Nationalities Papers (2025), 1–20
doi:10.1017/nps.2025.14

ARTICLE

"Don't You Think That We've Reached an Extreme?": The Issue of TV Broadcast Language in Soviet Latvia, 1955–71

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Abstract

Riga, the capital of Soviet Latvia, was the first city in the USSR where television was created outside the Slavic linguistic space. This presented Soviet television with a brand new challenge of tackling bilingualism in the only available television programme, bringing with it viewer frustration as reflected in letters addressed to the studio. To relieve the republican television studios and their only programmes from the issue of bilingualism, in 1960, the CPSU called for the creation of a second republican programme – the retransmission of Moscow's Central Television. This article tracks the development of the issue, focusing on the case study of a western-orientated, non-Slavic Soviet republic where negotiations regarding the place of Russian in a given field of public life took fifteen years, involving stakeholders of various levels. Thus, the article offers an opportunity to study certain aspects of Soviet nationality policies in the Soviet Western periphery under Khrushchev and Brezhnev from the viewpoint of a single, specified problem.

Keywords: Baltics; Soviet Union; Soviet Television; Language Policy; Archival research

"Don't you think that we've reached an extreme at this point, that we ought to go back?" Such was the question posed in an April 1967 letter sent in to the Riga television studio by a viewer from central Latvia. She made no complaints about the content of the programming or the broadcast quality, as one may have assumed; it was the state of the broadcast language that she had found 'extreme'.

In November 1954, Riga, the capital of Soviet Latvia, became the fourth city in the USSR to broadcast television and the first to do so in a non-Slavic linguistic space[1]. For the development of television in the USSR, this meant tackling a new operational challenge, i.e., the distribution of the national languages and Russian on television in the context of formal bilingualism. The practical implementation of this objective proved difficult. In 1955, during its first months of operation, the Riga television studio already faced criticism over the language of its programmes as expressed in viewers' letters, and, in the following decade, the studio admitted this to be the problem viewers wrote about the most. Both Latvian and Russian viewers felt that too many television broadcasts were conducted in the other language.

Throughout the years of Soviet rule, the language policy of the USSR was declared to be based on Lenin's conviction of the Soviet Union not needing a uniform state language (Ļeņins 1945), and this was reflected in all Soviet constitutions. However, from the 1930s onwards, the practical implementation of Stalin's policies had begun to diverge from those declared, contributing to the assertion of Russian over the other languages of the peoples of the USSR (Grenoble 2003). While Khrushchev may have made the occasional rhetorical sidestep[2] over the language issue, in practice,

he was, in fact, completing the process begun by Stalin. In 1961, the role of Russian was officially consolidated in the Third Programme of the CPSU[3] and, having formally acquired the status of "language of interethnic communication" (*jazyk mezhnacional'nogo obshhenija*) or *lingua franca* of the peoples of the USSR, Russian became, in reality, the *de facto* state language. Within this peculiar mechanism of Soviet language policy, the new medium of television brought with it a new problem. Unlike the radio, television wasn't equipped with multiple transmission waves, nor the capacity to rapidly deliver several programmes, so in areas where society had become bilingual, television had to follow suit.

As television entered the scene, the residents of Latvia lived in a world of shifting, uneven, asymmetrical bilingualism. The Soviet ethnic policy in Latvia was based on a linguistically isolated education system in which Russian and Latvian were of a formal equality, but not of a practical one – learning Russian in "Latvian" schools was mandatory, but Latvian in "Russian" schools was not. Moreover, in 1950, children of military personnel in all elementary, seven-year and secondary schools with Russian as the language of instruction – including evening and correspondence school pupils in active service – were officially released from learning Latvian.[4] Russian was also intensively promoted as a language of instruction in secondary technical and higher education institutions. The public space in Latvia during the Soviet period was commanded by "signboard bilingualism" – the names of streets, public transport terminals, institutions, and shops were always bilingual, and yet, using the services themselves often required Russian proficiency, especially in major cities with a large proportion of Russian inhabitants. The continuous expansion of an information space impossible to navigate without Russian led to the formation of Latvian "sanctuaries"; Latvian preserved its role as the language of Latvian education, literature, culture and humanities, the language of written and broadcast Latvian media, the language of rural Latvia (including *kolkhoz* record-keeping), and, to a much lesser extent, the language of record-keeping in republican enterprises with a predominance of Latvian employees. In the record-keeping of other institutions as well as technical sciences, industry, and day-to-day activities (services, healthcare), the use of Latvian decreased steadily, and in certain areas, like transport or the military-industrial complex, the language wasn't in use at all.

The distinctiveness of the language issue in Latvia reflected the trauma left by the destruction of Latvian statehood in 1940, the return of the Red Army in 1944, and the subsequent repressions and Sovietisation. Latvians, a society of fewer than two million inhabitants, suffered two mass deportations to Siberia by the Soviets – in 1941 (more than 15,000 people deported or 0.79% of the population) and 1949 (more than 42,000 people or 2.3%, respectively) (Zālīte and Eglīte 2002). The goal of the deportations was to tear away the nation's elite and economically strongest farmers from the rest of society in order to break resistance to the occupying power and successfully carry out Sovietisation and a forced collectivisation of agriculture. At the same time, after the end of World War II, a rapid adjustment was made to the ethnic composition of the society through a stark increase in population: between 1945 and 1959, more than 400,000 Soviet citizens from other republics (mostly ethnic Russians) entered the Latvian SSR (Eglīte and Mežs 2002). It was during the same period that Latvia was also subjected to a power struggle between, on the one hand, an older generation of Sovietised Latvians and Russian communist leaders who had arrived in the republic following its permanent Soviet occupation in 1944, and on the other, a younger generation of indigenous Latvian communists or the so-called national communists (Prigge 2015). Throughout the 1950s, the national communists gained power and influence which they used to defend the republic against real and/or perceived Soviet abuse. Two crucial elements of their work were immigration control and promoting the role of the Latvian language; their efforts came to an abrupt halt in 1959 with the purge of nearly two thousand individuals, mainly through demotions in the Party.

Through an analysis of dozens of viewer letters both in Latvian and Russian from 1955 to 1970 on the issue of the television broadcast language as well as reports on viewer letters between 1961 and 1971, this article presents a case study of a western-orientated, non-Slavic Soviet republic where

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2025.14 Published online by Cambridge University Press

negotiations on the place of Russian in the given area of public life took fifteen years, involving stakeholders of various levels – the Communist Party, the television committee, the television studio and its staff, television viewers of different nationalities. Starting from 1960, with the first steps of strategic management of television as a bona fide medium, the language issue in the television programmes of the CPSU was managed centrally, replacing the relative bilingualism of the 1950s exemplified by the co-existence of two rather isolated linguistic spaces. Although viewer letters were the primary means by which television audiences in the Soviet Union were able to interact with their broadcasters, it is important to keep in mind that, as a historical source, these letters usually represent the opinions of the most motivated individuals as opposed to the majority, and are also largely considered to represent what Estonian literary scholar Jaan Undusk has called "negative documentation," in other words, complaints, which in themselves also serve as "a signifier of a legally regulated relationship." (Undusks 2016). It is also worthy of note that this particular case study of viewer letters is unrelated to the phenomenon of Soviet public letters, i.e., individual or collective letters of dubious authorship published in newspapers through which the communist elite attempted to legitimise certain decisions and steer public opinion.

The topics regarding the policies of Soviet nationalities and language are interlinked and have been widely studied (Simon 1991; Carrère d'Encausse 1995; Martin 2001; Grenoble 2003; Hirsch 2005; Smith 2013; Goff 2021). An essential, though not exclusive, part of the dynamics within the policy of Soviet nationalities has been connected to decisions on language policy, including that of the relationship between Russian and the other languages of the USSR. As observed by American linguist Lenore A. Grenoble, towards the decline of the Soviet system, the "Soviet government had, in effect, created a four-tiered language hierarchy": at the two bottom levels were languages with no material support and/or official status, a level above were titular languages, i.e., those with an official status within the respective Union Republic, and at the top level was only Russian. "It was developed not only as the sole lingua franca of the USSR, but with the ultimate goal of functioning as the "Soviet" language of a new, specifically Soviet nation. It was developed as the sole official language of all administrative, educational and legal practice." (Grenoble 2003). The implementation of language policy in Latvia, as well as the aspects of centre-periphery relations present in these circumstances, have been thoroughly researched by Latvian historian Daina Bleiere and British historian Michael Loader (Bleiere 2022a, 2022b; Loader 2017, 2022). Their research is focused on the national communists and their defeat in 1959, also covering the course of Khrushchev's educational reform in Latvia. Grenoble has pointed out that "while it is difficult to ascertain the precise motive of any particular piece of language legislation, its impact can be evaluated in terms of actual language use and state-supported language activities (e.g., publications, media, and education)." (Grenoble 2003). It is precisely in this respect that the present case study examining the use of language in television over a fifteen-year period in one of the republics of the Soviet Union provides a novel contribution to a broader understanding of the subject. A somewhat similar problem has been researched only in the case of former Yugoslavia by Slovenian linguist and historian Lucia Gaja Scuteri. Her chapter *TV as a Linguistic Issue in Yugoslavian Slovenia: A Brief Chronology from the 1960s to the 1980s* in the 2016 book *Television Beyond and Across the Iron Curtain* looks at reactions to the deterioration of the status of the Slovenian language following the creation of Yugoslavian federal television in 1958 which was broadcast mostly in Serbo-Croatian (Scuteri 2016).

The 1954 decision of the Riga television staff to organise broadcasts bilingually (see Figure 1) and provide feature films only with subtitles was unofficial, aligned with the studio's technical capacity, and based on the unwritten law according to which all information in the public space was to be displayed bilingually. As in the case of Slovenian in Yugoslavia, for Latvian in the Soviet Union, the creation of television, usually regarded as "a positive element in building, consolidating and popularising a standard language," (Scuteri 2016) ended up making the situation worse. The decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU of January 1960, "On the Further Development of Soviet Television,"[5] which called for the launch of Programme Two (relay of the Moscow programme) in

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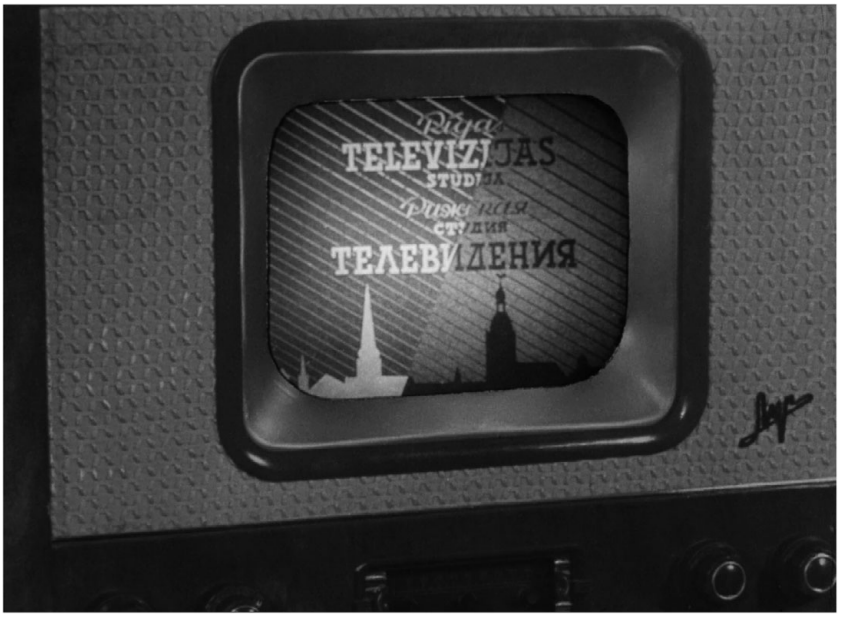

Figure 1. The Riga television studio ident in Latvian and Russian. Still from the newsreel Padomju Latvija (Soviet Latvia) No. 4 (1957). Latvian State Archive of Audiovisual Documents of the National Archives of Latvia (LNA-LVKFFDA).

the republics, allocating Programme One for broadcasts in the respective national language, provided a seeming solution to the issue of television broadcast language in the republics. In Latvia, the transition to the new system took ten years. By 1971, the problem that had given rise to the television viewers' sharpest objections had been finally put to rest. Although the language issue disappeared from television viewer letters, it remained present in other aspects of people's lives and, much like during the active years of the national communists, returned in full force with the onset of the policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost'* (Bergmane 2023).

The present article offers insights into the issue of bilingualism in the operation of Soviet television through the research of previously unpublished materials on television in the Latvian SSR of the Latvian State Archive of National Archives of Latvia (LNA–LVA and LNA–LVA, PA).

In the case of Latvia, I argue, the viewer letters sent in to television staff prove that it was indeed bilingualism and, later, the dominance of the Russian language on the air – at least until the early 1970s – that secured the position of television as a most novel arena of Soviet national relations and "contested Russian privilege" (Whittington 2023). From the mid-1960s onwards, this arena also witnessed rural Latvian-speaking audiences making demands for more television programmes in Latvian, thereby voicing their resentment towards the cultural and social divide between themselves and urban Russian-speaking viewers. The CPSU 1960 decree proved to play a decisive, long-term role in the resolution of the issue of the broadcast language; coupled with an ethno-linguistically isolated school system ("Latvian" and "Russian" schools), the decree fostered the emergence of a divided information space and two-community society. This, in turn, has continued to be a major challenge for Latvia ever since its restoration of independence in 1990–91 (see Cheskin 2016; Kaprāns and Mieriņa 2019; Laitin 1998; Platt 2024).

The argument is chronologically developed in three parts. The first part deals with the origins of the issue of the broadcast language in Latvia. The second part offers an analysis of Moscow's decision to launch Programme Two in the republics and the replacement of the Riga studio management on account of the language issue. The third and final part examines the transition to the new *status quo* of a two-programme system and the challenges faced during this transitional period.

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1. Emergence of the Issue of the Broadcast Language

In June 1954, Leningrad television studio employee Vladimir Pokorsky wrote a letter to the authorities of the Latvian SSR, stating the following:

> Talking to a few people working on the design and construction of the Riga telecentre, I began to wonder: in what language are the broadcasts going to be? The natural response would seem – Latvian. Absolutely. But you mustn't forget that amongst the owners of television and radio sets might be the people who've travelled here from other republics, that is, Russians who haven't yet learned Latvian. Already in the theatres of Riga you see radios being installed to provide translations. What to do with television programmes? This question still remains unsolved as television broadcasts are hosted only in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kyiv in mutually related languages [*na shodnyh mezhdu soboj jazykah*], and the telecentre coverage isn't too extensive either.[6]

Pokorsky also offered a solution to the arising problem, namely, to construct a commercial television set with a modification allowing two sound channels instead of one. This unexpected suggestion was considered technically viable due to the availability of the required transmitter as well as its alignment with the intention of the Latvian SSR to begin the manufacturing of television sets in the Riga Popov Radio Plant[7]. The Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR concluded that "fitting the television sets with the suitable switches […] could indeed resolve the inconveniences to be found in a national republic with Russian residents."[8] The discussion even reached the Minister of Radio Engineering Industry of the USSR: in October of the same year, he declared that due to their limited demand, the production of such devices was unfit for a large-scale factory, and it would be appropriate to assign the manufacturing to the Riga Popov Radio Plant that had intended to begin operations in the near future.[9] Yet in spite of this fact, within a month's time, the factory refused the project, suggesting to have it developed instead by a scientific institution.[10] Moreover, the production of standard-issue television sets hadn't been started either, and the question of broadcast language – one that could have been resolved from the very beginning – went on for more than fifteen years.

In the public space, however, the notion of finding a technological solution to the problem persisted, and there are at least three instances when the issue was raised in the Latvian press. The first time was in conversation with Latvian SSR Minister of Communications Aleksandrs Aļeksandrovs in March 1956.[11] In a front-page interview in the republican Party newspaper *Cīņa* (*Struggle*), the minister made the following remarks on the development of the means of communication over the following five years:

> This type of transmission [ultra-shortwave] is of particular importance in our circumstances because it can solve the problem of transmitting the sound of a television broadcast **simultaneously in two languages** [bold in the original]. […] not all films are dubbed into Latvian, but more importantly, the overdub is delayed. It's difficult and sometimes impossible to read the captions on the small screen of a television set. [Imagine if] viewers who wanted to hear the text of a film in Latvian could switch off the television's sound channel and turn on the radio on an auxiliary receiver. They could watch the images and listen to the text in a language they understand which is transmitted via ultra-shortwave in synchrony with the images. […] The need for such sound dubbing will grow immeasurably once we're able to receive television programmes from Leningrad, Tallinn, Vilnius, Minsk; and these cities will be watching our own telecentre programmes. […] This is technologically quite possible, and the task then falls to our engineers.

The argument for introducing alternative sound accompaniment resurfaced in December 1960 in *Zinātne un Tehnika* (*Science and Technology*), a magazine published in the Latvian SSR.

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The anonymous publication "Skaņas pavadījums divās valodās" ("Sound Accompaniment in Two Languages")[12] stated that "with the rapid development of the television network in recent years, there is a need in many cities of the national republics to procure television audio accompaniment in two languages – that of the republic and Russian." The article asserted that "there are already a number of known techniques that enable the transmission of two signals of sound accompaniment."

The subject was brought up again in an article from the December 1964 issue of the same magazine, which presented a report on the development of radio and television in the republic.[13] The anonymous article called for a "serious consideration of bilingual sound accompaniment to television broadcasts. It doesn't come at a great expense – the sound transmitter needs to be slightly rebuilt, and the television set needs to be supplemented with a simple add-on device. Bilingual television broadcasts could be much more functional as there would no longer be the need to repeat the programme in a second language. Several interesting experiments have already been carried out in Estonia, Uzbekistan, Lithuania, and Armenia." However, the validation and further research of these promising findings cannot be done alone – it requires a collaboration between several researchers working within the respective languages.

The experimental television broadcasts transmitted from November 1954 through May 1955[14] were, in essence, televised screenings of newsreels, feature films, and animations. This footage was shown via telecine, a process that transforms moving frames into a video signal, synchronising their different frequencies, i.e., the number of frames per second. The issue of bilingualism was addressed by implementing Latvian or Russian subtitles (Figure 2, Figure 3) prepared by the Riga Film Studio of Feature Films and Documentaries and providing information on the content in both languages. The aforementioned situation proved to be context enough to bring about the broadcast language issue predicted by the Leningrad television specialist as early as 1955.

Figure 2. Subtitles in Latvian for an unidentified motion picture. Author's private collection.

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Figure 3. Subtitles in Russian for an unidentified motion picture. Author's private collection.

In March 1955, the Riga television centre and the then overseeing Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR received a letter written by a colonel Astashkin on behalf of his military men (*ot gruppy voennosluzhashhih*):

> Seeing that Riga and other cities are inhabited by a great number of people who speak only Russian, and that almost all Latvians either speak or understand Russian very well, would you deem it wise to ignore such a thing and, as was the case on March 27, broadcast films in Latvian for an entire Sunday without giving any notice? Every family takes care of planning their Sunday recreation, and knowing in advance that the film will be in Latvian would allow for a change of plans.[15]

In his explanatory note to the minister, the commissioner of the Central Administration of Radio Information Indriķis Lēmanis indicated that:

> Dubbing feature films in Latvian and Russian is not necessary: if the movie broadcast is in Latvian, it will surely be subtitled in Russian. The incident described in the letter regarding the broadcast on March 27 of the two films in Latvian […] is not a coincidence as the copies in Russian show great signs of tear and were technically unsuitable for broadcasting on television. Both films mentioned had Russian subtitles, therefore the claim put forth by the author of the letter isn't entirely clear. Moving forward, we shall take into consideration Astashkin's request to give notice of future broadcasts in Russian.[16]

A year later, in March 1956, the television studio received a similar letter, forwarded from the Latvian Komsomol newspaper *Sovetskaia Molodezh'* (*Soviet Youth*). The author of the letter was Kopirenko, the head of the Riga Maritime School special discipline cycle. In his letter to the newspaper, he wrote:

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> I'd like to issue a complaint on behalf of Russian-speaking children, who, as it would appear, are of the least interest to the Riga television studio. Whatever children's programmes should you produce, all of them are broadcast only in Latvian. […] Why do broadcasts of feature films always come with Latvian captions, yet the films dubbed in Latvian don't have captions in Russian? Is it an oversight, or rather ignorance towards television owners of Russian ethnicity living in the republic of Latvia? […] Why do the directors of the telecentre exclude such a large group of Russian-speaking viewers? […] Is it correct conduct for the television staff to forget about their Russian viewers?[17]

The letter provoked an equally unrestrained response from the editor of children's programmes Vladislavs Staunis (also known as the poet Valdis Artavs). In his reply to the newspaper, he wrote:

> Since there are almost no popular science shows or cartoons in Latvian (neither via sound, nor subtitles), when it comes to the broadcasts from the studio, we make an effort to provide short conversations or stories in Latvian. And then follows the content in Russian. The content of each broadcast is explained in two languages […] Hosting a broadcast in two languages simultaneously is practically impossible. The studio is doing its best to find its way out of this complicated situation. However, one must say, since 90% of everything aired is in Russian, Comrade Kopirenko, being an educator of the youth, should be less occupied with confectioning chauvinistic attacks and more occupied with explaining to his youthful friends the things they might not understand.[18]

In his reply, Staunis elaborated his arguments with numbers, indicating that, for example, in January 1956, 23 feature films were shown – four without Latvian subtitles, one without Russian subtitles, and in February of the same year – 18 full-length films, two of them without Latvian subtitles. The absence of captions was not seen as the fault of the television studio; as Staunis pointed out in the letter, it was the [Riga] film studio that hadn't "printed them".[19]

In the meantime, the television studio had begun to address the question of publishing and distributing the television listings in order to help viewers navigate its offering and provide details regarding the broadcast language. As early as February 1955 – four years ahead Moscow[20] – the local newspapers both in Russian and Latvian *Sovetskaia Molodezh'*, *Cīņa* and *Padomju Jaunatne* (*Soviet Youth*), started printing the television listings. To meet the rapidly growing demand for this type of reference material, the first stand-alone radio and television guide *Rīgas Viļņi* (*Riga Waves*) was published on April 1, 1957.[21]

However, this innovation served only as temporary relief and did little to change the fact of the matter, i.e., bilingualism in the only available television programme. The television studio began receiving an increasing number of letters from insistent Latvian television viewers. The following letter reached the studio in December 1959, written by an anonymous group of television viewers:

> How sad to realise, while following the television programme, that we are being mercilessly submerged into Russification [underline in the original]. Latvians have virtually nothing left of cultural substance; not a single film, not a single play […] Judging by the actions of the television studio, Latvians appear to be abandoned orphans that need to be Russified as soon as possible. It is painful, beyond painful – to live in your motherland, yet abandon your mother tongue and have to struggle in a foreign one. […] Nearly every children's show is only in Russian. […] Why can't films be dubbed in Latvian, aren't there enough professionals, enough Latvians who could do it? Or has the transmitter of the Riga television studio been transferred to Moscow? […] Of course, if we were only to use the Moscow or Leningrad transmitter, our demands would be unjust as it is the transmitter of the Russian nation, but then one begins to wonder, where is Riga located, after all?[22]

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The issue of dubbing films was also touched upon in other letters, and in 1966, the television studio responded to the inquiries, explaining its inability to provide sound tracking as follows: "Dubbing films in Latvian can only be done in the Riga Film Studio as they have the necessary equipment. […] Since dubbing films in Latvian is a very complicated and expensive process, the majority of feature films are not dubbed, but only subtitled in Latvian. This process is handled by the republican film rental office."[23]

The choice in favour of a television with subtitles rather than dubbing was criticised in a December 31, 1964 letter from Antons Birģelis, a resident of the Valmiera district in northern Latvia:

> The captions in the films flash for a brief 2–3 seconds. Reading such tiny letters is impossible, especially when the captions are on top of a snow field or an actor wearing white. Can't they be printed on black? But abandoning this practice altogether would be even better. When the translation is spoken by the announcer, even the poor-sighted and dozing viewers can follow the film […] If it's technically impossible to display the Latvian captions legibly, then I suggest the same Latvian text be read by the announcer (behind the scenes). That way, every viewer, especially the elderly, will understand what the actors in the film are talking about. This is essential because the people of the Latvian SSR have the first right to understand the plot and, more importantly, have it be done in Latvian.[24]

A similar criticism can also be read in a letter of May 18, 1965 written by collective farmer Kaiviņa from Rauna, a village in north-central Latvia:

> On behalf of myself and other women of the *kolkhoz* […], I would very much like to ask if it might be possible to show Latvian films on television more often. So far, they're hardly shown. Russian films are shown every day, and even twice a day. We old country folk can't read the written text. Yes, there aren't many Latvian films, so please keep showing the same ones. […] Latvian plays are also rare. For weeks now, there are only plays in Russian. But we live in Latvia and we are Latvians, so why are we given less thought?[25]

Another letter from a viewer reveals the Riga television studio language policy on broadcasts created specifically during Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign. On 15 April 1963, a Soviet citizen named Minasidi, living in Riga, sent a thank-you letter to the television studio via the editorial office of the newspaper *Sovetskaia Latviia* (*Soviet Latvia*):

> The Riga telecentre is organising broadcasts for believers and non-believers. This is most valuable, but to my mind, there are one or two shortcomings […] the broadcasts are strictly in Latvian, and the telecentre seems to think [that] "holders of different faiths" [*inovercy*] from other Soviet nations have already become atheists in the full sense of the word, and no longer need the lectures. This assumption is wrong. […] Such broadcasts would also be very useful to other "holders of different faiths," especially since these people are associated with the creation of different sects. […] I am grateful to the telecentre for organising such broadcasts, even if they are only in Latvian.[26]

Rihards Zandersons, Chairman of the State Radio and Television Committee of the Latvian SSR (hereinafter 'the Committee'), the body responsible for television operations, thanked the viewer for his "warm feedback," noting:

> We cannot agree with your claims that these broadcasts take place only in Latvian. The Riga television studio began the broadcast cycle for believers and non-believers in early 1962 and transmits them once a month. For example, in February 1962, this broadcast was in Latvian and Russian, in May it was only in Russian, and in June and July it was in Latvian and Russian.

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> As of October 1962, we're also providing a series of broadcasts from the exhibition on scientific atheism in Latvian, and in these broadcasts, replies to letters from Russian comrades […] are given in Russian. When deciding on the language of a broadcast, the television studio considers the language spoken by the majority of the believers whose faith is the subject of the broadcast in question. For example, a broadcast on Orthodoxy is currently being prepared, and it will be in Russian.[27]

2. Introduction of Programme Two and Replacement of the Riga Studio Director

A crucial turning point, one with far-reaching consequences in the matter of the language policy of television programmes and the operation of Soviet television in general, was the decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU of January 29, 1960 "On the Further Development of Soviet Television." Described by Christine E. Evans as "surprisingly belated," (Evans 2016) this was the first supreme-level decision that expressed the Party's views on television and its purposes. Among many other issues, it implicitly recognised the language issue as a problem in the so-called Union republics:

> With an intention to fully satisfy the demand of the population and organise programmes both in the local national languages and in Russian, the CPSU Central Committee has imposed the obligation […] to establish Programme Two in the Union and autonomous republics in the coming years.[28]

Further action was settled upon in the March 11, 1960 decree of the State Radio and Television Committee of the USSR "On the Further Development of Soviet Television," in which it was "considered necessary that Programme Two be introduced in the Union republics over 1961–63 and in all autonomous republics throughout the subsequent years."[29] In reality, the creation of Programme Two was a means to ensure the technical retransmission of Programme One of the Soviet Central Television in the Union republics. As planned by the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party (LCP CC), the retransmission was to begin in the first quarter of 1961,[30] yet a regular retransmission from Moscow began in 1962.[31] In a 1962 statement on Riga television studio broadcasts, the local radio and television committee appeared unjustifiably optimistic: "The [very] first broadcast of Programme Two took place in July 1960, fulfilling the CPSU Central Committee's decree of January 29, 1960, which provides for the establishment of Programme Two in the Union republics […], ultimately resolving the language issue and enabling broadcasts to be planned in the local language and in Russian in such a way as to better satisfy the interests of the audience."[32] In actual fact, the creation of Programme Two can be regarded as the moment when the foundations for the divided information space were laid: in order to eventually eliminate broadcasts in Russian on Programme One, every evening, the Russian population living in Soviet Latvia was "moved" to Moscow via Programme Two. An attempt to keep the Russian population up to date with the current events in Latvia was initially provided through the Programme One broadcast *Televizionnoe obozrenie* (*Television Review*) – a weekly news report in Russian which lasted from 1960 to 1972. Granted, the ineffectiveness of this solution was implicitly acknowledged as early as 1962: "The portrayal of life in the republic in Russian […] is currently assigned [*vydelena*] only one broadcast per week. This broadcast can't possibly contain all the necessary information, ruling out any proper operational capacity."[33]

On April 9, 1962, the Latvian Committee met to discuss Russian-language broadcasts on radio and television. In an exchange among the staff, television editor-in-chief Visvaldis Albins stated:

> The work in the television studio is different from that in the radio. Most of the television broadcasts are in Russian. […] the [Latvian] programmes are shorter, so it may appear as if

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> they are more. We've received letters saying that there are too many programmes in Russian. Since Programme Two is in Russian, the result is that the majority [of the airtime] is in Russian. Programme Two broadcasts don't reach the entire republic, and there aren't that many devices [that can receive both programmes]. The audience breakdown is unknown. There is no common plan for the Russian broadcasts. If the broadcast is in the opposite language, the captioning isn't always up to par.[34]

Committee adopted the decree "On Russian Television Programmes in the First Quarter of 1962,"[35] which found that in the first three months of 1962, 21% of the 498 hours of content broadcast was in Latvian, 65.5% in Russian (44% of which was feature films), and 13.5% in both languages. On Programme Two, 453 hours were broadcast only in Russian. In the document, it is acknowledged that "the studio does not have a common framework for the Russian programmes and therefore lacks sufficient mindfulness and coordination regarding this issue. On some days, all the broadcasts of Programme One were in only one language, leading to accusations made by those who don't understand the given language." The editorial offices were instructed to "prepare the broadcasts more carefully and thoughtfully, considering the viewer language skills" and "not to allow longer broadcasts without captions in the second language," all the while ordering "to maintain the increased number of broadcasts in Latvian."

The issue of the broadcast language also served as a reason for the Party strongly reprimanding Kazimirs Jalinskis, the first director of the Riga television studio. Jalinskis, as recalled by his contemporaries, was a much-loved team leader with a biography of a self-made man and an unorthodox, pointedly democratic personality. On August 21, 1962, the LCP CC issued a strong reprimand to Jalinskis via an entry in his record card "for irresponsible and politically immature appearances on television as well as poor control over the ideological and political content of television broadcasts."[36] At the meeting of the Bureau of the Central Committee where the issue was discussed, it was established that "on 30 July […], during the programme *Atbildes uz televīzijas skatītāju jautājumiem* [*Answers to Television Viewer Questions*], Jalinskis allowed for a speech that was erroneous, politically immature, and unreasonably open in form [*razvjaznoe po forme vystuplenie*]. Jalinskis made the gross mistake of quoting politically incorrect judgments from letters sent in by individual viewers and engaging in a public discussion with them. The result was a juxtaposition of Russian and Latvian viewers."[37]

Although Jalinskis was criticised on several counts, in a notice (*spravka*) prepared for the LCP CC meeting by the Propaganda and Agitation Department[38], it's said that the main criticism was in relation to Jalinskis' liberty to discuss the language and, by consequence, the national issue on live television. The Party's criticisms were founded on three complaints[39], one of which was written by Kincis, a staff member of the Party Central Committee magazine *Padomju Latvijas Komunists* (*Communist of Soviet Latvia*). Kincis elaborated on the statements made during the broadcast as follows:

> His response to a letter from citizen Kormiļicina with a complaint of too many broadcasts being broadcast in Latvian was completely tactless [*bestaktnym*]. Comrade Jalinskis' tactlessness began with him citing this erroneous, politically immature letter on live television. However, Comrade Jalinskis went on to make another mistake. Taking the false position of a defendant [*zanimaja lozhnuju poziciju opravdyvajushhegosja*], he became engaged in a lengthy polemic with the author of the letter and started a public argument about the exact percentage of the Daugavpils [a predominantly Russian-speaking city] and Liepāja population who understands Latvian, and then vowed that all broadcasts of the Riga studio were made in equal amounts of Latvian and Russian. This rather long-winded performance by comrade Jalinskis couldn't achieve much else than leave the audience with a heavy impression of its political helplessness and ambiguity.[40]

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The second mistake from the viewpoint of the LCP CC was the brashness of not only mentioning the lack of funds as such, but also linking the unavailability of Programme Two outside Riga to the large sums of money the state was spending on defence. "Discussing, among other things, the reasons for the delayed construction of the retransmission line to Daugavpils and Liepāja for broadcasts of Programme Two, he explained that the lack of financing is due to funds being directed to state defence," Kincis noted.[41]

The minutes of the Bureau meeting reveal that Jalinskis rejected the allegations made against him regarding the language issue:

> I'm fully aware [*otdaju sebe polnyj otchjot*], of where I stand. Why am I to play the Pharisee and say I'm at fault? To my mind, the claim that there can be no talk of the television broadcast language is absurd. I explained [on air] that Russian and Latvian are assigned roughly the same amount of material, considering the different audience segments.[42]

LCP CC Secretary Augusts Voss was particularly severe:

> You talked about things that are of great damage to the upbringing of our republic's workers. The comrades who heard you are quite right to make claims that you brought a big mess [*vnesli bolshuju putanicu*] onto a politically charged issue. You divided the workers of the republic into Russians and Latvians. You discussed what percentage of Russians and Latvians are in what city, and in what cities the split is half and half. You said that Russians are making claims about 90% of the broadcasts being aired in Latvian, and that they want more in Russian. Where is your political maturity? […] You're fuelling the nationalist fire within the people of our republic.[43]

Whereas LCP CC First Secretary Arvīds Pelše was more direct when presenting his arguments:

> You're unaware of a very simple thing. You talk about how many Russians there are in Daugavpils and how many Latvians. Of course, it's no secret, you can find it in any reference book, but does it mean that the question of language needs to be debated on television and that the airtime needs to be disturbed [*budorazhit'*] with this problem? You simply have no understanding of this political matter, yet you are outraged at this having been pointed out: you were merely asked a question, so why not answer it.
>
> And then there's the question of why there's no second line [i.e., programme]. Everyone knows the money goes to defence. But who are you to propagate it? The propaganda of the enemy [*vrazheskaja propaganda*] is already carrying out a similar task in our republic. Objectively, in the national sense, you made a move in favour of them [*im naruku*], not our Party. They are [also among those] proclaiming that if there's anything going wrong in Riga, it's because instead of creating consumer goods, we're launching satellites. Īverts [Ilmārs Īverts, candidate for member of the LCP CC Bureau and editor of the Party newspaper *Cīņa*] is right when he says there's not enough paper for printing, but it's not something we mention in the newspapers. One might also observe that we export our paper, and [at the same time] don't have enough for ourselves. It's the truth. But it shouldn't be made into a reason to spit on Soviet authority.[44]

It was not until a few months later, on January 8, 1963, that Jalinskis was relieved of his duties as director of the television studio on account of him "entering retirement".[45] It must be noted that Jalinskis' dismissal should be considered also as part of the Latvian Communist Party purges and related processes during 1959–62 (Loader 2018). This is pointed to by the fact that during the aforementioned LCP CC meeting, Jalinskis was repeatedly criticised for granting permission to televise a speech by Vilis Krūmiņš, former Second Secretary of the LCP CC (and, briefly, the Latvian

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SSR Minister of Education and Council of Ministers Deputy Chairman), who had fallen into disgrace during the defeat of the national communists.

In October 1962, Visvaldis Albins, the successive television director (at the time, acting deputy for Jalinskis), submitted a report on language distribution on Programme One during the first half of 1962. This report, submitted to the LCP CC Propaganda and Agitation Department, had been prepared earlier, most likely in August.[46] Over the course of six months, out of the 447 total broadcast hours, 19.5% of the Programme One broadcasts had been in Latvian, 17.4% bilingual, and 63.1% in Russian. The television studio made the following assessment:

> On Programme One, Latvian viewers understand:
>
> 1) 19.5% of Latvian-only broadcasts.
> 2) 17.4% of broadcasts in both languages (e.g., sports coverage).
> 3) 33.1% of cinema productions; although they are in Russian, they are generally understandable to all viewers because they contain Latvian subtitles that help navigate the content.
>
> Accordingly, people who don't speak Russian have access to at least 70% of all broadcasts of Programme One […] In addition, prior to broadcasts that take place in only one language (e.g., theatrical performances), the studio provides an exhaustive annotation in the other language. It should be added that the content of the broadcast is also made clearer by the very nature of television: visibility [*nagljadnost'*].
>
> Russian viewers can understand at least 80.5% of all broadcasts of Programme One […] In this case, the above factors should be considered as well. In addition, it should be noted that Programme Two, almost equal in scope to Programme One, airs broadcasts only in Russian.

In 1962, another report was prepared: "Information [*Svedenija*] on the Operation of Latvian Radio and Television."[47] It found that "any national specificities are mainly rooted in language considerations [*svoditsja k uchetu jazyka*]," and out of the daily average of 5.3 hours of airtime on Programme One, 1.03 were broadcast in Latvian, 3.34 in Russian and 0.93 hours bilingually. Programme Two averaged 4.7 hours of Russian airtime a day. In the context of both state policy and the large "market" for Russian, television in Latvia during these years was of an exceptionally Russifying nature: of the daily ten-hour broadcast average, 8.04 hours were in Russian. For comparison, the two radio programmes following the same operational principle as television, as well as the third radio programme which retransmitted Programme Two of Moscow Radio, aired a daily average of 18 hours in Latvian, 18.5 in Russian, and 0.5 in Swedish (making up the counter-propaganda broadcasts for Scandinavian countries).

Evidently, the retransmission of the Moscow TV programme in Riga and areas within its 70-kilometre radius didn't resolve the issue of the broadcast language; the television studio kept receiving letters from dissatisfied viewers. Moreover, the decision of the Latvian Committee of June 28, 1963 on managing viewer letters found that the language issue remained one of the most important matters raised by the audience: "What are the viewers writing in about? The most crucial items raised in the letters are: the language issue, Programme Two, and changes in the TV listings. Russian viewers are accusing the television studio of too many broadcasts in Latvian on Programme One, sometimes even making claims that the broadcasts are only in Latvian. Latvians, however, feel that there are too many broadcasts in Russian and are asking to schedule more in Latvian."[48]

3. Transition to a New *Status Quo*

In the first half of the 1960s, the Riga television studio found itself in a vicious cycle. It had to resolve the language issue that had been frustrating the viewers and follow the CPSU CC decree on

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broadcasting programmes One and Two in different languages. But in order to do so, it was crucial to ensure the reception of Programme Two in areas far-removed from the transmitter in the capital of Riga. The location of Latvia's largest cities in this regard is very unfortunate, because the second largest city, Daugavpils (91,200 inhabitants in 1968[49]), which was mostly populated by Russians, and the third largest city, Liepāja (86,900 inhabitants), which in turn had a Soviet Army navy base, are both more than 200 kilometres from Riga (690,500 inhabitants) and more than 400 kilometres from each other (see Figure 4). Liepāja was significant in another aspect as well, in that it was a city on the outermost western border of the USSR. While it was not possible to ensure a stable reception of Programme Two in either of the cities, the television authorities didn't allow for a significant change in the language distribution in Programme One, resulting in what could be called an exercise in fence-sitting that lasted till the end of the decade.

In the July 26, 1966 document "On Measures to Improve the Reception of Radio and Television Programmes in the Republic, 1966–70" it was revealed that "Programme Two has a stable reception in only 45–50% of the territory of the republic."[50] In light of the above, the language issue in viewer letters was seen to materialise into two specific demands: Latvian viewers insisting on "Latvianising" Programme One on the grounds of now having Programme Two for Russian needs, and Russians demanding to have Moscow broadcasts available outside Riga. In February 1966, an Orlov of Liepāja, "an invalid of the Great Patriotic War," addressed a complaint to the State Radio and Television Committee of the USSR in Moscow about the lack of access to Central Television in the third largest city of Latvia:

> The Latvian SSR Riga television studio broadcasts two programmes, one of which is the Central Television Programme that, for a while now, is received only in Riga, and a city like Liepāja is prevented from receiving the Central Television Programme. About 50% of the population in Liepāja are Russians with television sets, but they have no way of using them,

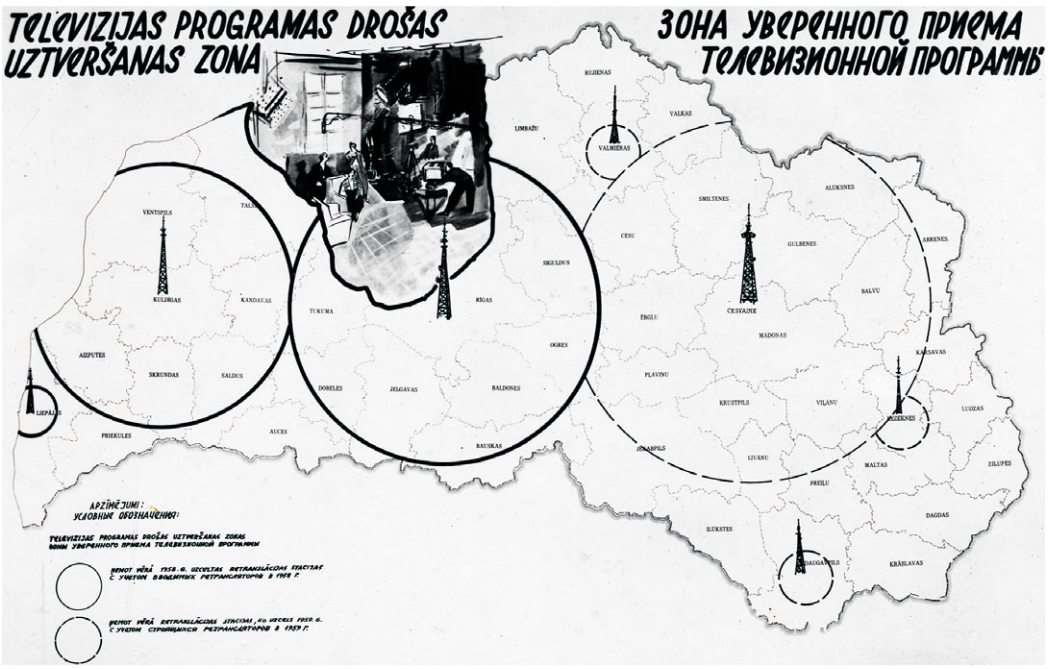

Figure 4. 1957 map of the "stable reception areas" for television's first (and at the time, only) programme, "taking into account the broadcasting stations to be built in 1958 and 1959." LNA-LVA, 894–2–111, 32 (Fotoal'bom "Itogi raboty organov svjazi Latvijskoj SSR za 1957"). In the centre—Riga, capital of the Latvian SSR, on the far lower right—Daugavpils, the second largest city of the republic, on the lower left—Liepāja, the third largest city.

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> and here's why. During the last two years, the Riga television studio has, rather timidly [*robko*], been disrupting their Russian programme, and in the course of the past year, suspended it altogether. […] This has led to a situation in which for over a year, the residents of Liepāja are unable to access the Central Television Programme, and many unsavoury rumours are brewing regarding the border town's defence. My opinion is that it's necessary to broadcast an explanation in both Russian and Latvian via the Riga television studio to the residents of the cities lacking Central Television reception, including Liepāja, describing what is being done [on the matter], and whether there will be an opportunity to access the Central Television programme.[51]

In his reply to the resident of Liepāja, Zandersons, the Chairman of the Latvian Committee, made a statement on April 29, 1966 that "the construction of a relay line which will allow the residents of Liepāja to receive the Central Television programme […] is expected to be completed this year. This will also make it possible to improve the reception quality of Programme One broadcasts. You likely already know that in Liepāja, there are many disruptions in reception that need to be prevented. The new line will become operational as of 1967. You've been writing that all broadcasts of Programme One are in Latvian. It must be noted that almost 70% of Riga television studio broadcasts are aired in Russian."[52]

A complaint regarding the language issue was also received on May 24 of the same year. It was sent in by an Obodov, a resident of the village of Aknīste located in the southeast of Latvia:

> I've been instructed to ask the television studio a question on behalf of the Russians living in the territory of Latvia. Why are the broadcasts intended as learning aids for school children, for the most part, aired in Latvian, if, to my mind, Latvians and Russians have a common understanding regarding the importance of learning? It would appear you're trying to make Latvian stand out. The peoples of the Soviet Union are equal, so everything must be equal, for Russians and Latvians alike. You broadcast films mostly in Latvian, why? If you examine the TV listings for May 23 to May 29, you'll see that there is a considerable preference for the majority nation of the republic. "Go back to your homeland," one might say. According to the Constitution of the Soviet Union, its citizens have the right to reside in any republic in the territory of the USSR.[53]

A December 1966 letter from an anonymous country viewer touched upon the language issue yet again, but with a more palpable sense of social tension:

> One more time about the Latvian broadcasts. Isn't it possible to make Programme One more Latvian? For viewers of Russian nationality, the Central Television broadcasts and films, almost all of which are in Russian, would be more than enough. Why must the Riga broadcasts be scattered with Russian texts? Do you think that Latvian audiences, particularly the collective farmers, wouldn't like to listen to Latvian broadcasts on, say, the latest fashions, as was aired on December 3? But why would boors like us want to learn about fashion! Showing it to the Russian damsels is just as fine! It's well-known that the content and arrangement of the programme are dictated at the top levels and your hands are tied, but then we should be in the fight for Latvian together.[54]

This sentiment was also evident in the 1966 report on viewer letters: "Many viewers, especially in the rural areas, have made requests in their letters, as well as viewers' conferences and questionnaires for the television studio to broadcast more feature films, theatrical performances, etc. in Latvian. This is most relevant to the cartoons watched by pre-school children."[55]

Similar criticisms from rural residents continued in the spring of 1967. On April 3, an Ezeriņa from Ērgļi, a village in central Latvia, wrote:

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> The broadcasts in Russian are giving us a lot of trouble. In the city, people are already "born" with two languages which is not the case in the countryside, where the houses are quite far off from one another. Very few people here have a good command of Russian. I know there are many people of other nationalities in our republic, and they also have to benefit from your broadcasts, but wouldn't the launch of Programme Two resolve this issue? And still, an increasing amount of the broadcasts on Programme One are taken up by those in a foreign language. On February 23, the broadcast in Latvian lasted only 10 minutes.[56] Don't you think that we've reached an extreme at this point […]? We're grateful for every overdubbed film, every Latvian film, every Latvian play.[57]

In an analysis from May 1968, language is once again highlighted as the main concern: "In their letters, what television viewers write about the most, is the language issue. This is one of the most difficult problems we face because it is not yet technically possible to receive both programmes throughout the republic. Many viewers, particularly in rural areas, are pleading in their letters for more broadcasts in Latvian."[58]

At the beginning of the new decade, there was still dissatisfaction with the broadcast language in rural areas which continued to bring in letters from affected viewers. For example, on March 16, 1970, Počs, a retired resident from the Rēzekne district in eastern Latvia, wrote in:

> Our Latvian television broadcasts only 5 hours, and most of them are in Russian. Is it not possible in our own Latvia to have more of these few hours prepared in Latvian? Programme II is all in Russian. In the countryside as well as in the city, there are many elderly people, especially women, who don't speak Russian and say that their TV sets only serve as a piece of furniture.[59]

On March 31 of the same year, the television studio received a strikingly similar letter from a Millera living in Ugāle, a village on the opposite corner of the republic:

> Everyone in the country who has a television likes to watch it in the evenings. The only thing that we aren't happy about is that so many of the broadcasts are in Russian. People in the country rarely understand it and it sometimes spoils the evening. There are so many good broadcasts in Russian on the second programme, couldn't there be more in Latvian on the first? Some people have even said that buying a television isn't worth it because most of it is in Russian anyway.[60]

The above claims were included in the 1970 report on viewer letters. It stated still that "many viewers, mainly from rural areas, have requested that Programme One contain more broadcasts in Latvian."[61]

For the television staff, the transition to the new *status quo* had been completed by 1971, as it was the last year when the request for "more broadcasts in Latvian"[62] was included in the reports on viewer letters. The gradual construction of new and more powerful retransmission stations also eliminated the difficulties in receiving the Moscow programme, which had been a contributory factor to the language issue: in May 1972, Programme One was reported to have a stable reception for 75% of the population of the republic across 75% of the territory, and for Programme Two, the figures were 70% of the population in 60% of the territory.[63] This, in turn, made it safer to reduce the role of Russian in Programme One. At the same time, an opposite development – adaptation – was also taking place, as during those first fifteen years of television, a new generation of viewers had grown up, one already well socialised in Russian.

Conclusion

In November 1954, Riga, the capital of Soviet Latvia, became the fourth city in the USSR to broadcast television – right after Moscow, Leningrad, and Kyiv. Television viewers of the republic

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soon began expressing concern over the language relations on television and the availability of programmes in their mother tongue, and, for years to come, showed no hesitation in sending in letters to the Riga studio to question the *status quo* of the broadcasts. This challenging of the *status quo* had several dimensions, both ethno-linguistic (Latvians vs Russians vs Latvians) and social (rural vs urban), and took place in two major phases: from the establishment of the Riga television studio in 1955 to the CPSU 1960 decree, and from the launch of Programme Two in 1962 until 1971, by which time television staff had deemed the issue to have become exhausted. Neither the television studio nor its managing committee had any autonomy in solving the language issue – for years they had to juggle the provisions of the CPSU decree, the adoption of the most convenient and cheapest technical solutions (including those of other institutions), the audience's opinion coming in through viewer letters, and the unwritten law of bilingualism.

The CPSU decree of 1960 addressing the issue of the broadcast language also led to far-reaching consequences that became fully apparent only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By "transferring" Russian-speaking viewers to Moscow via Programme Two, in the long term, these viewers were effectively estranged from local processes. While the initial concerns about the potential issue were implicitly expressed as early as 1962, they became fully palpable after the collapse of the USSR, when retransmission as a concept took on a whole new meaning: after the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1990–91, Russians living in the country carried on with their decades-long habit of "watching Moscow," even though it now meant consuming the information space of another country. Having absorbed Russian television for many years, the Russian-speaking population of Latvia has been exposed not only to the Latvian, but also the Russian mythscape, where the narratives of cultural and political memory (especially regarding the treatment of World War II) are diametrically opposed to those that have emerged in Latvia and within the discourse of the Latvian majority. Over the long-term, the outcome of these circumstances in contemporary Latvia has been the formation of a polarised society, the dominant discourses of which are at times even seen as mutually exclusive.

Acknowledgements. I am grateful to Yuri Slezkine (University of California, Berkeley), Una Bergmane (Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki University) and Anna Whittington (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) for reading and commenting on a draft version of this article. I would also like to thank Mārtiņš Mintaurs (University of Latvia) and Daina Bleiere (The Institute of Latvian History) for their input throughout the various stages of the article and to Marianna Zvaigzne for the translation into English. I thank the journal's anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on my work.

Disclosure. None.

Notes

1 The 1959 Soviet Census found that Latvian was the native language of 62.3% of the Latvian SSR population. Pēteris Veģis, 1959. gada tautas skaitīšana Latvijā, at https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/62860 (last accessed March 15, 2022)
2 *Prezidium CK KPSS. 1954–1964. Chernovye protokol'nye zapisi zasedanij. Stenogrammy. Postanovlenija* / T. 1. Chernovye protokol'nye zapisi zasedanij. Stenogrammy / Gl. red. A.A. Fursenko (Moskva, 2003), 370–371.
3 *Programma Kommunisticheskoj partii Sovetskogo Sojuza. Prinjata XXII S"ezdom KPSS* (Moskva, 1961).
4 LNA–LVA, 700–4–28, 159. (General orders [of the Ministry of Education of the Latvian SSR] from January 4, 1950 to August 12, 1950)
5 *KPSS o sredstvah massovoj informacii i propagandy* (Moskva, 1979), 519–525.
6 LNA–LVA, 270–2–4970, 54. (Perepiska s SM SSSR, sojuznymi i respublikanskimi ministerstvami po voprosam stroitel'stva televizionnogo centra v g. Rige, 1954)
7 LNA–LVA, 270–2–2086, 2. (Rasporjazhenija SM LSSR (kopii) i materialy k nim ##1467r–1517r, 1953)

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8 LNA–LVA, 270–2–4970, 59. (Perepiska s SM SSSR, sojuznymi i respublikanskimi ministerstvami po voprosam stroitel'stva televizionnogo centra v g. Rige, 1954)
9 Ibid., 64.
10 Ibid., 66.
11 "Sakaru līdzekļu attīstība jaunajā piecgadē," *Cīņa*, 1956, 25. marts, 1.
12 "Skaņas pavadījums divās valodās," *Zinātne un Tehnika*, no. 5 (1960), 41.
13 "Radiofonija un televīzija mūsu republikā," *Zinātne un Tehnika*, no. 12 (1964), 26–27.
14 LNA–LVA, 1182–1–8, 1. (Report on the work of the Riga television studio, 1955–1957)
15 LNA–LVA, 678–1–203, 38. (Correspondence with the Main Directorate of Radio Information of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, Riga television studio, etc., and complaints and suggestions from the workers regarding improvements of the television studio operations. 1956 and 1957. First quarter report on the work of the Riga television studio)
16 Ibid., 37.
17 LNA–LVA, 678–1–203, 42. (Correspondence with the Main Directorate of Radio Information of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, Riga television studio, etc., and complaints and suggestions from the workers regarding improvements of the television studio operations. 1956 and 1957. First quarter report on the work of the Riga television studio)
18 Ibid., 43–44.
19 Ibid. This problem remained unresolved. As one TV viewer pointed out in an October 1970 letter: "Unfortunately, there are still many films that don't have such subtitles […]." (LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1820, 35. verso)
20 The Party newspaper *Pravda* (*Truth*) began publishing television listings on April 4, 1959, and government newspaper *Izvestiia* (*News*) – on November 20, 1959.
21 In the rest of the Baltic Republics, stand-alone radio and TV listings began to be released in 1956 – *Kalba Vilnius* (*Vilnius Speaking*) in Lithuania and *Raadio ja Televisiooni Saatekava* (*Radio and Television Listing*) in Estonia.
22 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–17, 22–23. (Letters from television viewers, 1957–1963)
23 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–883, 144. (Letters from television viewers, 1964–1966)
24 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1478, 28. (Letters from television viewers, 1963–1967)
25 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–883, 56. (Letters from television viewers, 1964–1966)
26 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–90, 104. (Correspondence with radio listeners and television viewers on the content and quality of broadcasts, 1956–1966)
27 Ibid., 102.
28 *KPSS o sredstvah massovoj informacii i propagandy* (Moskva, 1979), 524–525.
29 LNA–LVA, 1184–1b–1, 41. (Postanovlenija i prikazy predsedatelja Gosudarstvennogo komiteta po radioveshhaniju i televideniju pri Sovete Ministrov Sojuza SSR. Nachato fevralja 1960 goda okoncheno 27 maja 1963 goda)
30 LNA–LVA, PA-101–23–39, 181. (Decrees of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, protocols #28–44, 1960)
31 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–70, 86. (Reports on the work of the Committee in 1962)
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 14.
34 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–13, 25–26. (Committee meeting protocols ##1–9, 26 January–20 December 1962)
35 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–70, 95–96. (Reports on the work of the Committee in 1962)
36 LNA–LVA, PA-101–25–22, 131. (Protokoly zasedanij bjuro Central'nogo Komiteta Kompartii Latvii s #36 po 41 za avgust mesjac 1962 goda)
37 Ibid.
38 LNA–LVA, PA-101–25–57, 358–359. (Spravki, zajavlenija, proekty reshenij, stenogrammy i drugie materialy k protokolam zasedanij bjuro CK KP Latvii s #38 po #40 tom III s avgust mesjac 1962 goda)

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39 Feedback on Jalinskis' speech was provided by Džimbits, correspondent of the Party newspaper *Pravda*, Kincis of *Padomju Latvijas Komunists*, and Gurvics, deputy director of the Azerbaijan Telegraph Agency.
40 LNA–LVA, PA-101–25–57, 360. (Spravki, zajavlenija, proekty reshenij, stenogrammy i drugie materialy k protokolam zasedanij bjuro CK KP Latvii s #38 po #40 tom III s avgust mesjac 1962 goda)
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 368.
43 Ibid., 371.
44 Ibid., 372.
45 LNA–LVA, PA-15500–2–7038, 37. (Jalynskij Kazimir Kazimirovich, 1955–1963)
46 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–85, 33–34.
47 LNA–LVA, PA-101–25–84, 90–95. (Correspondence on propaganda, agitation, and press of the Latvian SSR, 1962)
48 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–3, 81. (Decrees of the Committee with annexes. October 1962–December 1963)
49 Vilis Samsons (red.), *Latvijas PSR mazā enciklopēdija* 3 (Rīga, 1970), 20.
50 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–86, 122. (Correspondence with the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Latvian SSR on the work of the Committee from 1962 to 1966)
51 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–90, 138. (Correspondence with radio listeners and television viewers on the content and quality of broadcasts, 1956–1966)
52 Ibid., 136.
53 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–883, 140. (Letters from television viewers, 1964–1966)
54 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1478, 54. verso (Letters from television viewers, 1963–1967)
55 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–442, 47. (Report on letters from television viewers, 1961–1966)
56 This statement is not an exaggeration. On 23 February 1967, the Soviet Army and Navy Day, all broadcasts on Programme One except for the schedule announcements and children's newsreel (both adding up to a duration of 15 minutes) were in Russian. (*Rīgas Viļņi*, no. 8 (1967), 13.)
57 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1478, 80. verso (Letters from television viewers, 1963–1967)
58 Ibid., 5.
59 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1820, 39. (Letters from television viewers, 1970)
60 Ibid., 41.
61 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1821, 7. (Report on television viewer letters, 1970)
62 LNA–LVA, 1184–3–1970, 11. (Report on television [viewer] letters, 1971)
63 LNA–LVA, 1184–1–168, 87. (Correspondence with the State Radio and Television Committee of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on the work of the Committee, 1972)

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Cite this article: Zariņš, Toms. 2025. "'Don't You Think That We've Reached an Extreme?': The Issue of TV Broadcast Language in Soviet Latvia, 1955–71". *Nationalities Papers*: 1–20, doi:10.1017/nps.2025.14