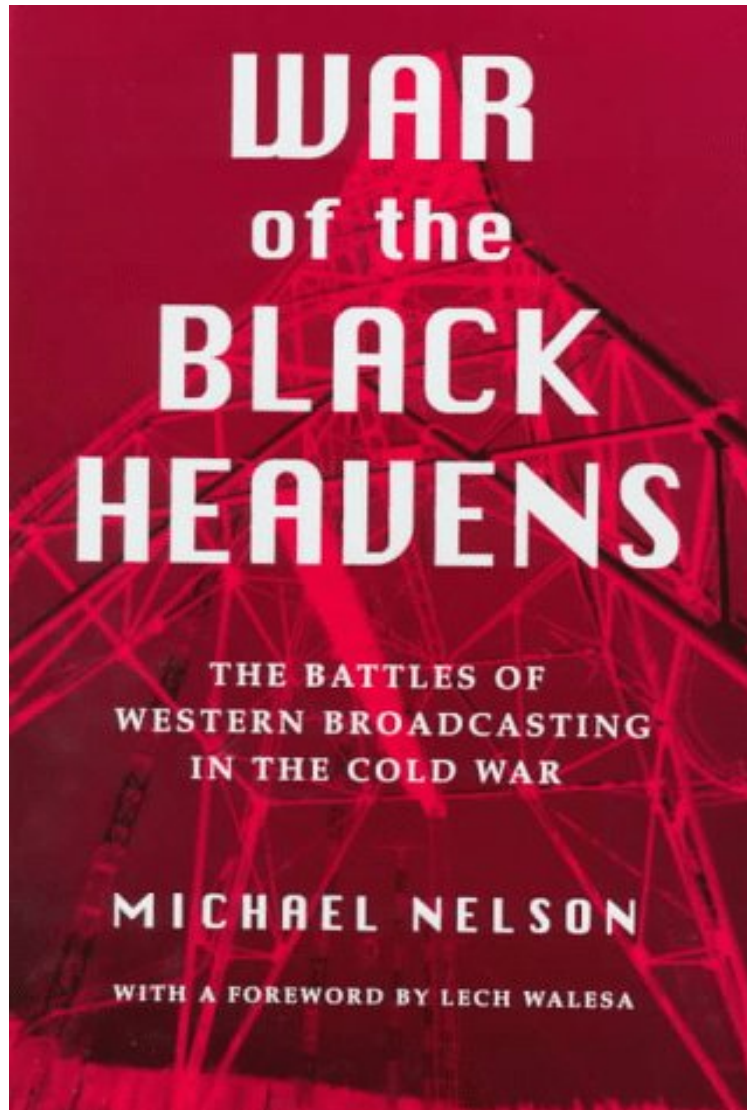


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War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War

Michael Nelson

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Michael Nelson : War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Radio Defeated Soviet Communism By Gregory M Excellent overview of how Western shortwave radio broadcasts to the USSR and its client states not only was a 'window to the

world' for citizens of those Orwellian societies, but how this flow of information helped to eventually bring down those terrible systems. Citizens of the East Bloc might have lived behind an 'Iron Curtain', but in the end the Communist apparatchiks could not squelch the flow of information that the BBC, Voice Of America, Deutsche Welle, Radio Free Europe, Radio Canada International and other stations beamed toward those totalitarian states. Lech Walesa is quoted thusly : 'When it came to radio waves the Iron Curtain was helpless. Nothing could stop the news coming through...',

International diplomacy and a changing global economy did not bring about the fall of the Iron Curtain. Radio did, and it was mightier than the sword. Based on first-hand interviews and documents from the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, Michael Nelson shows that Western radio -- principally, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the Voice of America -- were unrivaled forces in the fight against communism and the fall of the Iron Curtain. It was a propaganda war in which the Communists had few radio listeners in the West. They did everything in their power to prevent the infiltration of Western thought into their world, resorting to jamming radio signals, assassinating staff, and bombing stations. The Russians decided to stop the mass production of short-wave radios so that their citizens could not hear Western broadcasts. War of the Black Heavens reveals that, due to administrative incompetence, short-wave radio production continued, making worthless many of the billions of dollars spent on jamming. These radio programs introduced a forbidden, exciting culture to millions of eager listeners. Pop music, talk shows, news, and information about consumer goods all relayed a message of the good life, subtly undermining the values of the communist regimes. Western radio presented the concept of a civil society that upheld basic human values; it actively connected listeners with the cultures of Europe and North America War of the Black Heavens describes an unheralded story of success and adds a new interpretation that helps us understand some of the most momentous political events of this century.