

## ***Ethnicity and Soviet Television News***

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The Carter Center

1991

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***Even before the violent takeover of Lithuanian television in January 1991 and the subsequent sharpening of the center-periphery conflict, television news broadcasts in 1987-1989 revealed a serious underreporting of non-Slavic ethnic groups and ethnopolitical issues.***

The approximately 130 different ethnic groups and languages that comprise the Soviet Union create an imposing challenge to television broadcasting. To some extent the needs of the various populations vis-à-vis the state are supposed to be reflected in the structure of the broadcasting system. But the increased political activity and incidents surrounding the demands of some ethnic groups have drawn critical attention to these groups' representation on national television news. This article reports an empirical study of these issues.

**Until 1991, television in the Soviet Union was centrally administered under the direction of the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting (Gosteleradio) and its branches.** A 1991 presidential decree, described below, detached the regional affiliates but essentially kept in place a hierarchical system, with a newly named, but very largely unchanged, central administration for State Television at the top. Like the Soviet political and economic system, television is organized on a territorial basis, from national (or All-Union) through republic, province (*oblast*), city, and district (or borough). <sup>1</sup> All 15 republics, with the exception of the Russian Republic, have their own television channels in addition to receiving one or both of the two national channels, headquartered in Moscow. Provinces and cities transmit their programs, but except for very large cities, like Moscow and Leningrad, they do so for only a few hours a day in "windows" on the second national television channel. Leningrad television (designed originally as a potential third national channel) can also be received in Moscow; its system is the most innovative in the country. National channels broadcast in Russian; other channels broadcast in Russian or the language of the local nationality. Although the future of cable television may be promising (a

Soviet Cable Association was formed in 1990), its reach at present is very limited. <sup>2</sup>

The amount of effective delegation of authority has varied over the course of Soviet history. During the Brezhnev period, television became significantly more centralized, and regional broadcasting at the subnational level consequently decreased <sup>3</sup>. The Brezhnev policy also involved a more powerful and direct role for the Communist Party (3, p. 45). The political reforms of the Gorbachev era, however, have prompted substantive, rather than cosmetic, decentralization, especially in the media, where they began with the policy of glasnost. Although television is certainly more conformist and less innovative than such journals as *Ogonyok* (*Little Flame*) or such newspapers as *Argumenty i fakty* (*Arguments and Facts*), it is available to 97 percent of the Soviet population (and a prime-time audience of 150-200 million), while even the largest circulation newsprint is between 25 and 35 million. Television has successfully upgraded production values, admitted dissenting points of view, transmitted more pictures and fewer talking heads, and significantly increased response time in news broadcasting <sup>4</sup>. Audiences have been extremely responsive to these changes. Vice President Lukyanov announced, for example, that the large audiences for the first live transmission of the Congress of People's Deputies caused a 20 percent reduction in labor productivity during the period <sup>5</sup>.

Although television programming in general, and news in particular, had, by 1991, come a long way from the stultifying images and scripts of the Brezhnev era, the sharp political disputation that marked the broadcasts of the late 1980s and 1990 were diminishing. Leonid Kravchenko, appointed head of State Television late in 1990, announced at that time that television had stirred up passions and exacerbated conflicts. His policy would be to provide more entertainment programming (which had been in relatively short supply, in any case) at the expense of public affairs. In addition, he would conceive of the First Program (the more widely received of the two national networks), as the "presidential channel" and structure the news accordingly.

The prominence and decentralization of television that has taken place under Gorbachev was essentially ratified in a 1990 presidential decree that redefined the structure of the television industry <sup>6</sup>. It recommended that the Supreme Soviet pass a law on broadcast regulation, including the status of Gosteleradio, and further asserted that state television and radio should be independent of any political party. This is particularly important since the legal monopoly role of the Communist Party ended with the repeal of Article 6 of the Constitution. Notably absent from this decree was the more liberal position of the 1989 Law on the Press, which permits individuals, not only public organizations or political parties, to found and operate media.

Early in 1991, a second decree created the All-Union State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, transferring to it the assets of Gosteleradio, as well as

the chairman. At the same time - and with the same chair - a council was set up to coordinate activities with the republics, whose own television systems would function independently of the center. Until a law on broadcast regulation is passed, the currently constituted State Television and Radio Company is primarily responsible for licensing all newcomers to the television system. Furthermore, equipment and the technical infrastructure - including a complex network of communications satellites - in the possession of State Television would be available to potential users generally on a fee-for-use basis. This obviously limited the possibilities for stations with little revenue. It also presented problems for Russian Republic television, whose claim to the second national network met with the response that the patrimony of the country as a whole could not be turned over to one republic without adequate monetary compensation. In a transition period, then, the new All-Union Television and Radio Broadcasting Company retained much of the old power of Gostele-radio.

While the 1990 directive forbids any political party or group from monopolizing airtime, it relates this to another, more problematic prohibition, forbidding the conversion of "state television and radio broadcasting into a means for the dissemination of the personal political views of the staff." This prohibition makes it difficult to justify the kind of commentary and analysis that many television personnel regard as their professional responsibility. The continuing tension on this front is, as will be seen below, a serious impediment to covering minority issues.

In terms of decentralization, new investments have been made in regional broadcasting, and Moscow is to create some 67 regional television broadcast studios, over half of them outside the Russian Republic. Local television committees are being given significantly greater latitude in setting their goals and detaching from the center, to the extent that their resources and technological infrastructure permit.

As might be expected, these reforms have drawn attention to television's political utility. However, even with increased regional authority over broadcasting, the seriousness of ethnic tensions has made national television coverage of ethnic issues and its representation of ethnic groups a critical policy issue.

In the early years of glasnost, national television policy provided for virtually no coverage of ethnic clashes. "Vremya," the authoritative evening news program, took roughly four months to deliver coverage of the tragic events in Armenia and Azerbaidzhan that met then-current standards of glasnost. In fact, it was not "Vremya" but a special documentary program, "Pozitsiya" ("Position"), that provided the first footage from the February 1988 violent clashes in the Azerbaidzhani cities of Sumgait and Stepanakert - some two months after the events. During the violent events in Tbilisi in April 1989, national television did not provide vital information on the use of gas, the numbers of victims affected, and the brutality of the termination of the demonstration. As a Soviet observer of

television news coverage noted: "For a long, too long a time, national television tried to keep quiet about what was worrying literally all television viewers. The vacuum of objective information gave birth to rumors, heated up conjecture, and put weapons into the hands of our ideological adversaries" <sup>7</sup>

Increased coverage inevitably triggers increased criticism from the aggrieved parties, and there have been numerous accusations that "Vremya" favors the adversary. <sup>7</sup> Gosteleradio's response has been defensive. Invoking the Hippocratic oath, then-Gosteleradio Chairman Mikhail Nenashev took the position that the role of television is not to exacerbate problems <sup>9</sup>. The Congress of People's Deputies has on several occasions decided not to televise debates that, in its view, might inflame tense situations. Thus there was no coverage of debates on events in Nagorno Karabakh and of the report of the commission investigating the 1989 Tbilisi deaths.

As ethnic conflicts have escalated and multiplied, national television has continued to offer minimal coverage and limited film footage. Analysis is sparse, and backgrounders that contextualize the issues satisfactorily are not the rule. "Non-interference" for a newsgathering organization is something of an oxymoron. As Alexander Tikhomirov said on the news analysis program "7 dnei" ("7 Days") (January 28, 1990), "It is impossible and indeed unethical to be good for everyone." His comments helped to provoke the termination of that program.

**Another facet of the problem of ethnicity and television news in the Soviet Union is the presentation of particular groups.** Commenting on the U.S. experience and the socializing effect of television, Comstock and Cobbey note: "Findings imply an effect for television where experience fails; they also imply that television, because of the limited stereotypic scope of its portrayals, may provide a homogenizing influence - an implication to which the data on ethnic minority children would not by themselves lead" <sup>10</sup>. The Kerner Report on the causes of race-related violence in the United States and subsequent studies have focused on the importance of the news in socializing both minority and majority populations <sup>11</sup>.

In the Soviet Union, television is considered so central to socialization that it has been blamed for the clear failure of previous socialization practices. One Soviet analyst described television as the "most powerful and efficacious instrument of influence on public consciousness. Our TV with all self criticism has to take on itself the weight of responsibility for the deficiencies in the internationalist upbringing of the Soviet people" <sup>12</sup>. Although television clearly is not solely responsible for ethnic tensions, its power and its political value for an ethnic group are perceived to be very great.

If television is considered critical to the process of ethnic integration, then the portrayal of ethnic groups on television will be highly salient for those groups. With the increased importance of television have come complaints from ethnic

groups who are "left out." Central Soviet television is still very heavily Russian, and a Soviet observer asked, "Isn't the whole first *All-Union* program of television too *Moscow* in its subject matter?... The overwhelming majority of viewers don't live in the capital" <sup>13</sup>. A Central Asian viewer of a 1989 program, "Intelligentsia and Perestroika," complained that all the participants were Russians and that the program lacked any Central Asian *intelligenty* <sup>14</sup>.

Unlike its U.S. counterpart, Soviet entertainment programming remains relatively underdeveloped and underfunded. It is in the arena of news and public affairs programming - and primarily regarding matters of domestic politics and economics - that the most stunning reforms in television have taken place. A national survey taken at the end of 1989 <sup>15</sup> found that public affairs programs were much more popular than entertainment (films, sports, etc.). News broadcasting was expanded at the beginning of 1990. Some versions of the national news that begin in the morning (Moscow time) clearly are aimed at the east-ernmost time zone, although they are received on the national channel throughout the country. Of all the news programs, however, the nightly newscast "Vremya," shown at 9:00 p.m. Moscow time, remains the most authoritative and widely received. Although there was considerable criticism in the press of the Kravchenko policy of following the "presidential position" on the news - and limiting access to critics - "Vremya" 's positioning on First Program gives it a considerable advantage in reaching viewers.

**To study the ethnic complexion of Soviet TV news, we coded four seven-day weeks of "Vremya" - one each in February, May, July, and October - in 1987, 1988, and 1989.** This procedure <sup>16</sup> yielded a total of 2,132 international and domestic news stories over 12 weeks comprising over 58 hours of newstime. (Foreign stories not mentioning the Soviet Union were excluded.) An average program presented about 25 news stories, and an average story lasted slightly more than 1 1/2 minutes. <sup>17</sup> Each story on a newscast was coded for 49 categories of primary subject, which were aggregated into 16 categories for analysis. Domestic politics (25 percent), international politics (24 percent), and economics (19 percent) were the three primary themes.

In order to focus on ethnic representation on Soviet television news, we coded only Soviet citizens as "newsmakers." To be a "newsmaker," a person either had to be seen and identified by name (by the correspondent, anchor, or news reader, or with a graphic) or to speak on camera. Thus, being visible in a crowd scene was not sufficient. There are 1,473 newsmakers in our sample, <sup>18</sup> and about two-thirds appear in stories covering the three primary themes. We also coded all Soviet correspondents, who report 837 (40 percent) of the stories.

Determining the ethnicity of the newsmakers and broadcasters was more complex. There are relatively few differences of race among the roughly 290 million citizens in the Soviet Union, but there are over 130 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own language. However, Soviet minorities, unlike those in the

United States, tend to have a fixed geographical base and inhabit their "own" republic or autonomous regions. Each republic has varying degrees of ethnic homogeneity; for example, some 24 million Russians live in republics other than the Russian Republic <sup>19</sup>. If nationality was not explicitly indicated, we based our coding decision on a combination of criteria: name, place of story, language spoken, appearance, and accent. Since the last two are obviously subjective, conservative judgments were made. To enhance reliability, we used an aggregation to arrive at four groups: Slav, Central Asian, Balt, and Transcaucasian. The first three groups are related ethnicities. The fourth, comprising the Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaidzhanis, are unrelated culturally and linguistically but are aggregated in order to preserve regional integrity. When specific ethnicity was to any degree unclear, we conservatively assigned the individual to the larger ethnic group. We found nationality impossible to determine in a little over two percent of the cases.

We coded for a variety of sociodemographic variables in addition to ethnicity. Where people were unidentified but spoke (in "man on the street" interviews, for example), they were coded as "masses." We also noted the length of time each newsmaker was allotted to speak.

**Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians, who together make up the larger "Slavic" ethnicity that comprises some 70 percent of the Soviet population, account for 84 percent of the newsmakers in our sample.** Slavs dominate the national political elite, as well as key posts (second secretaries, heads of security organs and communications, and large factories) in the republics. Even outside the Russian Republic, military commanders are usually Russian <sup>20</sup>. Russian is the language of "Vremya" broadcasts as well as of all programming on the two national television channels. In our three-year sample, all the on-camera studio personnel (anchor, news reader, commentator) are Slavs.

The second largest ethnic group in the Soviet Union is the Muslims (mainly of Turkic ancestry), who make up some 17 percent of the overall population. The largest concentration is in Soviet Central Asia. <sup>21</sup> Taken together, Central Asians account for about 12 percent of the Soviet population but only 3.6 percent of the newsmakers in our sample. Central Asians are the most disadvantaged ethnic groups in the country. They have large families and high birth-rates, high rates of unemployment, and widespread health and ecological problems, and they are highly dependent on agriculture.

The second largest newsmaker group in our sample is the Transcaucasians - people from the Republics of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaidzhan. They account for 6 percent of newsmakers, very close to their 5.3 percent proportion of the population at large. This relatively high degree of representation is to a large extent due to the visibility of one of their number - Georgian Eduard Shevardnadze. During the period sampled, the then-foreign minister was the only non-Slav in the top leadership of the country. If we remove the "Shevardnadze

effect," we find that the Transcaucasian ethnic groups make up a little more than 3 percent of the total number of newsmakers.

People from the Baltic Republics make up 2.3 percent of the newsmakers, as compared with their 2.9 percent of the population. This is not a severe underrepresentation, although it could be argued that these ethnic groups were making news during our sampling period far in excess of their population proportion.

All other ethnic groups combined make up only 1.8 percent of Soviet newsmakers. The nationality of 2.3 percent of newsmakers could not be coded.

The emphasis on urban life is one reason that many of the ethnic minorities, who are primarily rural dwellers, are underrepresented. The actual population of the Soviet Union in 1988 was 66 percent urban and 34 percent rural (5, p. 18). Yet 83 percent of domestic stories with newsmakers took place in urban settings, and 90 percent of all the newsmakers appeared in these urban-based stories. <sup>22</sup> Particularly overrepresented are such predominantly urban ethnicities as Slavs and Balts. Central Asians, large numbers of whom live in the country-side (the Uzbeks, largest of the Central Asian nationalities, are 58 percent rural), are shown in rural locations much more than any other nationality. Other groups are disproportionately shown as urban. Thus, 26 percent of all the Central Asians are shown in rural locations, compared with 10 percent of the Slavs (32 percent of whom in fact live in rural areas) and less than 3 percent of the Transcaucasians (about 40 percent of these republics are rural). None of the Baltic newsmakers is shown in a rural setting.

**In terms of the news stories' primary themes, approximately half of the Slavic newsmakers are shown in stories about the domestic political process and international politics.** About half of all Transcaucasian newsmakers are shown in stories about international politics (another effect of a Georgian foreign minister), as compared to 12 percent of Central Asians. Roughly a third each of the Central Asian and Baltic newsmakers are shown in stories about domestic politics. Six percent of Slavs and 9 percent of Balts appear in stories about economic problems.

The distribution of ethnic groups in stories about political violence presents an interesting pattern. Twenty-one percent of all Balts are shown in stories related to political violence (the same as for stories about family and culture); 12 percent of Central Asians appear in stories about political violence, both international and domestic, as compared to only 4 percent of the Slavic newsmakers. Four percent of Slavs, 6 percent of Transcaucasians, and 6 percent of Central Asians appear in stories about law and crime.

Given the television policy constraints on the reporting of domestic ethnic violence, the stories that are reported reveal important detail. The sample includes a number of stories about Azerbaidzhani/Armenian strife in Nagorno

Karabakh. The most violent situations are reported in stories without pictures (such as one in July 1989 that spoke of civil strife in Stepanakert and the deaths of 19 military men). The three stories with pictures from the area tend to be more static and less sensational. In one, a police official indicates that a bomb had exploded in the streets but that no one had been hurt. He refers to gunfire; there are pictures of weapons, tanks, and soldiers; and officials discuss efforts to curtail crime and improve interethnic relations. In another story, a reporter shows what was left of a bridge that had been blown up and notes that no one had been hurt. Pictures follow of peaceful street scenes and routine airport security checks. A third story first shows soldiers in rural areas going about their daily routine and then pictures closed factories with stockpiled goods awaiting the solution to transportation blockages. The reporter comments that factory workers throw rocks at the soldiers stationed nearby; the factory director denies it. The reporter ends by lamenting that soldiers cannot do their jobs while under attack from the residents and intones, "Just as people cannot live without bread, an army cannot live without faith." These reports offer viewers certain facts about this bitter ethnic tragedy, but they fail to provide the explanatory grid and the deeper understanding of genuinely effective news reporting.

Newsmakers belonging to the highest levels of the political elite are Slavic and Transcaucasian (again reflecting the Shevardnadze effect). Only one Balt and no Central Asians are represented at this level. Central Asians are much more likely (30 percent) to be portrayed as local government or Party officials, compared with 7 percent of Slavs, 10 percent of Transcaucasians, and 15 percent of Balts.

Central Asian newsmakers also hold the low-skilled jobs: Nine percent are low-skilled industrial or (mostly) agricultural workers. Six percent of Slavs fall into these two categories, but most of them are industrial workers. No Balts are pictured in either job category.

The extensive coverage of parliamentary activities during this period includes appearances by ethnic minorities. For example, 46 percent of all Balts shown during this period are associated with the national government, as are 15 percent of Central Asians and 10 percent of Caucasians. This setting permitted the audience - during a period of extremely high viewership - to see an ethnically mixed forum.

**The overrepresentation of Slavs as newsmakers is even greater when we look at speaking time.** Ninety percent of all speaking time is given to Slavs, 4 percent to Transcaucasians, 2 percent to Central Asians (again, the most notable disparity between news representation and population proportion), and 1 percent to Balts.

Some groups are mutely present on the news; others are given the microphone to direct their own message to viewers. Sixty percent of all Soviet newsmakers speak for themselves; 32 percent are identified by the broadcaster and shown



only in filmed or taped footage. The rest are shown while their statements are quoted or ideas paraphrased.

As speakers, Slavs are somewhat overrepresented (62 percent), and Central Asian speakers approximate their proportion of the population. Transcaucasians and Balts speak considerably less than the average - only 35 percent of Transcaucasians and 42 percent of Balts. The apparent underrepresentation of Transcaucasians as speakers is a function of Shevardnadze's many appearances around the world and with foreign visitors. Most of these stories are presented as pictures with voice-over. When Shevardnadze's appearances are excluded, 54 percent of the Transcaucasian newsmakers get a "sound bite." Most striking is the underrepresentation of speaking time for people from the Baltic Republics. These people, whose bold political programs include returning to an independence they regard as having been illegally wrested from them, have relatively little opportunity to present their point of view.

Some representation of ethnic minorities does occur in the stories narrated by news correspondents, whose expertise has been shown to contribute significantly to the shaping of opinions <sup>23</sup>. In our three-year sample of newscasts, correspondents cover 690 stories about the Soviet Union, both in domestic and international settings. (An additional 147 correspondents, all of whom were Slavs, reported foreign stories.) Slavs account for 93 percent of these appearances, Transcaucasians 2.5 percent, Balts 2 percent, and Central Asians just under 2 percent (again, the most seriously underrepresented). Soviet news, unlike U.S. news, generally organizes stories into blocs: first the most important governmental news, followed by domestic news, international news, and culture and science stories. Ninety-four percent of correspondents appearing in the first three stories about the Soviet Union on the nightly news are Slavs, 3 percent are Transcaucasians, slightly more than 2 percent are Central Asians, and just under 1 percent are Balts.

Slavic correspondents report on all the subjects for which we coded. Other nationalities are clustered in certain kinds of stories. For example, Baltic reporters cover stories on family and culture - lighter material, usually about the arts, and placed at the end of the newscast. About a fifth of Baltic correspondents cover media stories; another fifth cover upbeat economics stories. They are thinly arrayed across the more serious domestic political stories.

Transcaucasian correspondents, too, cover family and culture stories (18 percent of their correspondents), positive economic stories (18 percent), and, especially, domestic politics (29 percent). Central Asian correspondents handle stories on positive economic developments (25 percent of their correspondents); otherwise their small numbers are distributed across several political topics and the ubiquitous family and culture stories.

With non-Slav minorities making up only six percent of the correspondents, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about their degree of access to the most important news stories. Balts seem to be given a higher proportion of the stories at the end of newscasts, suggesting that the pattern found for speaking representation is not an anomaly.

**Whether or not specifically ethnic issues are addressed, a television news system exhibits a country's ethnic groups in patterned images and roles.**

Dominant nationalities or races tend to populate the elites and make disproportionately more news. In the Soviet Union, the less advantaged and more rural peoples of Central Asia are also the most underrepresented. There are two mitigating factors: the very visible (though often nonspeaking) role of Georgian Eduard Shevardnadze, the foreign minister during the sample period; and the extensive coverage of a legislature that is ethnically very mixed. Most problematic, however, in political terms, is the relative difficulty with which people from the breakaway Baltic Republics obtain the all-important sound bite on the news and, as correspondents, cover the most important stories on the news.

In the Soviet Union there is a widespread belief that failures in policy on interethnic relations are also failures of television policy. Numerous complaints have been registered about the central authorities' tardy response to the pleas of the Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh to receive television from the neighboring Armenian Republic <sup>24</sup>. Criticism of television's slow response in covering the Chernobyl accident has assumed the character of ethnic-based grievances from the affected populations of Ukrainians and Belorussians.

Television is also faulted for failing to cover adequately the searing conflicts dividing ethnic groups. Policy-makers face a real dilemma: how to contribute to the solution rather than inflame the hostilities. <sup>25</sup> But there is surely a line, however faint, that for news broadcasting divides inadequate coverage from something that embraces the most intense concerns and everyday lives of the citizenry. Soviet newscasts are so close to noncoverage that many viewers in the non-Russian republics indicate a preference for their own broadcast systems <sup>26</sup>. Ultimately the political form of what presently constitutes the Soviet Union may change substantially, but during the volatile period of transition, the integrative potential of the country's most massive mass medium will be reduced to the extent that alienated ethnicities turn to competing and fragmenting television news systems. <sup>27</sup>.

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## Notes

**Note 1:** Exceptions to this ladder are the "autonomous" areas reserved for ethnic concentrations. In the past this has been a largely formal recognition; as the

framework of relations between nationalities changes, these autonomous areas are claiming enhanced rights. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** The pockets of cable broadcasting that do exist throughout the country mainly show films and other entertainment programming. These programs are supported by viewer subscriptions and are run independently of State Television, though their chief sponsors often include local government and public, semi-official organizations, such as the Young Communist League (Komsomol). [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** See, for example, Erevan Domestic Service, June 27, 1990, reported in FBIS-SOV-90-125, June 28, 1990. Erevan International Service, December 9, 1989, reported in FBIS-SOV-89-237: " 'Vremya' true to its principle of circumventing the truth about Armenia." Moscow World Service, March 22, 1990, reported in FBIS-SOV-90-057: "Vytautas Landsbergis...has described Central Television's relay of the Vilnius meeting...as propaganda." [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** The same period within each quarter was used for each year, except for the summer of 1988, when a week in August was substituted for technical reasons. Sports and weather, which on Soviet news follow the news proper, were not included. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** In 1984-1985, a single newscast presented, on the average, 22 stories [9]. The time allocated to the broadcast is not fixed; some events are deemed important enough for more complete coverage, such as speeches by national leaders during sessions of the highest government bodies (sometimes broadcast in full) or summit meetings. In addition, during our period of analysis, "Vremya" devoted as much as an hour of coverage several days in a row to sessions of the Supreme Soviet that took place in May of all three years, especially in 1989. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** Of the total of 2,132 stories, 1,402 (66 percent) have no newsmakers; 746 of these are foreign stories, which tend to be very short capsules of filmed coverage (usually purchased from a Western agency) of international events. The remaining 656 are international stories that deal with the Soviet Union and some other country. Fewer Soviet newsmakers appear in international stories than in domestic stories. [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** Central Asia always includes the Republics of Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Kirghizia, and Turkmenistan. Sometimes it also includes Kazakhstan, which has had a somewhat different pattern of economic development and immigration [15]. Since Kazakhs are clearly ethnically Central Asian, we include them in our definition of Central Asian ethnicity. [Back.](#)

**Note 8:** The same is true of news coverage in the United States. In a comparative analysis during the same sample period we found virtually the same distribution of newsmakers: 90 percent were located in cities and 8 percent in the

rural United States, although the census lists 27 percent of the population as living in the countryside. [Back.](#)

**Note 9:** The Soviet Union is not alone in facing this dilemma. In 1990, after Andy Rooney (of "60 Minutes") was suspended from and then readmitted to the airwaves, Walter Goodman wrote in the *New York Times*: "All the main news programs practice a gentler, kinder journalism when it comes to dealing with influential minority groups. Given the quick flash point to allusions like Mr. Rooney's to the capacities and proclivities of some minorities, there is something to be said for discretion by a medium with so formidable an ability to incite" (4). In the Soviet Union, the current debate does not center on accommodating what Goodman calls "influential minority groups," but rather on Central Television's allocating sufficient time and exposure to minorities, especially those with dissenting political platforms. In both cases, though, the recognition that television has an "ability to incite" creates policy dilemmas with no easy solution. [Back.](#)

**Note 10:** Alimov, G., E. Gonzalez, A. Stepovoi, V. Romanyuk, and V. Shchepotkin. "Formiruetsa pravitelstvo" [The government is being formed]. *Izvestia*, June 17, 1989, pp. 1, 3. [Back.](#)

**Note 11:** Comstock, George and Robin E. Cobbey. "Television and the Children of Ethnic Minorities." *Journal of Communication* 29(1), Winter 1979, pp. 104-115. [Back.](#)

**Note 12:** Egorov, V. V. *Televidenie i zritel* [Television and the Viewer]. Moscow: Mysl, 1977. [Back.](#)

**Note 13:** Goodman, Walter. "Fallout from the Rooney Brouhaha." *New York Times*, March, 11, 1990, p. 35. [Back.](#)

**Note 14:** Gosudarstvenny komitet SSSR po statistike [U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics]. *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1988* [The Economy of the U.S.S.R. in 1988]. Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1989. [Back.](#)

**Note 15:** Guboglo, N. M. "Natsionalny vopros: predposylka perestroiki" [The nationality question: The pre-requisite of perestroika]. In V. A. Yadov (Ed.), *Sotsiologia perestroiki* [The Sociology of Perestroika]. Moscow: Nauka, 1990. [Back.](#)

**Note 16:** Kerner Commission. "The News Media and Civil Disorders." In *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Otto Kerner, Chairman. New York: Bantam Books, 1968. [Back.](#)

**Note 17:** Lane, David. *Soviet Society Under Perestroika*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990. [Back.](#)

**Note 18:** Mickiewicz, Ellen. *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. [Back](#).

**Note 19:** Mickiewicz, Ellen. "Ethnicity and Support: Findings from a Soviet-American Public Opinion Poll." *Journal of Soviet Nationalities* 1, Spring 1990, pp. 140-147. [Back](#).

**Note 20:** Mickiewicz, Ellen. "Ethnic Differentiation and Political Communication." In T. Anthony Jones, Walter Connor, and David Powell (Eds.), *Soviet Social Problems*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991. [Back](#).

**Note 21:** Mickiewicz, Ellen, Ada W. Finifter, George Gerbner, Boris Grushin, and Nikolai Popov. U.S./U.S.S.R. National Survey in the Soviet Union. Press materials for press conference at the Carter Center, Emory University, March 28, 1990. [Back](#).

**Note 22:** Nenashev, Mikhail. Chairman of Gosteleradio. Interview with Ellen Mickiewicz, Moscow, May 1990. [Back](#).

**Note 23:** Page, Benjamin I., Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey. "What Moves Public Opinion?" *American Political Science Review* 81, 1987, pp. 23-43. [Back](#).

**Note 24:** Rumer, Boris. *Soviet Central Asia: A Tragic Experiment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989. [Back](#).

**Note 25:** Tsvik, V. "Internatsionalny teleekran" [Internationality television screen]. *Televidenie i radioveshchanie* [Television and Radio] 12, 1988, p. 13. [Back](#).

**Note 26:** "TV/3+1." *Literaturnaya gazeta*, February 1, 1989, p. 7. [Back](#).

**Note 27:** "Ukaz." *Izvestia*, July 19, 1990, p. 1. Zadorkin, V. I. and A. V. Sosnovsky. "Perspektivy kommunikativnykh vozmozhnostei televidenia kak sredstva osveshchenia kulturnogo urovnia" [Perspectives on the communications opportunities of television as means for the interpretation of cultural level]. *Issledovanie rosta kulturnogo urovnia trudiashchikhsia* [Research on the Growth of the Workers' Cultural Level]. Moscow: Institut sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniï (Akademiia nauk SSSR), Sovetskaya sotsiologicheskaya assotsiatsiia, 1977, pp. 90-101. [Back](#).