

THE ROLE OF DIASPORA LATVIANS AND LATVIAN COMMUNITIES  
IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS  
SINCE THE MID-19TH CENTURY

## BALTIC LANGUAGE BROADCASTING: ÉMIGRÉ POLITICS AND AMERICAN COLD WAR RADIOS

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Due to policy and budget constraints, broadcasts in the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages were initially excluded from the American-sponsored Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL). From 1950 until 1976, when Baltic language RL broadcasts finally commenced, Baltic postwar exiles and émigrés began a lobbying campaign in the United States on behalf of such programs. This article examines the relationships that developed between leading Baltic organizations in exile and American politicians and officials involved in Cold War broadcasting. A central theme includes the importance of a generational change within émigré communities in the United States and how this influenced the understanding of the ties between the émigrés and their homelands.

*Key words:* Émigré and exile politics, Cold War broadcasting, Détente, United States Congress, nonrecognition policy.

Commemorating the forty-eighth anniversary of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians gathered in their respective capitals on 23 August 1987 to remember Joseph Stalin's victims and sing songs connoting national independence. This occasion marked the first time when the Soviet authorities permitted such open demonstrations without interruption in the Baltic republics.<sup>1</sup> At the time, activists in the Baltic republics did not realistically believe that these demonstrations would lead to national independence, but believed it was possible to push for "greater democracy and political rights within the existing system."<sup>2</sup> This episode, however, demonstrates the perceived threat that the Soviet authorities believed emanated from Western broadcasts in the Baltic languages.

Leading up to, and following the demonstrations, Soviet officials accused “Western radio voices [...] of instigating the demonstrations” and maintained that the broadcasts were a direct interference in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> Two weeks prior to the commemorations, Baltic activists informed Western broadcasting agencies through dissidents, which resulted in American-sponsored Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe (RFE), as well as Vatican Radio broadcasting news of the planned demonstrations in the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages. Latvian activist Jānis Rožkalns, talking about the demonstrations, claimed, “It’s hard to say for sure, but I don’t believe it would have been possible without Western radio.”<sup>4</sup> Ironically, it may not have been the Western radio broadcasts that turned out thousands of people from Tallinn to Vilnius, but the strong reaction by the Soviet press. Demonstrators interviewed in Vilnius stated they had learned about the events not from radio broadcasts, but the “denunciations in the local and national press.”<sup>5</sup>

Following the restoration of independence to the Baltic States in 1991, many prominent politicians gave credit to American-sponsored broadcasting, particularly RFE for assisting during the transition from Soviet constituent republics to liberal, democratic, and capitalist nations. Former Estonian President Lennart Meri stated before the United States Congress in 1999 that “I am convinced that the broadcasting by itself prevented Moscow from taking even more radical steps against our national movement and thus set the stage for the recover of our independence as well as the dissolution of the Evil Empire as a whole.”<sup>6</sup> During the majority of the Soviet occupation, however, RFE did not broadcast in the Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian languages. It was not until 1975 that Radio Liberty (RL), which was the corresponding broadcasting station to the Soviet Union, began such broadcasts. This article will examine the political activism of Baltic émigrés residing in the United States and the initiation broadcasts in the three Baltic languages. From the moment that the Baltic languages were initially excluded from RFE and RL, politically active exiles and émigrés lobbied American officials for a favorable policy decision concerning these broadcasts. This article argues that during the period of Détente in the late 1960s and

early 1970s, Baltic émigré organizations in the United States successfully lobbied on behalf of Baltic language broadcasts over RL due to not only a number of important dynamics concerning the broadcast institutions that changed, but also the manner in which a new generation of Baltic political activists engaged in lobbying activities.

American-sponsored radio broadcasts to East Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War was based on two methods. The Voice of America (VOA) was the official broadcasting station of the United States. Even though the VOA sought to maintain its credibility through reporting the news “fairly and honestly,” it did have bold ambitions of capitalizing on vulnerabilities within the Soviet thought control system.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, there were two private broadcasting companies that received covert funding from the CIA that allowed postwar exiles from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to directly communicate with their compatriots behind the Iron Curtain. The National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE) began RFE in 1950 with initial broadcasts to Czechoslovakia on 4 July. During the following years, these broadcasts that included news, political analysis, and cultural information expanded to include Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Bulgaria.<sup>8</sup> Radio Liberty was responsible for broadcasts to the Soviet Union and was created by the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (Amcomlib) in 1953.

After the establishment of the NCFE in 1949, politically active exiles from the Baltic States, like other parts of Eastern Europe hoped to work with the new organization to help hasten the demise of the Soviet occupation of their homelands. The decision by American officials and the NCFE organizers to exclude the Baltic languages from RFE broadcasts was met with opposition by Baltic exiles. On 17 March 1950, the Lithuanian American Information Center submitted their first formal protest against the omission of the Baltic States from NCFE activities. A resolution was passed stating that: “Whereas, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, are in urgent need of support of the cause of liberation [...] Therefore, “be it resolved that the Lithuanian Organizations of Chicago appeal and request the NCFE to include Lithuania, and the other two Baltic States, in the Com-

mittee's plans and National Program for the liberation of Soviet-enslaved and dominated Europe."<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding formal protests and private lobbying efforts directed at the American State Department officials, there were two structural policy problems that resulted in the continued exclusion of the Baltic languages from both RFE and RL.

The guiding principle of American policy toward the Soviet-occupied Baltic republics was the continued nonrecognition of the annexation that was first declared by Acting Secretary of State Sumner E. Welles in July 1940.<sup>10</sup> Throughout World War II and the duration of the Cold War, the United States continued to recognize diplomats accredited to the United States from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania before the 1940 annexation. The nonrecognition policy was the prism through which any directive about the three republics was viewed. One goal of the NCFE and its RFE broadcasts was to organize anti-communist exiles in the United States to serve as surrogates for the lack of formal democratic institutions in the Eastern bloc. From the perspective of American policymakers, such committees might duplicate, or worse, make the exiled diplomats representing the Baltic republics irrelevant within the broader exiled communities globally.<sup>11</sup> Beyond the potential impact that deeper cooperation between the NCFE and Baltic exiles might have had on the sanctity of the nonrecognition policy, there were long-standing funding problems that prohibited the expansion of broadcasts in the Baltic languages. During 1952 and 1953 there were internal studies conducted by the NCFE and the State Department officials to determine the cost of commencing Baltic language broadcasts. Taking into consideration the number of radio sets believed to be capable of receiving broadcasts in East Europe, broadcasts in the Baltic languages were prohibitively expensive. Compared to the Czechoslovakian broadcasts, which were estimated as costing \$0.762 per radio set per year, broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian would cost on average \$18.22 per radio set per year.<sup>12</sup> RFE broadcasts to the Baltic republics were simply considered a poor use of limited resources.

The policy arguments used against the beginning of Baltic broadcasts over RFE were used in favor of beginning broadcasts in

the Baltic languages over the VOA. On 16 February 1951, the VOA began fifteen-minute daily programs in the Lithuanian language with messages from exiled Lithuanian Ambassador to the United States Povilas Žadeikis and Under Secretary of State Edward W. Barrett.<sup>13</sup> State Department officials argued that the nonrecognition policy afforded the United States the possibility of not being bound by diplomatic protocol over radio broadcasts like they were with the satellite states in Eastern Europe. Thus, the VOA could broadcast in a more provocative manner in the Baltic languages compared to other countries. Although cooperation between the NCFE and the Baltic exile communities eventually led to the establishment of consultative panels in 1951, radio broadcasts over RFE never materialized.

Throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s, the major Baltic organizations in the United States, the American Latvian Association (ALA), American Lithuanian Council (ALT), and the Estonian American National Committee (EANC) as well as the exiled diplomats in Washington and New York City continued to lobby on behalf of RFE broadcasts. There were myriad reasons for the failure of this first generation of political activism in the United States, including the inability of exiles to cooperate among their ranks and unwillingness to pursue more flexible policies. Following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, it seemed as though there would be few opportunities to change either the policy or the funding debates concerning Baltic language broadcasting over RFE. Two processes that began during the second half of the 1960s, however, altered the dynamics surrounding Baltic language broadcasts by RFE or RL. First, a gradual evolution occurred within the politically active Baltic communities in the United States, which was a component of a generational shift. Second, there were a series of political crises surrounding RFE and RL within the United States, which resulted in greater oversight of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

During the 1960s, a generational change began to develop within the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian communities in the United States.<sup>14</sup> The political activities of the major Baltic organizations in the United States during the 1950s were dominated prima-

rily by post-World War II exiles who were more concerned about maintaining political legitimacy in their ethnic homeland and pursuing the quixotic goal of gaining American assistance to liberate the three Baltic republics. Furthermore, despite efforts of American-sponsored organizations such as the National Committee for a Free Europe to foster better cooperation among the three Baltic immigrant groups in the United States, there was minimal success in establishing a shared Baltic identity among the exiles. As the Cold War became the status quo in Europe during the late 1950s and the early 1960s and assumed more global dynamics, it appeared as though there were no political opportunities available to Eastern European émigré communities in the United States, particularly those of Baltic descent. The new generation of politically active Baltic émigrés, however, changed the way they would pursue policy goals that could improve the status of their ancestral homes. First, there would be greater organizational cooperation among the three Baltic nationalities. Second, Baltic activists would lobby in ways similar to other American constituents rather than political exiles. Third, there would be greater flexibility in acceptable policy positions that might have in times past undermined the legitimacy of political exiles.

An early manifestation of this new generation of politically active Balts was the establishment of the Joint Baltic American Committee (JBAC), which was established in 1961. The JBAC was created by members of the ALA, EANC, and the ALT as not only a way of maintaining greater contacts among the three major Baltic organizations in the United States, but also as a way of more effectively lobbying members of the United States Congress and other American officials on issues that were important to the communities. The cooperation among Balts in the United States, however, went beyond lobbying activities in Washington, D. C. The first Baltic Freedom Rally in New York was held on 15 June 1952 with the assistance of the National Committee for a Free Europe.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the 1950s and 1960s annual rallies were held in New York to protest the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. By the mid-1960s, however, the dynamics of the Baltic freedom rallies began to change. On 13 November 1965, nearly 14,000 Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians

participated in a freedom rally, which started at Madison Square Garden in New York and ended at the United Nations building.<sup>16</sup> Writing for the *Baltic Review* Algirdas Budreckis described some of the unique aspects of the 1965 Baltic Freedom Rally. First, although it was initially organized by Lithuanians, all three Baltic communities were responsible for its organization. Second, a considerable number of members of the younger generation helped organize it. Budreckis claimed that “half of the 14,000 marchers were people under 35 years.”<sup>17</sup> Third, changes had occurred within the American Baltic communities. The rally was described as a grass-roots movement that involved former refugees, old immigrants, and native-born Americans, and was not conceived by exile politicians. Finally, Budreckis argued that the “cause of Baltic freedom will not disappear with the older generations.”<sup>18</sup> Although the older generation had failed in its attempt to maintain political legitimacy while in exile and simultaneously impact American politics, American constituents of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian descent in the mid-1960s became an important lobbying force on behalf of the Baltic republics. The initiation of RFE or RL broadcasts in the Baltic languages would be one such issue.

In March 1967, *Ramparts* magazine published an article exposing the CIA's ties with the National Student Association, which ultimately led to a greater examination of the role of the CIA's covert support of a variety of American organizations, including Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.<sup>19</sup> Despite these revelations, there was little immediate political fallout. The American public was more concerned about the ongoing Vietnam War, social unrest, and civil rights than the relationship between radio stations and the CIA.<sup>20</sup> Upon assuming office in 1969, the Nixon Administration decided to maintain the funding status of RFE and RL by the CIA for Fiscal Year 1970; however, the radios continued to face longterm funding challenges.<sup>21</sup> There continued to be questions of how the radios were to be funded, and more importantly, questions of whether the radios should continue broadcasting.

A central goal of President Richard Nixon's foreign policy upon assuming office was successfully extricating the United States from the Vietnam War. One means of this was pursuing a new policy

of Détente, or relaxation of tensions among the United States, the People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union. Nixon offered both the Soviet Union and China cooperative overtures in trade and recognition in exchange for assisting the United States bring an end to the conflict in Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> Framed within the context of American-led Détente among the superpowers was a relaxation of tensions between Western and Eastern Europe, most notably through West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Through accepting the political status quo in Europe, Brandt promoted new economic and social agreements with East European governments.<sup>23</sup>

It is against the backdrop of Détente that RFE and RL would play a somewhat contradictory policy role for participants in the Cold War. The 303 Committee, which was the National Security Council's subcommittee on covert operations, argued in January 1969 that RFE and RL played an important role in the "processes of fermentation and political adjustment which are now enveloping in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe" and that these processes were to "continue in the future."<sup>24</sup> In sum, the radios should continue to play their traditional role as surrogate radio broadcasts for citizens of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As Détente continued into the 1970s, American policymakers justified the continued role of RFE and RL as a way of fostering communication among people. Simultaneously, however, the governments in Eastern Europe continued to perceive the radios as American instruments to interfere in the domestic affairs of their countries. Indeed, the contradictory interpretations of the understanding of RFE and RL during this period posed a potential threat to these institutions. The Polish government launched complaints not only against the United States, but also against the Federal Republic of Germany over RFE broadcasts.<sup>25</sup> Although diplomatic *démarches* over RFE or RL did not seriously damage bilateral diplomatic relations between nations, they did demonstrate the perilous state of the radios in the period of Détente.

Beyond the potential international challenges to RFE and RL, there were growing domestic challenges to the covert status of RFE and RL.<sup>26</sup> Senator Clifford Case (R-NJ) gave a speech before the Senate on 21 January 1971 discussing the covert nature of the



radios, which sparked the beginning of the domestic scandal over RFE and RL. Following his speech, Case gave an interview, where he demanded that all ties between the radio stations and the CIA be severed.<sup>27</sup> Several days later, Case introduced legislation that sought to bring RFE and RL under the authorization process of the Congress.<sup>28</sup> A. Ross Johnson argues that when Case introduced the legislation, it effectively ended the possibility of continued covert funding for the two radios.<sup>29</sup> Although the State Department, the White House, and Case supported the goals of RFE and RL, there were clearly different opinions about how best to fund the radios. The CIA and 303 Committee believed that ending the radios' covert nature would be "seriously damaging" to their effectiveness.<sup>30</sup> Case, however, sought to have the radios viewed as an "open activity by our government".<sup>31</sup>

Case's legislation immediately shifted the debate over the radios from the executive branch, where it had predominantly taken place since their inception, to the chambers of Congress. The powerful chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee J. William Fulbright (D-AR) used the debate as an opportunity to potentially end RFE and RL broadcasts. In the spirit of *Détente*, Fulbright viewed the radios as a hindrance to relations between the United States and the Soviet Union as well as "outworn relics of the Cold War."<sup>32</sup> Fulbright was one of the most outspoken critics of the Vietnam War and viewed the conflict as an ongoing civil war – not the center of the Cold War – that brought about the worst attributes of American power, which included myriad covert activities that only damaged American interests.<sup>33</sup> The gridlock that ensued in Congress over the status of the radios allowed for the very real possibility that the radios would stop broadcasting by the end of June 1971.<sup>34</sup> A compromise was reached between the White House and Congress, which allowed Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to continue broadcasting in 1972.<sup>35</sup> Although Fulbright failed to stop RFE and RL broadcasting in 1971, lack of a long-term solution allowed politicians and activists be interested in the radios over a period of two years to make their cases for or against the radios' continuance. As Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright initiated a special investigation on the radios. Shortly thereafter, the

Nixon Administration appointed Milton S. Eisenhower, President Emeritus of John Hopkins University, to examine the operations of the radios. Much to Fulbright's dismay, his committee's reports were highly favorable of the radios, and accused Fulbright of "killing these vitally needed radio stations."<sup>36</sup> In February 1973, the Eisenhower Commission submitted its final report to the White House, reaching the conclusion that the broadcasts had "not deterred but rather contributed to the search for long-term détente."<sup>37</sup> Following the Eisenhower Commission's final report, Congress passed the International Broadcasting Act of 1973 in October, which provided open appropriations for RFE and RL through Congress, rather than the CIA.

By moving the debate over the funding and future of RFE and RL into Congress, an opportunity was provided to activists in the United States to potentially influence the direction of the two radios. Nixon Administration officials believed that constituent pressure on the members of Congress would prevent the total elimination of the two radios. A 303 Committee memorandum in January 1969 argued that "A number of Congressmen are likely to show particular concern for the fate of RFE and RL because of their traditional responsiveness to the interests of domestic European ethnic groups, and because of their considerable knowledge of and belief in the work of the radios."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, throughout the controversy over the future of RFE and RL, Eastern European émigrés and exiles were the most vocal supporters of the radios and most fervent opponents of Fulbright. In 1973, Jan Nowak, head of the Polish Radio Free Europe desk, referred to Fulbright as having "pro-Communist sympathies" and called for Polish Americans to prevent Clifford Case from being reelected to the United States Congress.<sup>39</sup> The East European émigrés that had the most to gain from the controversy, however, were Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians.

The cornerstone of political activism by Baltic exile and émigré organizations in the United States throughout the Cold War was working to maintain the American policy of nonrecognition toward Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. While the State Department officially upheld the policy by continuing to recognize exiled diplomats, by the end of the 1960s, American officials and some Balts in

the United States questioned the utility of the nonrecognition policy for the occupied republics. In 1967, mid-level officials in the State Department acknowledged that the nonrecognition policy “will not liberate the Baltic States, or grant them a change in status.”<sup>40</sup> Additionally, Rein Taagepera criticized the nonrecognition policy by pointing out that the longer the policy remained static, the more the policy and anything tied to that policy would become marginalized.<sup>41</sup> The period of *Détente* was potentially dangerous to the prospects of effective political lobbying by not only Baltic émigré organizations, but all Eastern European émigré organizations. As Baltic émigrés began to view Cold War dynamics in their homelands as not just an ideological struggle, but a struggle over the existence of their nations, Richard Nixon was laying the groundwork for an extended period of cooperation with the Soviet Union and the American people were becoming more comfortable with the Cold War order.<sup>42</sup>

Baltic organizations were forced to maneuver a complex political environment during *Détente* on several issues that directly effected the Baltic republics. Beginning in 1969, bilateral discussions started between the United States and Soviet Union concerning the opening of consulates in Leningrad and San Francisco, which eventually opened in 1973.<sup>43</sup> In the spirit of *Détente*, the United States became active participants in the process leading up the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Additionally, there was the controversy over whether or not RFE and RL broadcasts would continue to reach listeners in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. A common challenge that these issues presented to Baltic organizations in the United States was to promote policies that might uphold the nonrecognition policy in its strictest interpretation, or promote policies that might increase contacts between those residing in the Baltic republics and those residing in the West.<sup>44</sup> Political activism during *Détente* assumed greater flexibility when it came to understanding the nature of the nonrecognition policy, as well as greater sophistication in working within the structures of American constituent politics.

The case of Baltic language broadcasts over RFE or RL demonstrates the changes in Baltic political activism during this period. Throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s, Baltic language broad-

casts over RL were unacceptable to exiles and émigrés in the United States due to the possibility that such broadcasts meant for Soviet citizens would imply recognition of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as being legally incorporated into the Soviet Union. Although this rigid understanding of the nonrecognition policy might have helped exiles during the 1950s hold onto their political legitimacy, it did not foster increased Western influence in the Baltic republics. In 1970, Baltic émigrés became more open to the idea of sanctioning broadcasts over Radio Liberty. In 1970, a JBAC delegation met with Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Martin J. Hillenbrand to discuss a number of issues, including Baltic language radio broadcasts. When the delegates brought up the issue of RFE broadcasts, Hillenbrand expressed his sympathy and acknowledged the inherent contradictions involved. Like similar meetings between Baltic delegations and the State Department officials, he cited the lack of funding as the main issue revolving around the question. Unlike other meetings, however, Hillenbrand suggested a course of action for the activists. He suggested that Radio Liberty broadcasts should be pursued rather than over RFE. Hillenbrand stated that policymakers viewed the Baltic republics as being within the confines of the Soviet Union and broadcasts would technically be better served by RL.<sup>45</sup> Subsequent meetings between Hillenbrand and his Baltic interlocutors included building relationships outside of RFE and RL, which included better relations with Congress and White House staff members, since they were the parts of the U. S. government that would influence policy.

Clifford Case's January 1971 revelation that RFE and RL were covertly funded by the CIA served as the impetus for the JBANC, EANC, ALA, ALT, and other Baltic émigré organizations in the United States to start a new wave of lobbying on behalf of Baltic language broadcasts. Not only would Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians argue on behalf of broadcasts in their own languages, they would lobby to save RFE and RL as important institutions. In April 1971, the ALA, JBANC, and the Baltic World Congress began discussions with the Radio Liberty Committee. Although there were no formal agreements reached between the two parties, several long-standing issues concerning Baltic language broadcasts

were discussed. A concern of RL officials was whether or not inclusion of the Baltic languages would violate its policy of non-pretermination, which recognized that only people within the Soviet Union could decide its fate and refused to favor one émigré group over another.<sup>46</sup> Associated with the question of non-pretermination was whether or not the Baltic organizations objected to this policy due to the nonrecognition policy. In response Uldis Grava of the American Latvian Association brought forth no objections to this policy.<sup>47</sup>

The outstanding issue, which had prevented RFE broadcasts for over two decades was funding. Howland H. Sargeant, President of the Radio Liberty Committee responded to the requests for Baltic language broadcasting that there were no funds to initiate such broadcasts. It is at this point where the principal Baltic organizations in the United States directly associated the question of Baltic language broadcasts with the vulnerable position of RFE and RL due to the CIA scandal. Mārtiņš Bērziņš, a leading member of the ALA and a consultant for the Free Europe Committee, contacted Gene Sosin of Radio Liberty and informed him that Baltic émigrés were willing to use the compromised position of RL to push for Baltic language broadcasts. When Sosin inquired as to whether “members of the emigration in the United States might be willing to discuss with Congressmen the importance of RL as a powerful force for constructive influence on the Baltic population,” Bērziņš replied that, “this was entirely possible.”<sup>48</sup> Sosin immediately relayed this message to James Critchlow, Director of Information services for the Radio Liberty Committee.

During the six month battle over the future funding of RFE and RL, the JBANC, ALA, EANC, and ALT engaged in an active lobbying campaign on behalf of the two radio stations. The national organizations and their two hundred local chapters wrote letters to both national and regional newspapers, particularly in Fulbright’s home state of Arkansas. In particular, the House of Representatives Minority Leader Gerald Ford (R-MI) and leading Nixon Administration officials supported the efforts of the Baltic émigrés on behalf of the radios. In June 1971, as the funding situation was becoming dire, Grava wrote to Critchlow asking whether there was “anything that

the Baltic community might be able to do on behalf of Radio Liberty during this most difficult time.”<sup>49</sup> By the time that the compromise over the radios funding had been reached between Congress and the White House, there were assurances given to members of Congress by RL officials that broadcasts would start in the Baltic languages.<sup>50</sup>

Reflecting on the role that the Baltic organizations played on behalf of RL, Critchlow stated:

In general, we made no commitment of any kind to the Baltic émigré organizations; still, I believe that as we proceed with any plans for eventual broadcasting, we should keep them informed and give them an opportunity to register their views. In making this recommendation, I am not unmindful of the support given us in recent months by the Baltic émigré organizations, and of the sensitivity and patience they have displayed in not pressing unreasonable demands during this difficult period.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, there were no commitments made by RL toward Baltic émigré organizations concerning when RL broadcasts in the Baltic languages were to begin. There remained organizational and funding issues associated with the project. During the transition period for RFE and RL away from covert funding to congressional oversight, Baltic émigrés continued to be staunch supporters of the radios. When Senator Charles H. Percy (R-IL) and Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) introduced the Board for International Broadcasting Act, many organizations entered statements into the Congressional Record in support. The National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community of the United States sponsored one such statement. The statement strongly supported the legislation and reminded the committee that “the broadcasting of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty is a positive contribution to the free exchange of ideas which fosters knowledge and understanding on a people to people basis and creates another plank in the platform of meaningful détente.”<sup>52</sup>

With funding of RFE and RL under direct appropriations of Congress and the removal of objections to RL broadcasting by Baltic émigré organizations, RL included Baltic language broadcasting in its Fiscal Year 1974 budget. The proposal included six individuals would be required for each of the three language desks in

addition to an American advisor and secretary at a cost of \$540,000 annually.<sup>53</sup> It was believed that radio broadcasts would not begin until the second half of the fiscal year in order to allow the broadcasting desks to be properly organized, as a result, only \$270,000 was initially requested.<sup>54</sup> Due to budget issues, however, Baltic language broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian were stripped from the FY 1974 budget.<sup>55</sup> Eisenhower argued that even with eliminating other language broadcasts or various administrative positions, it would remain impossible to compensate for the budget shortfall, thus Baltic language broadcasts were delayed once again.<sup>56</sup>

During the 1973 House of Representatives and Senate hearings, the JBAC was invited to participate in the dialogue on the future of RL broadcasting. President of the ALA, Ilgvars J. Spilners testified on behalf of the JBANC about the importance of RL broadcasts in the three Baltic languages. In Spilners's prepared statements, as well as answers to questions posed by members of Congress, he discussed the centrality of RL broadcasts for pursuing meaningful *Détente* with the Soviet Union and the broadcasts' potential importance in preserving their languages, and indeed their nations.

Spilners framed the debate over properly funding RFE and RL not in the context of undermining the Soviet Union or the satellite governments, but instead discussed their importance to the ongoing discussions concerning the CSCE. He stated: "The declared U. S. government policy in relation to the CSCE is that specific steps should be taken to encourage the freedom of movement of people, ideas, and information."<sup>57</sup> He continued:

The United States is in a position to trade with the Soviet Union. This trade should be linked to the interests of the United States in free communication and travel. Our sympathies should be with the free spirit and not with the censorship, and our actions should reflect these sympathies. This is the reason why Baltic Americans, as represented by the JBAC, support RL, RFE, and VOA.<sup>58</sup>

By discussing radio broadcasts' importance in the context of how they were understood by the Nixon Administration, as well as supporters of the radios in the Congress, the JBAC was clearly working within the acceptable discourse during *Détente*.

The testimony before Congress then turned to the question of why RL broadcasts were important to Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians. Spilners portrayed the struggle in the Baltic republics as not ideological by nature, but rather one where the nations were struggling for their very survival. This was most evident in a discussion about language policies. He pointed out that Russian children who went to Russian schools in non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union did not need to know the language of that country; but non-Russian children had to learn Russian.<sup>59</sup> Spilners initially implied that more broadcasting in the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages were important to undermine the Russification policies that the Soviet Union had been pursuing in the republics.

A key aspect of Spilners' testimony before Congress was justifying the expense of Baltic language broadcasting in an era where there were clear budgetary constraints. Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Thomas Morgan (D-MI), asked Spilners, "do most of the citizens of the Baltic nations understand Russian as a second language, so they can understand broadcasts by RL in Russian? Is there any urgent need of broadcasting in a second language to the Baltic nations?" Spilners responded that the "Baltic peoples just want to maintain their own identities to which they believe they have a right."<sup>60</sup> Continuing with the budget issue Clement J. Zablocki (D-WI) inquired whether it would be acceptable to the Baltic émigrés if the VOA broadcasts in the Baltic languages increased in lieu of beginning RL broadcasting. While Spilners supported the idea he continued by stating, "There are many happenings related to the Baltic which I would say would be news to anybody in the Baltic States. But it still would not be a news item appropriate for the broadcast over the Voice of America, and this make a difference."<sup>61</sup> By arguing that surrogate radio stations that broadcasted news relevant to the Baltic States remained fundamentally different to official broadcasts by the United States government, Spilners buttressed the argument that all supporters of RFE and RL had been making since 1971.

The testimony that Spilners provided and the general lobbying effort by the JBAC reflected a growing sophistication among



Baltic activists in the United States. The arguments used were within the acceptable policy constraints imparted by members of Congress, the State Department, and RL officials. More sophisticated political organization, however, was insufficient to ensure the beginning of radio broadcasts. Instead, the uncompromising support by several influential members of Congress proved centrally important. When questioning Howland Sargeant, Robert H. Steele (R-CT) refused to accept the answer that Baltic language broadcasting had not started simply due to lack of funding, and argued that it was more a question of priority. After a lively discussion about the history of the Baltic issue for RFE and RL, Steele concluded: “[...] now that we have got everybody together it seems to me that it is time we move and include these languages one way or another in the broadcasts.”<sup>62</sup> Charles Percy (R-IL) made a similar argument before the Senate arguing, “I think it is a budgetary matter primarily. I would hope we can find other areas where we can make economies in order to achieve broadcasts in the Baltic languages. It is a matter of priorities, and I place very high priority on this.”<sup>63</sup>

Throughout 1974, Steele made his intentions clear that Baltic language broadcasts were high on his list of priorities. He informed Sargeant, “I intend to mount an effort in the House of Representatives to increase Radio Liberty’s budget by \$20,000 for the specific purpose of initiating broadcasts in the Soviet Union in Latvian and Estonian, as well as Lithuanian.”<sup>64</sup> On 7 March 1974, Steele introduced H. R. 13354, which made an appropriation to RL to initiate Baltic language broadcasting.<sup>65</sup> The budget constraints that prevented Baltic language broadcasting over RL came to an end in 1975 where in part of the \$49,990,000 authorized for RL’s budget, no less than \$75,000 would be made available “solely to initiate broadcasts in the Estonian language and not less than \$75,000 shall be available solely to initiate broadcasts in the Latvian language.”<sup>66</sup>

Lithuanian language broadcasts over Radio Liberty successfully began on a weekly basis in January 1975, and eventually moved to a daily schedule in March. It would be several more months before weekly broadcasts in the Estonian, and Latvian languages started in July followed by daily broadcasts in September.<sup>67</sup> The Baltic language broadcasts featured news from around the world and within

the Soviet Union, but in particular featured the news pertaining to the cultural history of the Baltic States in addition to what was occurring within the broader Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian émigré communities. For example, when covering the sessions and speeches at the Helsinki Summit in July 1975, RL broadcast news on the differing attitudes about the CSCE by various members of Congress as well as the demonstrations led by Baltic American organizations.<sup>68</sup>

Continued Congressional oversight of RFE and RL eventually led to the merger of the two organizational under RFE/RL, Inc. in 1976 and ensured that funding would support RL broadcasts in the Baltic languages. Radio Liberty would broadcast to the Baltic republics throughout the remainder of the 1970s until the radio desks were transferred to Radio Free Europe on 8 October 1984.<sup>69</sup> The decision to transfer the radios to RFE was twofold. First, RFE broadcasts better reflected American attitudes toward the Baltic republics concerning the continued policy of nonrecognition. Second, American officials cited the historical, cultural, and religious traditions of the Baltic nations that made them part of the European, rather than the Soviet experience. A small but important part of these policy decisions should be attributed to Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian émigrés in the United States who continued making the argument that their homelands were indeed naturally part of Europe rather than the Soviet Union.

Baltic émigré organizations in the United States faced a complex and at times contradictory political landscape during Détente. While American officials and the general public seemed to try and reduce Cold War tensions and strike compromise with the Soviet Union on a number of issues, Baltic émigrés began to see the Cold War as an even greater existential threat for their ancestral homelands. As the United States began pursuing a number of compromises with the Soviet Union that ranged from consular agreements and the CSCE, which discussed the ratification of Europe's postwar borders, it seemed that the cornerstone of Baltic political activism, the maintenance of the nonrecognition policy, was under threat of total irrelevance. The second generation of Baltic émigrés was faced with either pursuing policies that were outside constraints set

by American officials or willing to reconsider their understanding of the nonrecognition policy. Ultimately, organizations such as the JBAC favored increased contacts between East and West rather than continued isolation of the Baltic republics through a rigid interpretation of the nonrecognition policy.

Few case studies better reflect Baltic political activism during Détente than the fight over Baltic language broadcasts over RFE or RL. RFE broadcasts had been on the agenda of exiles and émigrés in the United States since when RFE first broadcast to Czechoslovakia in 1950. A combination of policy concerns over the meaning of the nonrecognition policy and budgetary concerns excluded the Baltic languages from either RFE or RL for twenty-five years. After willing to compromise with RL officials over whether or not Radio Liberty broadcasts would imply recognition of the occupation in 1970, the JBAC, ALA, EANC, and ALT found themselves in a position to effectively lobby on behalf of Baltic language broadcasts. The compromised position that RFE and RL were placed in after Clifford Case's 1971 revelation of their CIA origins allowed these Baltic organizations to not only fight for their own narrow interests, but for the broader question of RFE and RL's fate. Although it was the work of members of Congress that brought about the beginning of the broadcasts in 1975 and not exclusively the work of the Baltic émigrés, the actions of politically active Baltic émigrés rejuvenated the Baltic question for the remainder of the Cold War.

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policy, many Baltic émigrés protested against such American overtures. Nevertheless, following the opening of the Leningrad consulate, contact between Balts in the West and their homelands increased.

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## RADIORAIDĪJUMI BALTIEŠU VALODĀS: EMIGRANTU POLITIKA UN AMERIKĀŅU RAIDSTACIJAS AUKSTĀ KARA LAIKĀ

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Politisku apsvērumu un budžeta ierobežojumu dēļ Amerikas valdības sponsorēto raidstaciju "Brīvā Eiropa" un "Brīvība" programmās sākotnēji netika iekļauti raidījumi igauņu, latviešu un lietuviešu valodā. Laikā no 1950. gada līdz 1976. gadam, kad "Brīvība" beidzot uzsāka raidījumus baltiešu valodās, baltiešu pēckara trimdas un emigrācijas pārstāvji Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs rikoja kampaņu par labu šādām radioprogrammām. Rakstā aplūkotas attiecības, kas izveidojās starp vadošajām baltiešu trimdas organizācijām



un amerikāņu politiķiem un ierēdņiem, kuri atbildēja par radiopārraidēm aukstā kara laikā. Viena no galvenajām raksta tēmām ir emigrantu paaudžu maiņas nozīme Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs un tas, kā šī paaudžu maiņa ietekmēja tuvības saišu izpratni starp emigrantiem un viņu dzimteni.

*Atslēgas vārdi:* emigrantu un trimdinieku politika, radiopārraides aukstā kara laikā, starptautiskā saspīlējuma mazināšanās, Amerikas Savienoto Valstu Kongress, neatzišanas politika.

### Kopsavilkums

Pēc aukstā kara beigām liela nozīme tikusi piešķirta Rietumu raidstaciju, it īpaši amerikāņu sponsorētās “Brīvās Eiropas”, “Brīvības” un “Amerikas Balss”, pārraižu lomai demokrātijas veicināšanā un lielāku politisko tiesību nodrošināšanā tautām, kuras atradās aiz Dzelzs priekšvara. “Amerikas Balss” bija oficiālā Amerikas Savienoto Valstu radiostacija, bet “Brīvās Eiropas” un “Brīvības” rašanās cēloņi meklējami Amerikas valdības ierēdņu vēlmē gūt labumu no augsti izglītotiem speciālistiem, kas pirmajos pēckara gados līdz ar citiem trimdiniekiem ieradās no Austrumeiropas, un vienlaikus mazināt komunistisko valdību ietekmi Austrumeiropā un Padomju Savienībā. 1949. gadā tika nodibināta NCFE jeb Nacionālā komiteja brīvās Eiropas veicināšanai, kas 1950. gadā sāka sponsorēt Čehoslovākijas, Rumānijas, Ungārijas, Polijas un Bulgārijas iedzīvotājiem domātas pārraides. 1953. gadā Amerikāņu komiteja Krievijas tautu atbrīvošanai (*Amcomlib*) uzsāka pirmās radio “Brīvība” pārraides uz Padomju Savienību. Būtisks trūkums bija tas, ka ne “Brīvā Eiropa”, ne “Brīvība” neraidīja igauņu, latviešu un lietuviešu valodā.

Pēc NCFE nodibināšanas politiski aktīvie trimdinieki no Baltijas valstīm mēģināja vērsties pie komitejas amatpersonām un amerikāņu politiķiem ar lūgumu uzsākt šādas pārraides. Baltiešu apņēmība un centieni ietekmēt amerikāņu varasvīrus 50. gados neguva panākumus divu galveno cēloņu dēļ. Pirmais apsvēruma, kura dēļ amerikāņu politiķi un NCFE amatpersonas noraidīja baltiešu lūgumu, bija pārraižu dārgās izmaksas. Tā kā šādi Baltijas reģionam domāti radiatoraidījumi būtu tehniski sarežģīti, turklāt šajās padomju republikās bija neliels iedzīvotāju skaits, tika nolemts, ka tā būtu nelietderīga ierobežotu resursu tērēšana. Otrs apsvēruma bija tas, ka Amerikas Savienotās Valstis joprojām neatzina Padomju Savienības veikto Baltijas valstu aneksiju 1940. gadā. Neatzišanas politika bija tā uzskatu sistēma, caur kuru

tika filtrēta jebkura rīcībpolitika. Amerikāņu valstsvīri apgalvoja, ka baltiešu trimdinieku organizēšana ar NCFE palīdzību atkārtotu šo valstu akreditēto diplomātu centienus vai arī padarītu tos nevadzīgus. Turklāt baltiešiem domātās radio "Brīvība" pārraides, kuras varbūt būtu iespējams tehniski nodrošināt, varētu iztulkot kā vārdos neizteiktu mājienu, ka Amerikas Savienotās Valstis atzīst Igauniju, Latviju un Lietuvu kā Padomju Savienības sastāvā ietilpstošas republikas. Ne-raugoties uz vadošo baltiešu emigrantu organizāciju un vairāku amerikāņu valstsvīru pūliņiem panākt pārraižu uzsākšanu 50. un 60. gados, budžeta apsvērumu dēļ šā jautājuma risināšana tika atlikta uz nenoteiktu laiku.

Pārsteidzošā kārtā 70. gados norisinājās virkne notikumu, kas deva ierosmi baltiešiem domātu radiatoridijumu uzsākšanu (radio "Brīvība") 1976. gadā. Pirmkārt, 1971. gadā janvārī izcēlās skandāls, kad Klifords Keiss atklāja, ka CIP slepeni finansē radio "Brīvā Eiropa" un "Brīvība" raidījumus. Otrkārt, bija nomainījušās Amerikas Savienotajās Valstīs dzīvojošo igauņu, latviešu un lietuviešu trimdinieku paaudzes, un jaunā paaudze sāka pārvērtēt metodes un taktiku, ar kādu līdz šim tika aizstāvēta baltiešu lieta. Treškārt, rosīgāka kongresmeņu darbība ārpolitikā panāca to, ka tika pārskatīts radio "Brīvā Eiropa" un "Brīvība" budžets un piešķirts lielāks finansējums. Kamēr daži Kongresa locekļi Dž. Viljama Fulbraita vadībā, pakļaujoties starptautiskā saspilējuma mazināšanās noskaņojumam, centās apturēt radio "Brīvā Eiropa" un "Brīvība" darbību, politiski aktīvie baltiešu trimdinieki un emigranti izmantoja savu augošo ietekmi kā vēlētāji Amerikas politiskās iekārtas ietvaros, lai atbalstītu tos, kuri cīnījās par minēto raidstaciju saglabāšanu, tostarp vadošos radio darbiniekus, Ričarda M. Niksona administrācijas pārstāvjus un kongresmeņus. Pēc divu gadu ilgas vilcināšanās tika nolemts saglabāt radio "Brīvā Eiropa" un "Brīvība" raidījumus un uzsākt pārraides baltieši valodās. Lai gan baltiešu emigrantu cīņa par šādām pārraidēm ilga vairākus gadu desmitus, baltiešu spēja elastīgi mainīt metodes un taktiku, ar kādu viņi 70. gados aizstāvēja savas intereses, liecina par attapību un apsviedību, izmantojot Amerikas valsts iestāžu krīzi savā labā.

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