

**April 23, 1963**

**Memorandum, Jean Pennar to the President, 'RL  
Broadcasts in Baltic Languages: A Discussion Paper'**

**Citation:**

"Memorandum, Jean Pennar to the President, 'RL Broadcasts in Baltic Languages: A Discussion Paper'", April 23, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Released by the Central Intelligence Agency on October 16, 2019, in response to Mandatory Declassification Review request EOM-2018-00930. Contributed by A. Ross Johnson. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/290929>

**Summary:**

AMCOMLIB official Jean Pennar circulates a discussion paper suggesting opportunities for RL Baltic broadcasts.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

#13-1329

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April 23, 1963

MEMORANDUM TO : The President  
FROM : Counselor on Institute Relations  
SUBJECT : RL Broadcasts in Baltic Languages  
A Discussion Paper

24 APR 1963

Introduction

This paper is presented in the hope that it will stimulate discussion on the subject of RL broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. The question has been raised informally on several occasions before, but it has never been, to my knowledge, fully discussed. I have had a lingering interest in the subject owing to my own background and when I raised the question recently with RL officers in New York I was encouraged to write a paper outlining the opportunities for RL broadcasts in Baltic languages.

General Comments and Statistics

The Baltic States were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. It was not until the end of the war, in 1945, that Sovietization began in earnest. Reports from the area indicate, however, that:

National traits, local pride and the traditional westward look across the Baltic for trends in taste and style have survived the grim and crushing days of wartime occupation by Germany and the Soviet Union. (Osgood Caruthers, The New York Times, Sept. 26, 1959)

The 1961 population figures for the Baltic States are the following:

Lithuania	2,852,000
Latvia	2,170,000
Estonia	2,235,000

6,251,000 (USSR total: 219,745,000)

/Source: Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR, 1961/

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The population total includes at least one million Russians, more than half of them in Latvia. A substantial number of these Russians, however, are native-born and bilingual and have lived in the area for several generations. The 1959 census gives the nationality breakdown as follows:

Lithuania	--	Lithuanians	2,151,000	or	79.3%
		Russians	231,000	or	8.5%
		Poles	230,000	or	8.5%
		Belorussians	30,000	or	1.1%
		Jews	25,000	or	0.9%
		Ukrainians	18,000	or	0.7%
Latvia	--	Latvians	1,298,000	or	62%
		Russians	556,000	or	26.6%
		Belorussians	61,000	or	2.9%
		Poles	60,000	or	2.9%
		Jews	37,000	or	1.7%
		Lithuanians	32,000	or	1.5%
		Ukrainians	29,000	or	1.4%
Estonia	--	Estonians	873,000	or	72.9%
		Russians	260,000	or	21.7%
		Finns	17,000	or	1.4%
		Ukrainians	16,000	or	1.3%
		Belorussians	11,000	or	0.9%
		Jews	5,000	or	0.5%

/Source: Current Digest of the Soviet Press, March 2, 1960/

During the past fifteen years the Baltic region has been subject to intensive urbanization. Gross industrial output was, in 1961, 11 times larger in Lithuania, 12 times larger in Latvia, and 13 times larger in Estonia than in 1940. The USSR total gross industrial output grew during the same period 5.7 times. One result has been that the urban population of Latvia and Estonia is now over 59% which is higher than the All-Union average of 51%. (Source: Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR, 1961)

On the subject of local languages, perhaps the following comment by Theodore Shabad is pertinent:

There is little evidence of Russification in the Estonian cities and even less in the countryside. Most public signs are in Estonian and Russian, but one hears little Russian spoken in the streets or shops. On one or two occasions a salesgirl addressed in Russian summoned a colleague to translate. ("'Bourgeois' Estonia," by Theodore Shabad, The New York Times, May 19, 1962)

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L. Eringston, Dean of the History and Philology Faculty at the Tartu State University, confirms Shabad's observation:

What to do with those /students/ who graduate from Estonian schools and cannot even speak of elementary everyday things in Russian? Unfortunately, there are quite a few such cases.

/Source: Sovetskaya Estonia, August 30, 1961/

Radio Sets and Listening Habits

In Tallinn, where Finnish TV and radio programs from Helsinki can be seen and heard as clearly as local ones, Theodore Shabad of The New York Times asked: "But what if ... a Finnish news program or commentary /is/ expressing a point of view other than Soviet?" -- "That would not be so terrible, either," was the reply. (The New York Times, May 19, 1962; Estonian and Finnish are closely related languages and mutually understood.) Another Times correspondent notes that:

Broadcasts in the indigenous languages predominated /in the Baltic states/ over those in Russian from the Moscow radio, despite the fact that most of the younger generation has become virtually bilingual.

(Osgood Caruthers in The New York Times, Sept. 26, 1959)

Radio is apparently quite popular as a form of entertainment and source of information. The Estonian State Radio receives an average of 30,000 letters a year as fan mail, most of them practical suggestions for improving the programs. (Source: Sirp ja Vasar /Sickle and Hammer/, Tallinn, November 16, 1962.) Radio listening habits are not limited to local broadcasts. The following item appeared in a Soviet Estonian newspaper recently:

... our young music makers more often than not manage to obtain beyond-the-woods /i.e. foreign/ bad jazz music either through the radio or correspondence.

(Sirp ja Vasar, March 22, 1963)

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Statistics concerning the total number of radio sets are incomplete in official publications. The following figures may provide a clue:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Radio receivers and TV sets as of Jan. 1, 1960</u>	<u>TV sets only as of Jan. 1, 1961</u>
Latvia	368,000	83,000
Lithuania	215,000	21,000
Estonia	216,000	38,000

/Sources: Ezhegodnik Bolshoi Sovetskoi Entsiklopedii, 1960 and 1961/

In the table above the number of TV sets refers to the year 1960 and the combined totals to 1959. More recent figures (1961) are available for Estonia alone:

Radio receivers	225,000
TV sets	53,000 (1962: 77,650)
Wired speaker centers	83,000

(Sources: Kommunist Estonii, January 1962 and February 1963)

The All-Union total of radio receivers in 1961 was 30.5 million (Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR, 1961). This means that in Estonia there was one radio for five persons as compared to the All-Union average of one for seven. No breakdown is available for shortwave receivers.

Radio sets are being produced in the area. Latvian production figures are highest: A total of 610,300 radios and radio-phonographs were produced in 1961. The comparable figure for Estonia was 18,200. No figures are available for Lithuania although radios are being produced there, too. (Source: Ezhegodnik Bolshoi Sovetskoi Entsiklopedii, 1961)

Broadcasts in Baltic Languages

The Voice of America broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian (VOA also broadcasts to the USSR in Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian and Armenian). Radio Nacional de Espana in Madrid has two daily shortwave programs in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. Vatican Radio has a weekly shortwave program in Estonian, twice-weekly program in Latvian and a daily program in Lithuanian. No other free-world broadcaster carries programs in Baltic languages. (Data from World Radio and Television Handbook, 1963 edition.)

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Response to RL Programs

RL programs in Russian have had a good response from listeners in the Baltic states. Following are the figures for listener mail responses (listener giveaway responses included) during the period January 1962 through February 1963:

1962 -	Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian SSR's .....	50
	Other USSR .....	202
1963 -	Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian SSR's .....	46
	Other USSR .....	149
Totals -	Baltic states --	96
	Other USSR --	351

(Data from RLN, New York)

Responses were received from all three countries although the number of letters received from Latvia was largest. It might be of interest to point out that RL received 27% of its total recent responses from an area which contains no more than 2.7% of the total Soviet population and this with programs that were (presumably) neither technically directed nor linguistically keyed to the area.

Legal and Jurisdictional Matters

There appear to be no legal or policy restrictions on broadcasting in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian over RL facilities. The following documents were checked: Amcomlib charter, draft "Statement of Mission, Operating Objectives, and Policy Guides" (February 1957), "Radio Liberation Policy Manual," and the Committee's "Manual of Operations." The key article in the Amcomlib charter states:

The objects and purposes of the Corporation are to further the ideals of the free world, primarily among the peoples of the Soviet Union and refugees and exiles from the USSR.

It is nowhere stated that the above quote applies to the USSR as of 1939, to conform with the U.S. policy of non-recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. RL broadcasts in the Baltic languages would not necessarily violate U.S. policy.

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The U.S. government is practicing de facto recognition. For instance, American diplomats assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow have traveled in the Baltic states and Soviet tourists, delegates, etc. from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are admitted to this country as USSR citizens. On a non-governmental level it would be, to cite but one example, virtually impossible for Rand-McNally to stay in business if it were to publish maps which would show the Baltic states as independent. None of these actions, whether governmental or private, have affected U.S. de jure recognition of the Baltic states as independent countries within the 1939 borders.

On the "jurisdictional" side it has been suggested that broadcasts in the Baltic languages fall within the competence of RFE since the Free Europe Committee already supports the Free Committees of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia which are associated with the Assembly of Captive European Nations (also supported by FEC). It is my understanding that two years ago RFE did indeed propose the initiation of broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian but the request was turned down. It could be suggested that if RFE were to broadcast to the Baltic area in native languages it would, in effect, be broadcasting to the USSR which is the area designated for RL operations.

RL broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian would not solve all these jurisdictional or legal matters but would rather by-pass them. The target audience in the Baltic states is interested in knowing what is going on in the world and RL has obviously the technical ability to provide the area with a strong signal if such broadcasts were initiated. In addition, RL has the ability, by its very nature, to establish closer rapport with its listeners which an official voice is not in a position to do. An experienced RL Baltic staff could be recruited in less than six months. Sundry legalistic questions could be taken care of by a simple paragraph in an announcement to the effect that "RL, in initiating broadcasts in the Baltic languages, upholds the policy maintained by several free world countries, including the United States, that the independence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia should be restored."

JP:ors

Jaan Pennar

cc: Mrs. Thayer

Mrs. Dupuy

Messrs. Sosin, Obolensky, Langsdorf, Yedigiaroff