

viel zu kostspielig war, als dass alle Möglichkeiten hätten genutzt werden können. So richtete die Führung die Entwicklung der Informationsmedien an den Vorlieben der Bürger aus, was in einem Land, in dem die Partei behauptete, die Bedürfnisse der Bürger am besten zu kennen, völlig neu war. In den 1960er Jahren wurde das sowjetische Radio mit umfangreichen Maßnahmen weiterentwickelt, die in erster Linie darauf abzielten, das Publikum zurückzugewinnen. Trotz einiger Fortschritte war der offene Wettbewerb mit den westlichen Rundfunksendern jedoch zum Scheitern verurteilt, und zu Beginn der 1970er Jahre wurde wieder eifrig gestört, um den Einfluss der westlichen Sender zu bekämpfen. In Bezug auf Estland und die anderen Republiken wurde der Kampf um das Publikum noch dadurch erschwert, dass Moskau nicht bereit war, dem lokalen Rundfunkwesen ausreichende Ressourcen und weitere Spielräume zuzugestehen. In dieser Situation stieg die Beliebtheit der westlichen Sendungen nur weiter an. Gegen Ende der 1980er Jahre war die Glaubwürdigkeit der sowjetischen Informationsmedien in den Augen der Bevölkerung schließlich auf einem Tiefpunkt, während zugleich *Voice of America*, BBC, RL und viele andere Stationen als wesentlich glaubwürdiger galten. In Estland aber wurde neben den Radiosendern das finnische Fernsehen, das durch sein Unterhaltungs- und Informationsangebot ein echtes „Fenster zum Westen“ bot, zu einem bedeutenden Medium – eine Tatsache, die in Moskau viel zu spät erkannt wurde.

SUMMARY

*The Dangerous Republics:
Moscow's Media Policy in the
Soviet Baltic Republics*

By the 1960s Soviet authorities began to realize the threat posed by foreign radio broadcasters in the Soviet Union. It appeared that not only were there dozens of foreign broadcasters broadcasting in languages spoken within the Soviet Union, but also that a sizable audience tuned into these broadcasts on a regular basis. From the point of view of people in the Soviet Union, the Baltic republics were a special case. While foreign broadcasting was a relatively new phenomenon, the Baltic republics were used to tuning into foreign broadcasts already by the late 1930s and during the war. Furthermore, Estonia especially was an important source of foreign broadcasts due to neighbouring Finland. This became important when the KGB started to alter its policies concerning the jamming of foreign

broadcasts and excluded Finnish language broadcasts from its list of hostile broadcasts. Furthermore, television broadcasts from Finland could be picked up at the northern coast of Estonia from the late 1950s onwards and more extensively from the late 1960s. Although Finnish media was generally far from hostile to the Soviet Union, it nevertheless gave live coverage to events like the Prague Spring of 1968.

In the Baltic republics, Soviet authorities were losing their media monopoly much earlier than had been previously anticipated. Prevention of the free flow of communication was among the foundational pillars of the Soviet system and therefore the authorities put forth a row of measures for preventing its subjects from listening to foreign broadcasts. These measures, however, mostly failed and were in contradiction with other Soviet measures aiming at expanding the audibility of Soviet radio and the amount of high-quality radio receivers in general. Therefore, authorities also tried to improve Soviet radio programming in order to compete with foreign broadcasts during the 1960s. This policy led to changes and improvements in the Soviet radio, but failed to bring a big difference, especially in the Baltic republics, where local radios were not allowed enough broadcasting space.

The Soviet media policy in the Baltic republics in the 1950s and 1960s was forced to adapt to the situation of foreign broadcasts and was thus, in many regards, defensive. The Baltic republics, especially Estonia were in an exceptional situation when compared to any other Soviet areas with regard to possibilities for following foreign media from the late 1950s onwards.