



2009

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Recommended Citation

Nelson, '09, Lauren, "Surrogate Freedom: Transmitting Democracy to the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc" (2009). *Honors Projects*. Paper 8.

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Surrogate Freedom: Transmitting Democracy
to the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc

International Studies Honors Research Project
April 2009

By
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While currently relocating to a building away from the center of Prague, since 1995, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) has been headquartered in the former Czechoslovakian parliament building. The former President of Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel, invited the radios to move from Munich to Prague and occupy the parliament building for a symbolic dollar a year rent. This gesture of historical irony is especially appropriate in considering the history of international radio broadcasting: a building representative of Communism was converted into the headquarters for radio stations extolling the benefits of democratic media. This symbolic move signifies one of the paradoxes of the twentieth century: the United States, the major financial contributor to RFE/RL, profited from the broadcasting and ideological infrastructure developed by the Soviet Union, and the medium intended to unify and spread Communist goals was ultimately used against the system and contributed to the downfall of the regime.

To examine this phenomenon, this paper will consider the beginnings of two forms of broadcasting: early Soviet and post-WWII programming by Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The importance of broadcasting was recognized from the early days of Soviet power. Vladimir Lenin first advocated radio as a tool of national unification in order to spread revolutionary ideas to far removed regions and target the illiterate population. In the hands of democratic nations, radio transcended political and geographical borders and effectively broadcasted information and news that had been suppressed by the Soviet Union. RFE/RL's contribution¹ to the downfall of the Soviet regime is an especially compelling example of historical irony, as Soviet Russia was the first country to pioneer radio broadcasting for political purposes. Comparing RFE/RL's

¹ "Contribution" is used here extremely loosely. There is no statistical analysis, or any convincing fact-based evidence, of the extent to which RFE/RL contributed to the dissolution of the USSR. What *does* exist, however, are theories postulated by scholars, and oral interviews from people who lived in the countries in which RFE/RL broadcasted.

broadcasting strategies against those of the early Soviet Union uncovers notable overlaps even though one broadcasting entity strove to construct a nation and the other to deconstruct the political regime.

This exchange of information and ideas between countries led to a complex relationship between international and domestic media and introduced instances where the two blurred, combined, and when one served as a surrogate for the other. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)² filled the latter role for East European countries and the republics of the Soviet Union and performed two important functions: they provided their audiences with a democratic worldview by transmitting news silenced by the government “at home,” and offered a chance for silenced voices (such as exiled writers and political figures) to be heard. This presented a double-fronted attack against communism. The U.S. government employed the intellectual émigré population (who had been effectively silenced by their native governments), providing them with jobs broadcasting back into their home countries, while at the same time transmitting democratic ideas of Western origin.

Comparing early Soviet broadcasting strategies against those of RFE/RL’s (and American/Western broadcasting in general) uncovers notable overlaps in method, and what is ultimately apparent is that propaganda can be packaged in a variety of guises, including democracy. After the October Revolution of 1917, Vladimir Ilych Lenin began to advocate the unique attributes of the radio as a form of national unification, which he continued until his death in 1924. Exploring Lenin’s role in the development of Soviet

² Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were separate broadcasting stations until 1976. As they are currently referred to as one entity, for the sake of clarity for the modern reader, this paper will use the abbreviation RFE/RL when discussing generalities common to both stations, and individual abbreviations when their history does not overlap.

radio necessitates the use of sources in Russian as the only³ intensive study of Lenin's work toward connecting the Soviet Union by radio broadcasts in English is Thomas H. Guback and Steven P. Hill's The Innovation of Broadcasting in the Soviet Union and the Role of V. I. Lenin. In it, they examine the development of radio in the Soviet Union from both political and economic perspectives. T.M. Gorjaeva's Istorija sovetskoj radio-zurnalistiki (The History of Soviet Radio Journalism) is a collection of primary Russian documents outlining the development of radio in Soviet Russia: excerpts from program guides, letters from Lenin praising the new form of technology, and descriptions of broadcasts moving toward governmental control, in addition to extensive coverage of radio references in newspapers and speeches. Yuri Murashov's article "Sovetskii etos i radiofikatsiia pis'ma" ("Soviet Ethos and the Radiofication of Letters") considers the conversion of radio into the main form of Soviet leisure as a highly important political goal. In a more extensive scholarly comparison of the beginning of Soviet radio broadcasting and initial transmissions of RFE/RL, Soviet periodicals such as *Govorit SSSR* (Here Speaks the USSR), *Govorit Moskva* (Here Speaks Moscow), and "hobby" radio publications such as *Radioljubitel'* (Radio Enthusiast) could be used to compare Soviet methods of propaganda to those used in the American Crusade for Freedom.⁴

There is a wide variety of American overviews of media in the Soviet Union, and while most of them are now outdated, they are useful not only in their information, but also in the tone in which the information is conveyed. Mark Hopkins' Mass Media in the Soviet Union provides a comprehensive view of various media sources--newspaper, radio, television--in the Soviet Union, and how they were utilized to accomplish political

³ As far as I am aware.

⁴ A limitation of my research is a lack of Russian sources in Russian. Gorjaeva's compilation of primary sources is a monumental, vital resource, but given the opportunity to access archives in Russia would contribute to the span of my research.

agendas. Martin Ebon's The Soviet Propaganda Machine covers all forms of propaganda, and is especially detailed in its coverage of Radio Moscow's World Service, and Soviet domestic stations.⁵

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty scholarship is rather limited in breadth for many reasons. Scholars often attribute the absence of extensive scholarship on Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to the secretive nature of the radios; at one point, the radios were funded by the CIA, a fact not known publicly in America at the risk of public outcry and fear of the population viewing the radios as merely government-funded propaganda. Further, the very nature of radio means that primary documents are limited to radio transcripts and recordings, held in Munich, Germany until fairly recently when the Hoover Institution sponsored their move to the Hoover Archives at Stanford University.⁶ Why significant modern scholarship has not emerged as a result of access to these archives is unknown, though a new release by the Hoover Institution Press, Discovering the Hidden Listener: An Assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR During the Cold War perhaps indicates a movement toward reviving study of a relatively archaic⁷ form of communication.

The existing scholarship specifically pertaining to the history of RFE/RL often takes the form of personal accounts combined with historical backgrounds, frequently by people who have worked for RFE/RL in the past, or in international journalism⁸ such as: Sig Mickelson's America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio

⁵ While my paper focuses on the beginnings of each radio (Soviet broadcasting and RFE/RL), further study could be done on how (or whether) the two mirrored each other after their idealistic beginnings.

⁶ While I do not know the full contents of the archives, it can be assumed that the transcripts and recordings are not all in English, and while many scholars may be polyglots, when the language count goes into the dozens, a comprehensive study of the archives would be daunting. Even today, RFE/RL broadcasts in 21 countries.

⁷ In the age of modern technology, it may perhaps be argued that academic focus on Soviet and Russian media has shifted according to new technological trends: television, the internet, and even blogs.

⁸ (Strangely enough, I am no exception.)

Liberty, Arch Puddington's Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and Michael Nelson's War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War.

What is missing in existing accounts of RFE/RL is a departure from narrative; the “stories” of the radios are purely descriptive--they do not analyze the radios as a strategic, calculated move against Communism, and especially do not compare the stations to those of the Soviet Union. This paper will eschew unnecessary⁹ anecdotes of the history of the radio beyond what is vital for comprehending the complicated past of RFE/RL, and instead focus on the duality of its broadcasting, the aforementioned double-fronted attack on Communism in which RFE/RL went beyond what international stations like Voice of America and the BBC did for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. For the sake of concision, the timeline focused on in this paper will not follow the entire trajectory of RFE/RL history, but rather the beginning of the stations' broadcasts. For future study on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, access to the Samizdat Archives located in Moscow and Munich and the Hoover Archives would provide a comprehensive view of which *samizdat* works were broadcasted as well as important information on programming specifics unavailable in current print materials.

A textbook history of Soviet radio broadcasting¹⁰ begins: “Our country is the mother of radio,”¹¹ illustrating that the Soviet Union truly adopted radio as its own creation. While the exact location of the first radio broadcast in the world is debated, following the Revolution of 1917, Russia proved an especially adept backdrop for the

⁹ Unnecessary for the sake of this research paper. The canon of RFE/RL narratives comprises many extremely well-researched and interesting books from professionals and scholars who had personal experience with the stations for extended periods of time (and especially noteworthy, in a volatile time in the radios' histories). As my experience with RFE/RL is limited to a summer internship in 2008, I have no authority to add any additional anecdotal description; rather, I intend to add a new perspective on RFE/RL history.

¹⁰ A *Soviet* history of soviet radio broadcasting.

¹¹ Hopkins 244

development of international broadcasting. The benefits of radio broadcasting complemented the shortcomings of Russia's physical geography: unifying a country of such sheer, unwieldy size could be accomplished with broadcasts that did not require literacy or production materials (other than transmission technology) to reach the population.

On a symbolic level, radio was instrumental in the project of nation building: it encouraged national unity by providing a common, auditory link between people in far removed regions and the center: everyone would be able to hear news from Moscow, regardless of physical distance. Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote a poem called "Radioagitator"¹² that described radio as an auditory unifier and as the peoples' voice. He exclaimed,¹³ "What is read in Moscow, you can hear in Archangel'sk!"¹⁴ According to Mikhail Epstein, "[Russia] had come to occupy an area so large that finding its place in time became somewhat difficult."¹⁵ Radio negates the limitations of spatial separation, and instead relies on the advantages of temporality. The speed of radio waves provides an almost instantaneous relay of information, covering the span of the Soviet Union's eleven time zones exponentially faster than newspaper distribution ever could.

Thomas Guback and Steven Hill explain that after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the new leaders experienced the challenge of bringing a "large, culturally amorphous collectivity into a technological, machine-oriented twentieth century."¹⁶ Technologically backward and vast, modernizing Russia presented a daunting task. In his writings, Lenin demonstrates awareness of the fiscal advantages of radio broadcasts as

¹² Радиоагитатор: someone who participates in radioagitatsia, or propaganda by means of radio broadcast.

¹³ Радиоагитатор, «Радиогазета» #100 (Radioagitator, "Radiogazeta" #100), May 3, 1925, in Gorjaeva, 108.

¹⁴ «Как можно в Москве / читать, / а из Архангельска / слушать!»

¹⁵ Michael Epstein. "Russo-Soviet Topoi," in Dobrenko, 297.

¹⁶ Thomas H. Guback, and Steven P. Hill. The Innovation of Broadcasting in the Soviet Union and the Role of V. I. Lenin, (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1972), 10.

opposed to published newspaper. In an article in Pravda Lenin wrote, "...there are 350,000 copies of Izvestia and 250,000 of Pravda for the whole of Russia. We are paupers. We have no newsprint."¹⁷ As a new form of communication, radio would potentially not only eliminate the paper shortages and the need printed material, but also expedite the spread of Soviet revolutionary ideas. Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Brunevich explains Lenin's aspirations for using radio for the enlightenment of the masses: Lenin said "in every village there should be a radio...the country cannot live in the dark: the newspapers come very slowly with delays, and now the radio, in our condition of destruction, is especially important."¹⁸ Further, radio was a particularly effective way of combining propaganda and agitation (agitprop), which persuaded masses and enforced Communist values.¹⁹

Aleksei Mikhailovich Bonch-Bruevich, a leading developer of Soviet radio technology, received a personal note from Lenin, outlining the value the first Soviet leader placed on radio: "The newspaper without pages and "without distance," that you are creating will be an incredible achievement. I promise you my unlimited support in this and similar endeavors."²⁰ Lenin's conceptualization of radio as an auditory form of print pervaded far its development. Although Lenin viewed radio as a departure from the printed newspaper form, he never considered it a separation and programming strongly resembled material found in print; in fact, newspapers were often simply read over the airwaves. The Central Committee broadcasted two newspapers over the radio: daily for

¹⁷ Ibid. 17.

¹⁸ «В. И. Ленин и радио» ("V. I. Lenin and Radio"), in Gorjaeva, 308.

¹⁹ Martin Ebon, The Soviet Propaganda Machine, (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987), 7.

²⁰ «В. И. Ленин -- М. А. Бонч Бруевичу» (V. I. Lenin to M.A. Bonch-Bruevich), in Gorjaeva, 18.

workers, and 3-4 times a week for peasants.²¹ The *radiogazeta* (radio newspaper) editorial board was created from the editorial boards of print newspapers, but the unique demands of oral newscasts led to the development of radio journalism and different strategies of transmitting news.

The volume of radio broadcasting was frequently described “in terms of newspaper pages,” even four decades after its conception.²² Rather than a wholly distinct media form, radio “tended to be viewed as a public address system for the printed word.”²³ Lenin asserted the value of developing radio in a letter to Nikolai Petrovich Gorbunov, calling it an “action of great importance (the newspaper without pages and without wires...) because all of Russia will listen to the newspaper read in Moscow” and demanded that Gorbunov keep him updated of the radio progress at least twice a month.²⁴

Lenin charged a radio laboratory in Nizhny Novgorod with the development of a central radio station in Moscow with the capability of broadcasting 2000 verst.²⁵ His dedication to the spread of radio can be attributed to his belief that it was “absolutely essential that communication facilities be extended with the radiotelephone so that many could simultaneously hear a message or announcement.”²⁶ Five million rubles were allotted to the project with the aim of broadcasting the “oral newspaper” by means of “loudspeaking telephones” (*gromkogovoritel'*) on six squares throughout the Moscow.²⁷ Shortwave radios intended to serve as outlets for in-country information became widely available, and thus radio was not broadcasted only publicly, but also within private

²¹ «Из постановления ЦК ВКП (Б) «Издание радиогазет» (“From the Resolution of the Central Committee “Broadcasting of Radio Newspapers”), March 22, 1926, in Gorjaeva, 27.

²² Mark W. Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union*. (New York, NY: Pegasus, 1970), 254.

²³ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁴ «В. И. Ленин--Н. П. Горбунову, 26 Января 1921 года» (“V. I. Lenin--N. P. Gorbunov, January 26, 1921”), in Gorjaeva, 19.

²⁵ 3,200 km. There are 1.6 kilometers per verst.

²⁶ Guback, *Innovation*, 12

²⁷ «Постановление Совета Труда и Оборны об организации устной газеты» (“Decree of the Labor and Defense Soviet on the Organization of the Oral Newspapers”), in Gorjaeva, 20.

homes. He allotted the radio laboratory two and a half months to complete the project, emphasizing the expedited attempts to create sustainable broadcasting in Soviet Russia.²⁸ Despite the Civil War-induced electric energy shortage in 1920, Nizhny Novgorod's radio laboratory was given high priority: it was never limited in its use of energy resources, and the laboratory workers were exempt from the state-wide draft.²⁹ Further, in one of Lenin's dictation's to Stalin's (back then, one of the Commissars of the Soviet National Council) office, he suggested utilizing financial resources from Soviet Russia's National Treasury, which held funds allocated only for emergencies.³⁰ Lenin did not limit radio development in terms of energy or monetary funds, and he often exalted radio broadcasting as the ultimate force of propaganda.

In the early days of Soviet Russia, radio occupied the private sector, but as the political advantages of radio became apparent and the country entered the Civil War, the military commandeered the airwaves.³¹ During the war, radio stations were subordinated to the military command of marine and naval infantry, but radio grew into a more multifaceted political tool that both informed and involved the Soviet citizens. The first test of radio equipment in Moscow was on August 18, 1922 and soon after, the station, known as The Comintern Radio Station, broadcasted its first radio concert.³² On October 27, the station began operating, though "the official opening was reserved for a special occasion, November 7, 1922, the fifth anniversary of the Revolution."³³ Lenin's voice

²⁸ «Гостановление Совета Рабоче Крестьянской Обороны о постройке Центральной радиотелефонной станции действия в 2000 верст» ("Decree of the Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Defense on Building a Central Radio Station with the Capability of Broadcasting 2000 verst"), in Gorjaeva, 17.

²⁹ Ibid, in Gorjaeva, 18.

³⁰ «Письма В.И. Ленина И. В. Сталину для членов Политбюро ЦК РКП (Б) о развитии радиотехники» (Letter from V. I. Lenin to I.V. Stalin for a Member of the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks on the Development of Radio Technology), in Gorjaeva, 20-21.

³¹ «О централизации радиотехнического дела Советской Республики» ("On the Centralization of Radio Technology for the Soviet Republic"), in Gorjaeva, 15.

³² Guback, *Innovation*, 32.

³³ Ibid., 33.

was heard over the air in photograph recordings of his speeches, and radio quickly spread throughout Russia. As radio gained importance, its ownership was gradually completely transitioned to the state. A decree from the Soviet National Commissars' Council entitled "On the Centralization of Radio Technology for the Soviet Republic" outlines the plan for transitioning radio to state ownership.³⁴ Through the Commissar of Post Offices and Telegraphs, the Department of Radio Technology was created in order to maintain control over what the radios transmitted.

The Party further encroached on broadcasting, essentially taking complete control over radio stations. In a resolution from the Central Committee, "On Control of Radio Broadcasting," the Communist Party asserts that all party committees on all territories where stations are located should take control over the work of those stations "and use them to the fullest extent in propaganda and educational purposes" as well as "assure political correctness of the materials broadcasted."³⁵ In order to carry out these goals, local Party Committees were instructed to:

1. Designate a responsible Party member as a leader of broadcasting who would be responsible for the organizational aspects and the content of *all* [italics are mine] broadcasted materials. This person will report to a relevant Party committee.
2. To establish *mandatory* [italics are mine] review of the plans and programs of all broadcasting by the Party Committees.
3. Carefully select the presenters and lecturers that participate in *radioagitatsia*, thus creating a politically correct body of broadcasters.
4. Undertake measures to secure the microphones so that every broadcast will be transmitted only with the permission of the responsible leader in charge of the station.

³⁴ «О централизации радиотехнического дела Советской Республики» ("On the Centralization of Radio Technology for the Soviet Republic"), in Gorjaeva, 15.

³⁵ «Постановление ЦК ВКП (Б) «О руководстве радиовещанием» ("The Resolution from the Central Committee "On Control of Radio Broadcasting""), January 10, 1927, in Gorjaeva, 27.

5. Glavlit [the central censorship organization]...should have its designees present in all radio transmitting stations.³⁶

Rather than just serving as an alternative media outlet to newspapers, radio was recognized by the state as an especially vital form of propaganda: the “Central Committee...acknowledges the organization of *radioagitatsia*³⁷ as an extremely important and necessary task as a new weapon of propaganda among the masses.”³⁸ The Central Committee announced that rather than just on main city squares, loudspeakers would be placed in workers’ clubs, peasants’ clubs and village libraries.³⁹ The spread of radio extended beyond Moscow and developed through the Soviet Union’s periphery, “targeting big industrial centers as well as the entire territory of the Soviet Union.”⁴⁰ As radio expanded outward geographically, it moved inward into the personal lives of citizens of the Soviet Union.

Broadcasting extended beyond the political and infiltrated the personal sphere: the general population’s interest in radio culminated in the creation of various radio clubs (called “Friends of Radio/*Druz’ia Radio*”), uniting people interested in radio technology and broadcasting. The Party immediately took special interest in these groups, suggesting that the leadership of the organizations be chosen from Party members with appropriate technological expertise.⁴¹ However, the Party’s intentions extended beyond simply supplying technical support to hobby clubs, and were in fact quite transparent: the stated

³⁶ «Постановление ЦК ВКП (Б) «О руководстве радиовещанием» (“The Resolution from the Central Committee “On Control of Radio Broadcasting”), January 10, 1927, in Gorjaeva, 27-8.

³⁷ Propaganda by means of radio broadcasting.

³⁸ «Из постановления ЦК РКП (Б) «О радиоагитации»» (“From the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks “On Radioagitatsia”), March 2, 1925, in Gorjaeva, 25.

³⁹ Ibid., in Gorjaeva, 25.

⁴⁰ «Из постановления ЦК РКП (Б) «О радиоагитации»» (“From the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks “On Radioagitatsia”), June 22, 1925, in Gorjaeva, 26.

⁴¹ «Циркуляр ЦК РКП (Б) «О помощи и руководстве организациями Общества друзей радио (ОДР)»» (“On Help and Leadership in the Organization of the “Friends of Radio Clubs”), July 14, 1925, in Gorjaeva 26-7.

reason for such attention to these clubs was that radio should play “as monumental means of *agitatsia* and propaganda.”⁴²

Pavel Mikhailovich Kerzhentsev, a theoretician of Soviet Culture and Chair of the Soviet Radio Committee, outlined the tasks of radio committees, explaining that radio and radio transmission obtained extremely political meanings: “the radio committees became the quickest political newspapers that reach out to the farthest corners of the Soviet Union faster than any other newspaper.” He continues to explain that radio encouraged “self-education,”⁴³ as it transmitted works of literature and music, and through those, promoted intellectual relaxation. Radio became a lauded, versatile media form once its benefits were recognized, and “Next to mass media and film, radio is now the mightiest weapon of communist education for the masses.”⁴⁴

In 1924, Soviet Union began international radio broadcasting “as it is known today, in voice and intended for listeners with their own radio sets.”⁴⁵ Anatoly Vasilievich Lunacharsky, the Soviet People’s Commissar for Education and Enlightenment, gave a radio lecture⁴⁶ on November 23, 1924 on the “Culture of the Soviet Union and the Importance of Radio.”⁴⁷ He spoke about the “magic abilities of radio” and encouraged people to “say that we will use it for the unification of people and exclaim ‘hail to the radio! Hail to the continuing progress in the deep unification of Communism for the future victory on the arena of class struggle that will end with the

⁴² Ibid, 27.

⁴³ P.M. Kerzhentsev, “Program Article,” *Govorit SSSR*, 3 no. 1 (1934), 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1997), 3.

⁴⁶ Радиолекция

⁴⁷ «Культура СССР и значение радио» (“Culture of the Soviet Union and the Importance of Radio”), November 23, 1924, in Gorjaeva 91.

creation of true human culture.”⁴⁸ He declared the importance of radio in the unification of workers and class struggle, and condemned bourgeois radio as an instrument of the system of lies that protects the ideas needed for the ruling class. But, Lunacharsky insisted, “we can reply to the bourgeois poison with a strong antidote provided by our Communist press, our Communist film, and our Communist radio...we know that we will be able to clean radio from the stains put upon it by fatty bourgeois fingers.”⁴⁹ In order to ensure that radio adhered to Communist goals and evaded capitalist corruption, the government considered it as an art form subject to Socialist Realism just as much as a novel, painting, or musical composition.

The growth of radio coincided with the implementation of Socialist Realism as the *only* permitted method of artistic expression in the Soviet Union, and adjusted its broadcasting model according to the requirements outlined at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Socialist Realism demanded of art the following four obligations: party loyalty (*partiinnost*), ideological commitment (*idenost*), accessibility of the art form for the masses (*narodnost*), and class-conscious works that supported the needs of the proletariat (*klassovost*).

Radio, by its very nature, epitomized the requirements of Socialist Realism. (I would argue that radio is truly the most ideal form of mass media for *any* ideological slant,⁵⁰ as a stream of auditory programming does not have the physical or visual space that a book or film does in which to imbed suggestive plot details or make subversive visual juxtapositions. Radio has no *mise en scène*, but is a solitary stream, and in its limitations, radio asserts its power.) Since it moved from a private enterprise to state-run

⁴⁸ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 94.

⁵⁰ Including democratic, as will be discussed within the context of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

political entity, radio necessarily promoted party loyalty: it was illegal and impossible to broadcast anything else. This can be extended to ideological commitment. As far as accessibility, the desirability of radio for the Soviet Union resided in its appeal to the broad masses. With no prerequisite of literacy or higher education, radio became a socially (but not politically) neutral mode of communication.

In order to demonstrate true adherence to Socialist Realism, a work of art should have displayed versatility that would allow for a seamless transposition between various media forms. News printed in a physical newspaper should demonstrate the same accessibility and clarity as news over the radio; literature in books should be able to transition to an auditory narrative without any confusion. Thus, literature's role as propaganda increased as plots and didactic messages previously constrained within the pages of a book (and to the literate population) were broadcasted over the radio. In an article titled "The Writer and the Radio" in *Govorit SSSR*, an editorial explained: "Any *good* [italics are mine--LN] work of Soviet literature is easy to transmit... Usually this may result in shortening and simplifying some of the plot lines, but a good writer, a great Soviet writer, should be able to adapt his work to the conditions of radio transmission."⁵¹ In collective reply to the editorial, Soviet writers such as Aleksei Tolstoy, Yuri Tynianov, and Mikhail Kazakov agreed that any important literary work should be transmittable by radio.⁵² Transmissibility became a measurement of literary success, and since the adaptation of literature to radio required writing clearly and unambiguously, transmissibility became an egalitarian symbol of clarity and accessibility for everyone.

⁵¹ *Govorit SSSR*, 19 (1934), 10.

⁵² *Govorit SSSR*, 24 (1924), 5.

Literature was subordinated to the rules of radio transmission, and the methods of radio shaped the production of literature.⁵³

In order to promote radio as a venue for literature, stations invited writers to produce pieces for the radio. Kerzhentsev writes, “The work for radio should be considered as extremely important so that the artists, writers, and musicians should feel proud and privileged to perform in front of the microphone.”⁵⁴ He insists that radio transmission of works of literature should demonstrate two qualities: they should be politically savvy and in tune with the demands of the time, and that “only those qualities will bring radio transmission to the same level as press.”⁵⁵

In addition to involving writers in a relationship of reciprocity, radio stations also reached out to their audiences.⁵⁶ In the 1930s, a new plane of communication was developed as stations solicited letters from radio listeners, connecting the audience not only on a political level but personal as well. Stations accepted letters from listeners, allowing an interactive experience with the media. In 1933, the Radio Committee received 2-3,000 letters a month, and the following year, the number of letters jumped to 22-25,000 letters a month, illustrating the growing popularity of both radio listening and listener involvement.⁵⁷ However, the widespread availability of radios did not always serve to further Communist ideals. Radio waves could also provide access to alternative voices, which spread knowledge that contradicted the Communist cause.

As Michael Nelson points out, “The irony of international broadcasting is that what had been started by the Soviet Union ultimately became a significant factor in the

⁵³ A similar relationship can be seen with RFE/RL and the literature it broadcasted over the airwaves. Even dissident literature is necessarily subject to the time and sensory constraints of a radio broadcast.

⁵⁴ Kerzhentsev, “Program,” 28.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Yuri Murashov, “Sovetskii etos i radiofikatsiia pis'ma.” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 86 (2007): 57.

⁵⁷ Murashov, “Sovetskii,” 57.

regime's own downfall.”⁵⁸ The same shortwave radios that were used to listen to Soviet broadcasts were eventually tuned into Western radio stations that contributed to the ideological battle between the Soviet Union and Western powers. “One of the peculiarities of Soviet space was its topological impermeability,” explains Epstein, “the notion that it could be understood only ‘from the inside.’ It was assumed to be impenetrable to those located outside of it”⁵⁹ One of the successes of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty is that an “inside” perspective is exactly what they intended to broadcast.

From their creation as Cold War institutions, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty aimed to provide alternative broadcasts to people throughout the Soviet Union and countries that fell victim to Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. The stations best exemplify the clandestine exchange of information to and from the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states, when people and ideas silenced by the government found alternate outlets of expression. They were unique in that they intended to provide radio broadcasts that would act as surrogate home country programs, with regionally specific news, rather than channeling American news and views into the countries as did The Voice of America (1942-present): “Only with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty...did a country establish broadcast services whose purpose was to change the form of government in foreign nations by airing news not about the country from which the broadcasts originated, but about the countries that were the broadcast targets.”⁶⁰ Thus, the broadcasting practices of these stations will be used as case studies to investigate how

⁵⁸ Nelson, *War*, 1.

⁵⁹ Mikhail Epstein, “Russo-Soviet Topoi,” in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, eds. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 297.

⁶⁰ Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, (Lexington, KY: The UP of Kentucky, 2000), 5-6.

radio broadcasting led to the spread of democratic ideas in the Soviet Union and East European countries.

James Critchlow describes how media transitioned when “wartime cooperation between the Soviet Union and its Western allies degenerated into Cold War tension.”⁶¹ In order to combat the growing power of Soviet media, Western governments started using shortwave radios and Britain and the United States began directly broadcasting into the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.⁶² Both The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and The Voice of America (VOA) can be considered strictly “Western” broadcasting stations, as they spoke for their home countries (giving VOA something of an eponymous mission), while the United States-funded Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty served as “surrogate” home stations for the countries to which they broadcasted, “attempting to provide listeners with the kind of domestically oriented programs that they might expect from their own radio stations if the latter were free of censorship.”⁶³

While the concept of giving “voice to the voiceless” is powerful on its own, the more immediate goal of RFE/RL--to provide news to countries where it is heavily censored--can also be counted as a great contributor to undermining the Soviet government. K.J. McNamara explains that behind every provider of alternative information is a source of authority (in the case of RFE/RL, this authority is the U.S. government).⁶⁴ Communist governments, which “monopolize information in order to legitimize their power” are therefore compromised when a new source of information is present.⁶⁵ Foreign broadcasts made available facts and news that Soviet media withheld

⁶¹ James Critchlow, “Western Cold War Broadcasting.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1 (1999): 168-75.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁴ K.J. McNamara, “Reaching Captive Minds with Radio.” *Orbis* 36, no. 1 (1992): 31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

from the population, and by doing this, they undermined totalitarian regimes by “ending the information monopoly”⁶⁶ within the countries’ borders.

During World War II, the United States created a propaganda agency, the Office of War Information (OWI), and simultaneously created the VOA.⁶⁷ When the war came to an end, the VOA’s budget was significantly decreased, and there was unrest among Congress members who believed that the United States no longer had a role in international broadcasting.⁶⁸ However, when the threat of Communism to the United States emerged from the Soviet Union and satellite countries of Eastern Europe, the United States saw an opportunity for a revised role in radio broadcasting. Since “the Soviets and local Communists moved expeditiously to silence opposition voices, eliminate an independent press, outlaw non-Communist political parties, neutralize religion, and seal off borders from foreign influence,”⁶⁹ General Lucius Clay announced the need for something other than Voice of America. He called for a station that did not just share news about America, but “would speak to each country behind the Iron Curtain in its own language, and from the throats of its own leaders who fled for their lives because of their beliefs in freedom.”⁷⁰ While his call to order is rather grandiose and dramatic, this is indeed what the United States did with its new approach to international broadcasting.

In considering why the United States government chose to continue international radio broadcasting as opposed to developing new technologies (television broadcasts, newspapers, etc.), the same issues present in the early days of Soviet Union reappear.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁷ Puddington, Broadcasting, 7.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Nelson, War, 39.

Although the nations held different intentions with their broadcasts and began decades apart, the core benefits of radio maintained a high level of importance. While the Soviet Union overcame its geographical obstacle in uniting the country across a vast expanse of land, the United States faced a similar problem: in promoting the message of democracy, they were an ocean away. The struggle with literacy⁷¹ remained, as well as the issue of practicality: newspapers required significant amounts of materials and even more relevant to the American case, physical distribution. It would be both incredibly difficult (impossible) and dangerous for the citizens of countries to which the U.S. broadcasted if subversive newspapers were printed and passed out to the population.⁷² Further, there is something significant about the idea of simultaneous listening, even if only on a symbolic level. In the Soviet Union, people from Leningrad to Irkutsk to Vladivostock were united by listening to the Moscow news at the same time⁷³, providing the feeling that the country was not disjoint, but united in its struggle against bourgeois corruption. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, citizens faced unspeakable terror and persecution, and on a more superficial but no less important level was “how lonely everyone felt and how cut off from the greater tradition of Western learning and thought.”⁷⁴ With American broadcasts, tuning into foreign stations provided the hope that someone else was also listening--a hope that there was someone else with opposing ideas. Thus, an alternative community of free thinkers was prompted.

If propaganda is stripped of its Communist/Socialist connotations, then Soviet and American radio followed essentially the same process: in order to best “distribute”

⁷¹ Moreover, since the U.S. broadcasted to multiple countries with multiple languages, radio again proved economical as instead of printing five different versions of the same news--a considerable use of capital--translators could instead be used.

⁷² It is interesting to note that at one point, Radio Free Europe did have a balloon campaign, where they sent millions of leaflets across the border of the Iron Curtain.

⁷³ The news was always broadcasted according to Moscow time.

⁷⁴ Marcin Krol, “Listening through the Jamming.” *American Scholar* 61, no. 3 (1992): 2.

propaganda, each nation turned to the powerful force of radio. This is true for RFE/RL as well as VOA and BBC, but RFE/RL departs from other western stations in that they did not simply use the Soviet Union's mass media of choice against the government who first advocated radio, but also their own citizens.

The sizable population of displaced people following WWII--people who escaped from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to major international cities--presented an opportunity for the U.S. government to use them as a "powerful force against their communist controlled homelands."⁷⁵ The NCFE recognized an opportunity to establish mutually beneficial relationships with refugees: in exchange for employment, the population of émigrés could provide an invaluable wealth of knowledge: "Many of the refugees had been leaders in the societies from which they had emigrated, and their backgrounds could be used to obtain a better understanding of the techniques and devices that were being used by the Communists to undermine the democratic governments."⁷⁶ Émigrés were valuable not only in their oppositional views to their former governments, but also because they provided the ultimate source of cultural knowledge and knew how to "appeal to their former fellow citizens."⁷⁷ George Kennan, often called "the father of our project"⁷⁸ even though he was never officially affiliated with the radios, spearheaded the creation of the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), asking Ambassador Joseph Grew to organize civilians into an anticommunist organization "that was dedicated to returning democracy to Eastern Europe, using the talents of the refugees."⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Cissie Dore Hill, "Voices of Hope: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty." *Hoover Digest*, no. 4 (2001), 1.

⁷⁶ Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, (New York, NY: Praeger, 1983) 2.

⁷⁷ James L. Tyson, *U.S. International Broadcasting and National Security*, (New York, NY: Ramapo P, 1983) 89.

⁷⁸ Puddington, *Broadcasting*, 8

⁷⁹ Hill, "Voices," 1.

In 1949, The NCFE,⁸⁰ initially headed by Allen Dulles and then by Joseph Grew,⁸¹ announced its official objectives as an organization.

The goal of the radios was not limited to providing truthful news, “but also to bring about the peaceful demise of the Communist system and the liberation of what were known as satellite nations.”⁸² In order to do so, the NCFE made it apparent that exile relations were a main priority,⁸³ and initial radio⁸⁴ plans were quite simple: exiled leaders and scholars⁸⁵ were provided with microphones and “given free rein to speak to their countrymen.”⁸⁶ The outlined plan for the exiles can be summarized into three main goals: to find occupations for the exiles, to put their voices on the air, and to allow the exiles to experience democracy.⁸⁷ The latter goal is rather vague, but to extrapolate further, the government wanted exiles to see democracy “in action,” with the hope that this would add credibility to the broadcasts. Rather than simply being seen as disaffected exiles from the USSR and Eastern Europe, what a testament to democracy if they were also converted! Radio Free Europe (RFE) executives recruited nationals from the five countries to which the station intended to broadcast: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.⁸⁸

RFE employed émigrés abroad and in the United States, though the station widely drew upon the population in New York, as it was “the preferred destination for those among the intellectual elite who were fed up with Soviet restrictions, Soviet censorship,

⁸⁰ Initially known as the Free Europe Committee (FEC).

⁸¹ In addition to Dulles and Grewe, the board comprised powerful and influential members, among them Dwight Eisenhower, former attorney general Francis Biddle, Dewitt Wallace (owner of *Reader's Digest*), and Henry Luce of Time, Inc.

⁸² Puddington, *Broadcasting*, X.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸⁴ In addition to radio broadcasting, there was also a publishing division of the Free Europe Committee called Free Europe Press.

⁸⁵ In *Scaling the Wall: Talking to Eastern Europe--The Best of Radio Free Europe*, George Urban notes that East European intellectuals were not only engaged by means of employment, they also served as an audience for RFE's broadcasts. In addition to news broadcasting, RFE transmitted educational lectures.

⁸⁶ Puddington, *Broadcasting*, 17.

⁸⁷ Nelson, *War*, 41.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

Soviet poverty, and especially, Soviet hypocrisy.”⁸⁹ RFE could recruit from a talented population of reporters, writers, poets, musicians, and commentators, who having been grudging adherents to the Soviet system, were willing to discuss the negative attributes and the “facts about the natural disasters and man-made catastrophes that were systematically covered up by Soviet authorities.”⁹⁰ The relationship between RFE and the émigré population (while some may call it exploitative) involved a fair amount of reciprocity, as “Radio Free Europe was a very important--for some the sole--source of income”⁹¹ for Polish, Hungarian, and Czech writers and intellectuals in exile.

RFE’s first official broadcast was on July 4,⁹² 1950 from West Germany, though it was “little more than an announcement of the impending commencement of regular programming” which began on July 14 on Bastille Day, significant in Europe as day of revolution against tyranny.⁹³ The first broadcasts were sent to Czechoslovakia, and then later in the year to Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Bulgaria.⁹⁴ The next year on May 1 (symbolic as May Day is a workers’ holiday and particularly important in Communist countries) broadcasting began from a larger transmission facility in Holzkirchen, Germany, near Munich.⁹⁵ Munich eventually became the official headquarters of RFE for a variety of reasons: it was convenient and necessary to have a European production site, West Germany shared a border with Czechoslovakia and Poland so it was geographically strategic, and many émigrés lived there.

The NCFE was funded through the CIA (by Congress) until 1972, but preferred to present itself as a private enterprise funded by the donations of Americans dedicated to

⁸⁹ Puddington, *Broadcasting*, X

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Krol, “Listening,” 2.

⁹² This date was chosen for obvious symbolic reasons.

⁹³ Puddington, *Broadcasting*, 18.

⁹⁴ Hill, “Voices,” 2.

⁹⁵ Where RFE/RL was headquartered until its move to Prague.

the cause of freedom. A *New York Times* article explains, “Radio Free Europe, which went on the air on July 4, and is scheduled to begin regular operations on July 14, promises to be one of the unique operations in the history of broadcasting. *Financed as a private venture by a group of American citizens*, [italics are mine--LN] with the public at large invited to participate through individual subscription, the outlet is designed to be ‘the voice of freedom.’”⁹⁶ To emphasize the supposed private investment into the NCFE, another organization--the Crusade for Freedom--was created to encourage even more funding for Radio Free Europe.⁹⁷ The Crusade’s “mascot” was a 10-ton bell with a “laurel wreath symbolizing peace encircling the top and a frieze of five figures representing the five races of humankind passing the torch of freedom.”⁹⁸ The committee displayed the bell throughout cities in America,⁹⁹ rallying citizens who believed in the values set forth by Radio Free Europe, and securing funding that although not enough to contribute substantially, did demonstrate the public support of the Crusade. Accompanying the parades were pithy slogans:¹⁰⁰ “Fight the Big Lie with the Big Truth” and “Help Truth Fight Communism,”¹⁰¹ and Americans signed “freedom scrolls” and contributed “truth dollars.”¹⁰²

As RFE successful gained listeners in Eastern Europe and tensions increased between the United States and USSR, the CIA resolved to pursue a similar endeavor in the Soviet Union, and thus was born RFE’s sister station Radio Liberty. Prior to Radio Liberty’s first broadcast, John Foster Dulles (president-elect Dwight Eisenhower’s

⁹⁶ Jack Gould. "RADIO FREE EUROPE; A Unique Private Enterprise Is Set Up To Pierce Russia's Iron Curtain Channels Set-Up Craftsmanship Unity." *The New York Times* 9 July 1950.

⁹⁷ Hill, “Voices,” 2.

⁹⁸ Hill, “Voices,” 2.

⁹⁹ It was later permanently installed in West Berlin.

¹⁰⁰ Comparable to the simple, powerful messages present in Soviet propaganda!

¹⁰¹ Hill, “Voices,” 2.

¹⁰² Nelson, *War*, 48.

secretary of state designate) appealed before senate, asking for “liberation of the captive peoples.”¹⁰³ In early March, 1953 under the auspices of the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (Amcomlib), Radio Liberation (eventually changed to Radio Liberty) debuted.¹⁰⁴ Soon after its first few broadcasts, Radio Liberty, was confronted with the story of Stalin’s death on March 5, 1953, assigning it the symbolic meaning of an end of an era of Terror.

In order to illustrate the “duality” of RFE/RL’s broadcasting--that is, the radios broadcasted both from the United States as a foreign news source as well as broadcasting “internal” information, such as literature--a discussion of *samizdat*¹⁰⁵ literature is helpful. *Samizdat* included works of political dissent, “but also included literary works that failed to receive the official seal of approval, as well as information on human rights.”¹⁰⁶ The idea of *samizdat* translated into other forms of media, including radio, resulting in the term *radizdat*.¹⁰⁷ Often, these *samizdat* publications would be smuggled to the West. Radio Liberty had an archive of these materials, and also broadcasted some of the documents over the air, right back to the public who was denied access to these works by the Soviet government.

Radio Liberty in particular served an important role for dissident Soviet writers who could not publish their works through government-supported presses: the station frequently broadcasted *samizdat* writings and collected an important archive of *samizdat* works in Munich. Radio Liberty published *samizdat* documents in weekly bulletins over

¹⁰³ James Critchlow, *Radio Hole-in-the-Head: An Insiders Story of Cold War Broadcasting*, (Washington, D.C: American UP, 1995), 2.

¹⁰⁴ Hill postulates that the reason Radio Liberty is even less known than RFE is because there was no “fanfare, promotion, and fund-raising with celebrity chairmen” (4). Rather, Radio Liberty maintained a low profile.

¹⁰⁵ Translated from Russian, *samizdat* means “self-printed” and the term is applicable to underground, clandestine publications that were created by individuals, rather than presses and illegally circulated.

¹⁰⁶ R. Eugene Parta, *Discovering the Hidden Listener An Assessment of Radio Liberty And Western Broadcasting to the USSR During the Cold War* (New York: Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007), 52.

¹⁰⁷ F.J.M. Feldbrugge, *Samizdat and Political Dissent in the Soviet Union*, (Netherlands: A.W. Sijthoff International Company, B.V., 1975), 4.

the radio (*Materialy Samizdata*/Materials of Samizdat).¹⁰⁸ The words of authors like Boris Pasternak, Joseph Brodsky, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Siniavskii, and countless others were broadcasted over the radio, presenting a revolutionary alternative to printed *samizdat* material.¹⁰⁹ Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* was serialized and broadcasted on RFE's Polish Service in 15-minute intervals.¹¹⁰ Marcin Krol remembers hearing Witold Gombrowicz and Czeslaw Milosz who may have been "entirely forgotten but for the opportunity to communicate with their countrymen over Radio Free Europe."¹¹¹ While in many ways it can be argued that RFE/RL essentially "preached to the converted,"¹¹² this in no way underscores its importance. For many listeners of RFE/RL, "the broadcasts were their only contact with the outside world"¹¹³ The great success of RFE/RL even apart from its contribution to the downfall of the USSR is that it raised awareness about an alternative thought venue, and people who held subversive views were connected in a community of listeners with the potential to eventually bring recognition to their struggles.¹¹⁴

RFE and RL did not broadcast without opposition from the target countries.¹¹⁵ From the beginning of its broadcasts, RFE "became the fiercely hated enemy of all totalitarian leaders in Eastern Europe."¹¹⁶ Within seconds of Radio Liberty's broadcasts in 1953¹¹⁷, the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries reacted by jamming the radio waves: on the same frequencies as the radio stations, they simultaneously

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁹ Printed *samizdat* works were often hand-written on carbon-copy paper and passed from reader to reader, a dangerous method of transport.

¹¹⁰ Hill, "Voices," 4.

¹¹¹ Krol, "Listening," 432.

¹¹² McNamara, "Reaching," 25.

¹¹³ Critchlow, "Western," 2.

¹¹⁴ McNamara, "Reaching," 26.

¹¹⁵ A fascinating and important facet of RFE/RL history that cannot fit within the space limits is the chain of bizarre sabotage that ranged from spies, mysterious murders, poisoned saltshakers and umbrellas, and terrorist plots.

¹¹⁶ Krol, "Listening," 1.

¹¹⁷ Critchlow, *Hole-in-the-head*, 67.

broadcasted shrieks, howls, or white noise (“KGB jazz”¹¹⁸) which effectively garbled RFE and RL’s transmissions.¹¹⁹ Krol asserts that the importance of RFE¹²⁰ can be seen in the reaction Communist powers had to the broadcasting--they did everything in their power to stop the transmissions.¹²¹ He recalls his father listening to the radio and hearing “enormous screeches, drumming sounds, and mysterious bleeps...until, finally, father found what he wanted.”¹²² However, even the jamming served to have a “positive effect on morale for us in Munich,” according to James Critchlow.¹²³

Although the Soviet Union and East European countries attempted to block out the transmissions from RFE/RL, people were still able to tune into the stations. Gene Sosin argues that the regime could have “saved millions of rubles in electronic costs and man hours simply by confiscating all radios and using loudspeakers exclusively.”¹²⁴ However, the vast network of personal radios throughout the Soviet Bloc made this highly impractical. By taking away the population’s personal radios, Communist governments would not only remove the influence of RFE/RL: they would also effectually remove their own strategic placement in the homes of their citizens, taking the history of radio full circle.

In a celebratory speech for the tenth anniversary of Soviet broadcasting, Lenin’s widow, Nadezhda K. Krupskaya, elucidates radio’s continued strengths while simultaneously comparing Soviet radio to radio broadcasts of capitalist countries: “Radio broadcasting is of enormous importance. It takes out of oblivion the most far removed

¹¹⁸ McNamara, “Reaching,” 27.

¹¹⁹ Hill, “Voices,” 5.

¹²⁰ Krol considers RFE to be the “most brilliant move against communism--more important, in [his] view, than embargoes, nuclear weapons, and various diplomatic and military pressures” (1).

¹²¹ Krol, “Listening,” 431.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 432.

¹²³ Critchlow, *Radio Hole-in-the-Head*, 67.

¹²⁴ Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider’s Memoir of Radio Liberty*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1999), 14-15.

corners of the USSR. It brings knowledge into the broad masses, it propagates, helps the masses to organize themselves anew... If in the capitalist countries radio broadcasting disorients and disorganizes masses, in the Soviet Union, the radio remains a great instrument of Socialist construction.”¹²⁵ Her words can be considered premonitory: while the Soviet Union and East European countries utilized radio as a constructive tool, Western stations such as RFE/RL hijacked the radio infrastructure and methods created by Soviet and East European governments, and used them to perpetuate their own form of propaganda. Despite the Soviet Union’s attempts to continue its task of nation building, capitalist broadcasts from RFE/RL undermined totalitarian governments and disorganized their listeners.

RFE/RL aimed to tell the truth, as well as provide a voice for the opposition. They broadcasted not as American stations (though they most certainly adhered to democratic ideals), but as “surrogate” stations that catered news and broadcasts to citizens living in each country to which RFE/RL broadcasted. To further the potency of their broadcasts, they utilized the cultural knowledge and experience of a sizable émigré community. While its role in the dissolution of the USSR is debated, RFE/RL smartly capitalized on elements of Soviet system: the émigré population and methods of broadcasting that Lenin himself advocated. Using former Soviet and East European citizens against their former homelands, and further, using the media form developed and advocated by Lenin himself to promote an anti-Communist dialog, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty eventual produced a mutual process of broadcasting--the Soviet Bloc was able to hear the world, and the world was able to hear the Soviet Bloc.

¹²⁵ «Приветствие по случаю 10-летия советского радиовещания» (“Celebratory Speech for the 10th Anniversary of Soviet Broadcasting”), 1934, in Gorjaeva 363.

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