 1967. In GARF f. r-6903, op. 1, d. 741, ll. 64-72. Also in Goriaieva 2007, 169-172.

[80] "Memorandum to TsK KPSS from I. Zhukov (GKKS) on the American state propaganda service USIA," 20 January 1958 (RGANI f. 5, op. 30, d. 270, ll. 6-25).

[81] HIA, RFE/RL, b. 564.4. "TALR # 81 – 63." 29 November 1963. The interview took place at a party for Soviet delegates. The interviewer was one of the Western hosts. See also Mikkonen, Stealing the Soviet Monopoly.

[82] Otchet o hode vypolenina CK KPSS ot 6-go iiunia 1962 g. "Ob Uluchenia radioveshchaniia dlia naseleniia sovetskogo soiuza I na zarubezhnye strany."December 1962. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d, 773, ll. 1-17.

us."[83] Furthermore, in another study from 1966, Smith found that from a sample of over 2000 American citizens, 6 percent of respondents had listened to political contents (news included) of foreign broadcasting. Radio Moscow was the most popular, although nine other stations were often mentioned. Respondents were often steady listeners, but they also understood these broadcasts either to be one-sided, or even outright propaganda, but they were also dissatisfied with how American media reported on international events.[84] While the US audience was likely the most anti-Soviet, audiences in Western Europe were more mixed. Soviet attempts to make their broadcasts less political and more general and neutral in appearance seem to have paid off.

Smith's analyses seem to be in line with the aims Soviet officials had in mind for developing their broadcasts. Following the 1960 resolution, there were fewer obvious political attacks and more news items, culture, and portrayals of everyday life of Soviet citizens.[85]*Moscow Mailbag*, which Barghoorn's analysis mentioned, was also considered important by Soviet officials. It was also immensely popular, not only with US audience, but also among other nations. According to numbers found in internal reports of the Party, letters received by the Soviet radio from foreign audience amounted to almost 100,000 in 1959, and in 1960 they well exceeded 170,000. In 1961 the number of letters went beyond 260,000 and in 1962 they were close to 350,000. The Party leadership advised radio programmers to pay even greater attention to letters from the audience, as well as to how they answered their questions. Q&A was featured prominently in broadcasts.[86]

Beyond the Radio Moscow brand

One last thing important in considering Soviet foreign broadcasting is to pay attention to how it was actually organized. So far, this paper has discussed only Radio Moscow, the main 'brand' of Soviet foreign broadcasts. But it was by means not the only one. Apart from addressing foreign audiences, Soviet leadership saw the need to reach out to its citizens abroad. During the Stalinist era, the number of Soviet citizens travelling abroad remained minimal, but since the mid-1950s there had been a steady, and increasing, flow of professional and tourist trips abroad from the Soviet

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[83] Smith, *Some Effects of Radio Moscow's*.

[84] Don D. Smith, America's Short-Wave Audience: Twenty-Five Years Later. In *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 33, 4 (Winter, 1969-1970), 544-545.

[85] Spravka o rabote Goskomiteta po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu posle Postanovleniia CK KPSS ot 29 Ianvariia 1960 g. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 675, ll. 1-67.

[86] Spravka o rabote Goskomiteta po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu posle Postanovleniia CK KPSS ot 29 Ianvariia 1960 g. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 675, l. 32; Otchet o hode vypolneniia postanovleniia CK KPSS ot 6-go iiunia 1962 g. "Ob Uluchenia radioveshchaniia dlia naseleniia sovetskogo soiuza i na zarubezhnye strany."GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 773, l. 3; Spravka o hode vypolneniia postanovleniia CK KPSS "Ob uluchenii sovetskogo radioveshchaniia i dalneishem razvitii televideniia" ot 29 ianvaria 1960 goda, February 1961. GARF f. 6903, op. 1, d. 734, l. 12.

Union partly related to drastically increasing presence of the Soviet Union in the international arena. Thus, regular daily newscasts in Soviet languages were introduced in 1963 as part of the Soviet foreign broadcasting. This was primarily an attempt to limit travellers' exposure to potentially corrupting imperialist media.[87] These 'temporary' audiences were novel. Broadcasting in Soviet languages abroad had existed before, but, it was targeted to émigré communities.

Before WWII, the Soviets had paid little public attention to émigrés and political "non-returnees". With the onset of the Cold War, Soviet émigrés suddenly started to matter. The Soviet authorities saw its émigré opponents abroad as a new kind of threat that could be, and effectively were, used by the US in anti-Soviet propaganda, but also in political warfare.[88] Anti-Soviet messages from Soviet émigrés potentially endangered the Soviet position in the international arena and had presumably a detrimental effect on dealings with neutral countries. Thus the Soviet authorities took a number of measures especially during the 1950s in order to combat the formation of an anti-Soviet front of émigrés. The GKKS was involved in these attempts, but the Soviet Repatriation Committee established few years earlier in 1955 was even more prominent. While the primary task of this KGB-linked committee was to repatriate as many former Soviet citizens as possible, it saw fighting the anti-Soviet émigrés as equally important. For this purpose, the committee had extensive broadcasting facilities at its disposal. Using these, it developed a radio station first called Radio Repatriation, which evolved in the 1960s into the less aggressive Voice of the Homeland.

While there had already been Soviet language media directed abroad, the Repatriation Committee's radio expanded considerably the foreign network of information channels in Soviet languages, primarily in Russian, but other languages as well. Its methods and contents followed those of Radio Moscow relatively closely, while being somewhat more aggressive and less conciliatory towards western governments. With the Kremlin's aid, certain programmes were circulated over different channels, like Radio Volga[89], the Ukrainian language Radio Kiev, Radio Armenia, and others broadcasting outside the Soviet Union to their target national audiences.[90] Typically, each Soviet

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[87] O radioperedachakh dlia sovetskikh grazhdan, nakhodiashchia za rubezhom, 6 Marta 1963. In GARF f. 6093, op. 28, d. 4, l. 14. Also in Goriaieva 2007, 156; also mentioned in Bumpus and Skelt, Seventy Years, 48-49.

[88] Mikkonen, Exploiting the Exiles.

[89] Radio Volga was a station directed to Soviet troops in East Germany, but it could be listened to in West Germany.

[90] Galina Oleinik, a Ukrainian émigré who had worked in US-sponsored anti-Soviet organizations, repatriated in fall 1955. One of her letters was first published in Kiev, then in the leading Soviet newspaper Izvestiya on December 21, then broadcast in Radio Kiev on December 28 and on December 30 in Radio Volga, see e.g. G. Oleinik "Gnezdo shpionov" in *Izvestia* 21 December 1956, p.

republic had its own service that relied on Radio Moscow's equipment to target nationalities in foreign countries. Together GKKS and the Repatriation Committee supervised and coordinated the propaganda efforts to émigrés.

One last addition to Soviet foreign radios was a direct result of the overhaul of Soviet radio: Radio Station Peace and Progress, which surfaced in 1964. Although operating with the equipment and staff from Radio Moscow, it represented a new approach to broadcasting, or at least an attempt at one. Its stated objectives were closely linked to those of Radio Moscow: "to broadcast truthful information about the Soviet Union", "to promote in every way the development and strengthening of mutual understanding, confidence and friendship between peoples". Significantly, this station was modelled quite obviously on Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe. It was presented as the "voice of the Soviet public opinion", a public organizationfree of state control, and.[91] Although anyone who knew the Soviet administration immediately realized that media independent of the State were impossible in the Soviet Union. Yet this was something audiences were not necessarily aware of. Most importantly, however, this radio station provided the Soviet government with a domestic agency to wage possibly vicious campaigns that would have tarnished Radio Moscow's reputation as a more reliable source of information.

Finally, as has already been mentioned, although Radio Moscow was the biggest socialist broadcaster during the Cold War, especially in Europe, it had negotiated a delicate distribution of labour with other socialist countries. Thus, letting other East European broadcasters carry part of the burden in Europe, Radio Moscow was able to concentrate on global affairs, as well as distance the more dirty campaigns from Radio Moscow. Bearing this in mind, any extensive study of Soviet broadcasting would necessitate at least paying attention to other socialist broadcasters in the Soviet orbit to understand the contexts in which they operated.

In conclusion

Soviet foreign broadcasting is a curious phenomenon. Although its origins in the 1920s as well as importance during the Cold War are mentioned in numerous studies, sustained research into it simply does not exist. The Soviet Union was the first national broadcaster to make its operations truly global. Early broadcasts, at least more extensive operations, to foreign populations were at first typically directed to hostile populations. Soviet operations, however, soon expanded to several

3; radio transcripts of this article can be found in HIA, RFE/RL 553. 8 "Regime Reaction Report # 34 – 56." December 31, 1956.

[91] "Radio Peace and Progress" OSA 66-2-244 (8 July 1970).

dozen languages already in the pre-WWII era. What the Cold War era meant from the Soviet point of view was at first merely an expansion of its already global outreach, whereas for the US it was more about building a global presence. Thus, the Soviet broadcasting operation had been building for a long time before the Cold War. Similarly, its objectives and aims were from the pre-WWII era.

The expansion of Soviet radio when measured in amount of languages or total broadcasting hours, occurred most forcefully during the 1940s and 1950s. Initially, Europe was the most important target area, but Europe beyond the Soviet borders was hardly a uniform area for the Soviet authorities, but rather several different areas of activity were apparent. First, the Soviet-occupied areas were very important targets until the political situation was stabilized towards the late 1940s. Second, contested countries like Italy, Yugoslavia and Finland, in which Cold War struggle with the US was most intense, became important targets for Soviet broadcasts. Third, all western European countries were targets of Soviet broadcasting activities, with Germany firmly in the lead. Even so, while Europe remained an important target area throughout the Cold War, already in the immediate post-WWII years, growth in areas outside of Europe well exceeded that of European broadcasts: Southeast Asia and South Asia gained in importance, and North and South American broadcasts were introduced. African broadcasts were also introduceed, which arguably became the most successful operation in the history of Soviet broadcasting. While Soviet broadcasting at times came second to US in the amount of total foreign broadcasting hours, it constantly had more languages in its arsenal and its world coverage easily exceeded that of the US. Even if it is impossible to evaluate the size of the audience of Soviet foreign broadcasting with existing studies, we can safely say that during the Cold War years, Soviet broadcasting had the widest global coverage for its broadcasts.

Soviet foreign broadcasting is typically associated with the Radio Moscow brand. It was the main operation, although a number of special operations, as well as Soviet national broadcasters existed throughout the Soviet era. The majority of these broadcast operations were directed to foreign audiences, but there were also stations broadcasting in Soviet languages, either to Soviet citizens stationed abroad, or to émigrés that the Soviet government wanted to reach. Furthermore, especially in Europe, Soviet broadcasting operated in concert with its satellites, coordinating with its Czech, Polish, Hungarian, and Bulgarian counterparts. This helped the Soviets to concentrate on making their broadcasting efforts truly global especially over the course of the 1950s. Yet while there were several different names, the basic objective remained the same: reaching distant audiences with Soviet messages.

Soviet foreign broadcasting was essentially agitation and propaganda, in Soviet vocabulary. It had a very clear foreign policy purpose for which it was created and which it continually sought to fulfil. It was never free of political control, but instead it was closely controlled and guided by the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party. Until the death of Stalin (1953) the contents of foreign broadcasts were outright propagandistic and primarily appealed to Communists and like-minded people. With simplistic content and repetition of certain concepts, radio aimed at controlling discussion on certain subjects, like world peace. Even when programming adapted to modern challenges, aiming at wider audiences since mid-1950s, this feature of asserting Soviet interpretation of certain contexts persisted. Thus, even in less political content, Western governments were called imperialist, while the Soviet Union was guardian of world peace and peoples' freedom.

The restructuring of Soviet radio in the late 1950s and early 1960s was of crucial importance for Soviet foreign broadcasting. Although major changes had been underway since Stalin's death, it was turn of the decade that saw the overhaul of radio with the Party's blessing. Major restructuring of programming and content took place as part of the attempt to answer foreign challenges as well to correspond to new Soviet foreign policy and to the planned global role of the Soviet Union. Not only were political messages hidden behind more appealing content, but there were several other attempts to make Soviet broadcasts more appealing. One was the attempt to compete with the swiftness of western media, which did not suffer from Soviet censorship or bureaucracy. Radio staff were urged for all kinds of reforms some of which were directly inspired by western broadcasters. Western broadcasts that were previously jammed were now taken as examples from which Soviet broadcasters were to learn.

On the whole, however, neither Radio Moscow, nor any Soviet radio broadcasters ever became similar to their western counterparts. It can safely be said that Radio Moscow remained an extension of Soviet foreign policy. It closely followed its emphases and changes, while continually attempting to enhance its messages. Even while Western broadcasting projects often had more political connections than domestic media, they had some level of political autonomy that Soviet broadcasting would always lack: it was an integral part of the Party-controlled regime. Further study on Radio Moscow, however, would be needed to answer basic questions about the detailed content of broadcasts, its changes over time, about differences and similarities between foreign broadcasting desks as well as the political control of the foreign broadcasting. Soviet foreign broadcasting emerges as one of the major global operations of the 20th Century, and further

understanding of it would cover blank spots not only in the history of global broadcasting, but in the global presence of one of the major powers of the 20th Century.