

# **THE IMAGE OF THE SAMIZDAT IN THE HUNGARIAN OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA**

Research Report

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The research project **The image of Samizdat in the Hungarian Official Propaganda between 1981-1990** at the Open Society Archives is a part of my Ph.D dissertation project, **The memory of 1956 in the 1980's**.

What do the archive's records show about the official propaganda and the samizdat in the Kádárist Hungary? The documents of the Open Society Archives were excellent to the opposition's and the samizdat's analysis. There was a great possibility to compare it the Agitation and Propaganda Department's documents<sup>1</sup> and the reports of the State Security Service with the opposition's documents, appeals, samizdats and the Radio Free Europe's fonds.

It was exciting to reading the summaries, the reports whiches were made for the party leadership: which samizdat's articles were analysed by State Security Services: what sentences were emphasized, what was underscored, what kind of comments was made. Based on these documents can be asserted, that the East European dissidents' international cooperation and activities induced the largest interest of the State Security Service and the party leadership.

Researching will be worthwhile further on the documents of the Directorate III/III-6. This subdivison was organized from the aim of his averting for the making of the hostile propaganda materials and dissemination. These documents are an important sources of

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□ The Agitational and Propaganda Department it worked as the part of the HSWP CC's apparatus based on the opinions of HSWP leader-body decisions and the Commission on Agitation and Propaganda, which working beside the party.

the state appearance against the samizdat. According to József Horváth, head of the internal security service of the ministry of the interior, the samizdat activity consisted in the centre of an appearance against the Hungarian Democratic Opposition. The campaign going on on the administrative and ideological level against the samizdat, but it was in real a state-supported violence against the intellectual freedom, for which the bureaucratic censorship joined forces with the institutionalised police autocracy.

In Hungary the Governance of the Information followed the principles that the press is “*a collective agitator, a propagandist and an organizer.*” The information was subordinated for the propaganda. The Hungarian Democratic Opposition broke the communist state's informational monopoly and the official exclusive representation with the samizdat. The achievement of the samizdat culture had the most important evidence of the Hungarian society's desire for the expression of the independence, and the alternative thoughts, the need for the freedom of culture.

The records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute (Hungarian Unit) were the sources of my research beside the samizdat collections (János Kis Collections on Hungarian Samizdat and Documents of the Democratic Opposition: Samizdat Periodicals and Publications, Manuscripts; Géza Sáska Collection on Hungarian Samizdat and the Monday Free University, Samizdat and Émigré Publications; Samizdat Collection of György Krassó: Periodicals, Books and other publications; Personal Papers of Gábor Demszky: Samizdat Publications, Hungarian Samizdat Periodicals, Hungarian Samizdat Publications, Preparatory materials and documents of samizdat printings, Manuscripts, Documentation of the opposition movements from the 1980's).

Furthermore I was researching General Béla Király Papers, the documents relating to Hungarian Democratic Opposition and the samizdat, and Contacts with Hungarian Dissidents. I was looking into a variety of materials from RFE Research Department background reports through the samizdat periodicals (*Beszélő*, *Demokrata*, *Hírmondó*, *Égtájak között* etc.) to the press collections and the Records of Index on Censorship (Situations Reports of RFE).

To study propaganda as history is to examine the practice of propagandists as events and the subsequent events as possible effects of propaganda. To examine propaganda in the light of political science is to analyze the ideologies of the practitioners and the

dissemination and impact of public opinion. For the analysis of propaganda, I used Agitation and Propaganda Department's documents at the Hungarian National Archive's of Hungary and the subjects files of the RFE Hungarian Units (documents of the anniversary of 56, department of the interior, police, censorship, Hungarian Democratic opposition, human rights, samizdat, ideology, media and the Hungarian Writers Union). The press-clippings from Western newspapers were very useful for my research project.

Overview, my research at the Open Society Archives was very successful. I would like to thank the opportunity, duly for the scholarship I reached a big progress in the completion of my Ph.D dissertation. I am very grateful to the Visegrad Fund and Open Society Archives for making this research possible and the helpfulness and kindness of the Archives' staff.