Preface

1. The survey was carried out by Vox Populi on 11–12 September 1991 with a sample size of 1,000. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said they listened to foreign radio broadcasts during the crisis: 30% heard Radio Liberty, 18% BBC, 15% VOA and 7% Deutsche Welle. The results were published in “Crisis Compendium: Analyses of Media Use in the USSR During the Coup Attempt,” Report #1017/92, January 1992, Media and Opinion Research, RFE/RL Research Institute. Other studies carried out by local research institutes in the USSR published in this compendium showed high rates of listening to Radio Liberty’s Russian service during the coup: Kiev 24%, Tbilisi 18%, Tallin 17%, Riga 38%, Yerevan 30%, Lithuania 35%. Listening was also high for broadcasts in the local languages (Ukrainian, Georgian, Estonian, Latvian, Armenian and Lithuanian) but generally lower than in Russian.

2. Based on a telephone survey of 704 members of Moscow-based political and intellectual elites carried out by Vox Populi between September 15 and 23, 1991. The report, Research Memorandum 1010/91 is published in the “Crisis Compendium” cited above.


Section One: Measuring the Audience to Western Broadcasters in the USSR


2. Audience Research at Radio Liberty was founded in 1954 by Dr. Max Ralis who continued in this position until his retirement in 1981. He was succeeded as Director by R. Eugene Parta, who had been working with Ralis since 1969. Dr. Ralis, who came to Radio Liberty from Cornell University, was a pioneer in developing a wide range of techniques, both qualitative and quantitative to study Soviet audiences to Western broadcasts. Audience research was located at RFE/RL headquarters in Munich until 1970 when it moved to Paris. It was known as Audience Research and Program Evaluation until 1981 when it took the name Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (SAAOR).


Section Two: Trends in Listening to Western Broadcasters in the USSR: 1970–1991


2. Ibid., p ii.


7. Rimantus Pleykis, Radiotsentsura. An article based on the author’s earlier (1998) book, Jamming. The article contains updated material from 1998–2000 from information in Soviet archives. “Radio Baltic Waves,” Vilnius, Lithuania, May 2002. p. 6 and p. 37. Pleikys notes that stations were placed in 3 categories according to their perceived hostility: The first category included Radio Liberty, Kol Israel, Radio Tirana and Radio Peking. They were jammed round-the-clock with special noise-producing jamming transmitters. The second category included BBC, Deutsche Welle and VOA which were jammed by signals from the Soviet musical station “Mayak,” which was not as effective as the noise-producing jammers. The third category included Radio Sweden, Radio Canada, Radio France International, Yugoslavia, Egypt, etc. which were not jammed at all after 1968. Radio France International never reported being jammed.

8. A favorite method to enhance audibility under conditions of jamming was to add the 16 and 19 meter bands to Soviet sets which generally did not include meter bands below 25 meters. Audibility was often better on these bands. The “twilight immunity” effect also meant that at certain times of the day jamming was considerably less effective than at other times. In urban areas “dacha listening” in the countryside was a favorite way to escape the heavier ground wave jamming in the cities.


11. Dawn Plumb, “Has the Nuclear Threat Increased? Some Soviet Citizens’ Views,” AR 1–84, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc., February 1984. The data showed an increasing trend from July-September 1982 when 47% replied yes to the title question to October-December 1983 when 65% answered in the affirmative. 43% of the 2,983 Soviet citizens queried ascribed this to an “aggressive Western policy.” Western radio listeners and non-listeners were of the same opinion that the nuclear threat had increased: 56% in each case.
Endnotes


18. Ibid., pp. 5–14.


20. For the sake of convenience, only those four major broadcasters which had the largest audiences are being included here. Of course, there were many other international broadcasters to the USSR, among them Radio France International, Radio Canada International, Radio Sweden, Radio Vatican, etc. but their audiences were generally smaller and because of this difficult to deal with in the MIT simulation.

21. The Moscow-based independent research institute ROMIR conducted the surveys during the period 1993–2001. They were published in RFE/RL’s Media and Opinion Research Report series in 1993 and 1994 and thereafter by InterMedia Research Institute, the successor organization to MOR.
Section Three: Who Were the Listeners and What Did They Hear?

1. Here the Soviet Census definitions for rural and urban are used. “Urban” areas may go down to settlements as small as a few thousand people.

2. R. Eugene Parta, “Civil Liberties and the Soviet Citizen: Attitudinal Types and Western Radio Listening.” AR 6–84, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc. This was SAAOR’s first attempt at putting together a typology of the Soviet population in order to better understand the position of Western radio listeners in the larger society. The analysis was based on a factor analysis of the data that isolated five questions (from a total of 14 that had been used during the survey period) that correlated highly on the issue of civil liberties to build an attitudinal scale which was then projected onto the urban population of the USSR using the MIT computer simulation methodology. The questions dealt with attitudes about issues such as freedom of speech, dissent, legality, the right to emigrate and racial tolerance. The methodology is explained in greater detail on pp. 16–29 of the report. Later, more sophisticated work, in looking at attitudinal patterns and types in USSR and later Russian society involved the application of the Agorametric perceptual mapping methodology, the RISC segmentation (International Research Institute on Social Change) and the PSE Expert model, developed with Prof. Jan Jerschina of Cracow University and Central European Market Research. This work will be examined in a subsequent study.


Section Four: Western Radio’s Place in the USSR Media Environment

1. R. Eugene Parta and Mark Rhodes, “Information Sources and the Soviet Citizen: Domestic Media and Western Radio,” AR 5–81, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc. This study carries an extensive section on comparisons of the SAAOR data with Soviet studies on media behavior, showing that they come to essentially the same findings, with the exception of Western radio listening, data on which was not published in the Soviet studies.


3. Agitprop comes from “agitatsiya and propaganda” and in this context refers to the structured organization of meetings, briefings and lectures held in local Party organizations, at the workplace and in other public venues. This was a highly developed system in the USSR and served as a channel for the Party to get its views and positions across to its membership and to the larger population.

4. Parta and Rhodes, “Information Sources . . .” op. cit., p. 7. The scores for Party members for Western radio listening were 59 vs. 61 for non-members. These scores are the totals of use of Western radio for national and international news.

5. Ibid., pp. 21–27.


Section Five: Western Radio and Topical Issues: Six Brief Case Studies


11. Ibid.

Section Six: Some Provisional Conclusions on the Impact of Western Broadcasting to the USSR

2. Ibid., p. 36.
4. Mark Rhodes, “Soviet TV Innovations Aimed at Reducing Western Radio Audiences,” RM 1–87, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc. April 1987. These changes consisted of greatly increasing the amount of live television programming, instituting a new “breakfast show” along the lines of “Good Morning America,” and introducing a new, less formal late night news program aimed specifically at a younger audience. The main evening TV news magazine “Vremya,” which had come under criticism in Pravda for being dull, monotonous and slow, was also revamped to make it more competitive with Western radio on international news topics. The Pravda article (“Vremya on the Screen: Remarks on Television News,” May 19, 1986) also offered guidelines on how to tackle the problem of
providing increased coverage of the West. While calling for broadcasts describing Western technological and scientific achievements, Pravda noted that they should point out the lack of significance of these achievements for ordinary workers under conditions of capitalism and should highlight “problems facing women and old people and the increase in crime and terrorism in the Western world.” It was now acceptable to be positive about some aspects of Western life (e.g. fast-food restaurants and the interstate highway system) but they should still be presented in a largely negative context.

Section Seven: Epilogue. A Comparison of SAAOR Findings with Data from the Archives of the Institute of Sociology of the USSR Academy of Sciences: Late 1970s and early 1980s.

1. Dr. Elena I. Bashkirova, “Measuring the Foreign Radio Audience in the USSR During the Cold War.” Paper delivered at the Conference on Cold War Broadcasting Impact co-organized by the Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, and the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, with support from the Center for East European and Eurasian Studies, Stanford University and the Open Society Archives, Central European University, Budapest. October 13–15, 2005. The paper will be published as part of a 2-volume publication on the conference under the auspices of the Central European University Press, Budapest, Hungary.
2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 11.
4. Ibid., p. 9.
5. Ibid., p. 9.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
9. Ibid., p. 15.

Appendix A: SAAOR Survey Methodology: Interviewing Soviet Travelers

Appendix C: Data Validation: Comparison of SAAOR Studies with Internal Soviet Studies

1. Mark Rhodes, “A Study of SAAOR Data Validity: Behavior and Opinion Measurement,” AR 5–84, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc. This paper was presented at the 1983 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Kansas City, MO, USA.


6. An article describing the purpose, methodology and results of this poll appeared in the Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt of September 24, 1981 under the pseudonym “Viktor Maxudov.” A translation of this article appears in the appendix of AR 11–81.


8. The results of the unofficial Soviet poll were published in the Danish newspaper, Berlingske Tidende of March 21, 1982.


11. Vesevolod Marinov, “What the Comrades Say,” Time, April 10, 1989. The sample consisted of over 1,000 residents of Moscow and was conducted March 6–14, 1989.


