

Visegrad Scholarship at the Vera & Donald Blinken Open Society Archives

Final Report

Research Project:

Propaganda Techniques in the Soviet Media:
Focus on the Uprisings during the Cold War Period

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The proposed project was focused on defining propaganda techniques in the Soviet media, specifically their role in the narratives concerning revolutions during the Cold War period in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). The post-doctoral research I am currently conducting deals with studying disinformation language and manipulation strategies in the media. However, a deep investigation into the propaganda language in the Soviet media, through exploration of its conceptual structure in the Cold War press, and defining its techniques in the interpretation of uprisings enabled me to draw a detailed picture of propaganda evolution in the Soviet media, and therefore, gave me an opportunity to develop a systematic, diachronic view on the misinformation techniques in the media of the 21st century.

Objectives of the Research

The proposed research project carried out at the OSA Archives, precisely addressed the issues that have been relatively little investigated but in the context of the current situation in Ukraine, which is called by some political scientists the

beginning of a new Cold War (*M. Calb, 2015; J.L. Black and M. Johns 2016*), required a complex analysis; such as the specifics of Soviet propaganda language in the media, the conceptual structure of misunderstanding techniques applied by the media, the main strategies of the Soviet information policy. In this respect during the research period at the OSA Archives, I analyzed news texts and materials referring to the following aspects:

- the Soviet news on the uprisings in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovak (1968) ;
- propaganda devices for representing information on opposition leaders, protesters, citizens involved in the uprisings;
- misunderstanding techniques for describing the role of local and central authorities, and Soviet army in the suppressions of the uprisings;

Therefore, to define the Soviet propaganda techniques during the Cold War, I explored the collections of Soviet press holdings (microfilms at the *OSA Archivum Library 17/1/4/3, 17/1/4/8, 16/1/6/3, 16/1/5/2, 16/3/1/2*) and built a corpus of texts (650) for further statistical analysis (software WordSmithTools 6.0). The corpus serves as a solid ground for a thorough analysis of the Soviet interpretation of the uprisings mentioned above. Besides, the materials published by former dissidents and sociological institutes (*HU OSA 300-30-8:45/5, HU OSA 336-0-4, RFE/RL BACKGROUND REPORTS, HU OSA 300-85-12 SUBJECT FILES*) were of especially high value for me, as they contributed to better understanding of many controversial issues, such as, communist ideology, democratic, social and national values in the Cold War.

In this regard, I reflected on the historical development of Soviet propaganda, which filled in the research gap concerning the systematic approach to the current media propaganda techniques in the world (Call Numbers: *947.085 HAZ, 303.37503 COL, 301.154 GEO, 301.1523 LER, 327/.14/0947 HAZ, 335.4 KIR, 301.15/4 LIN, 327.1/4/02547 19 ROS, 301.15/43/32 HOL*). Thus, research of this kind aimed at promoting active anti-propaganda citizen position in terms of positive messaging,

developing critical thinking, raising information awareness, and increasing information literacy amongst citizens.

My research interest on the media propaganda was facilitated by the European Parliament resolution warning against the *'hostile propaganda and disinformation directed against our societies by both Kremlin and non-state actors such as ISIS/Daesh'* in 2016. It is a fact that proves the vital need and high priority of all research focusing on propaganda identification in the national, local media for the sake of global security. For this reason, the OSA documents became valuable props for larger reflections on propaganda in the present media.

Documentation

During the six-week research period I built a corpus of 650 texts and statistically analysed propaganda devices applied in the Soviet press on revolution in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) from the holdings of the *Archivum Library 17/1/4/3, 17/1/4/8, 16/1/6/3, 16/1/5/2, 16/3/1/2*). My research focused on collecting and examining newspaper narratives in such Soviet newspapers as "Izvestiia", "Pravda", "Komsomolskaia Pravda", "Sovetskaia Rossiia", "Trud" etc. The digitalized material especially complemented limited resources available in archival institutions of Ukraine.

During my fellowship I had a chance not just to collect propagandistic narratives and build a corpus of texts, but also familiarize with the rich library at the OSA. The close readings of the archival sources, especially the materials of Radio Free Europe and Human Rights Collections (Call numbers: 943 BIS, 384.54094/09045 CUM, 384.540947/09045 22 JOH, 384.54094 22 JOH, 791.4 HOL, 384.54/094 21 URB, 384.54/094 21 PUD, 384.54094/09045 22 CUM, 384.54/09171/3 NEL, 302.23 FRE), helped me to approach the period of the Cold War more closely and served a valid basis for thinking over new propaganda devices and manipulation purposes in current media environment.

The Visegrad fellowship offered a chance to gain fresh knowledge and insights from the regular consultations with my supervisor, Anna Mazanik, the expert

in Samizdat Collection, and very helpful colleagues of the Archive. I must admit that without those consultations my research period would have been less productive.

The research period at the OSA Archives proved as highly efficient by providing relevant data for my current post-doctoral research, and opening up new opportunities for future studies in Corpus and Media Linguistics. The Visegrad scholarship at the OSA was an exceptional academic opportunity for which I am incredibly grateful.

Appendix: Files processed during the research scholarship

OSA Archival Collections

Reference code	Title	Archival Boxes
HU OSA 300-80	Soviet Red Archives	7, 8
HU OSA 300-6-3	Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research	8, 9
HU OSA 300-6-2	East Europe Area and Opinion Research	1, 2, 3, 5
HU OSA 205, HU OSA 205-4- 211	Records of the Open Media Research Institute, Russian Radical Press Files	1
HU OSA 306	Collective Fonds - Records Relating to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution	VHS #1, 2
HU OSA 300-30, HU OSA 300-30- 14	Czechoslovak Unit Collection of Documents on 1968	1, 2, 3, 4
HU OSA 300-40- 1	Hungarian Unit, Subject Files	1
HU OSA 300-8-38	Publications Department, Report on the USSR	1, 2
HU OSA 312 - Donation of Alfred	Poland : the role of the press in political change	

A. Reisch		
HU OSA 300-40-2 Subject Files in English		85, 86, 87
HU OSA 300-120-13	Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Western Press Archives: Subject Files Relating to Eastern Europe Czechoslovak Socialist Republic: Invasion 1968	
HU OSA 300-1-2 RECORDS OF RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE: GENERAL RECORDS: INFORMATION ITEMS	Helplessness of Western Anti-Soviet Propaganda	
	Soviet propaganda on Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Romania	
	Soviet Propaganda Film in Two Languages Produced in Austria	
HU OSA 300 - RFE/RL collection	Revolution in East-Central Europe : the rise and fall of Communism and the Cold War	
HU OSA 300 - RFE/RL collection	The Soviet propaganda network : a directory of organisations serving Soviet foreign policy	
HU OSA 300 - RFE/RL collection	Soviet political indoctrination : developments in mass media and propaganda since Stalin	Call number 301.15/43/32 HOL
HU OSA 300 - RFE/RL collection	KPSS o sredstvakh massovoi informatsii i propagandy : [Dokumenty i materialy]	077 KPS
HU OSA 300 - RFE/RL collection	Mass media in the Soviet Union The politics of ideas in the USSR	323.440947 18 CON
HU OSA 300 - RFE/RL collection- 303.3/2 STI	The bureaucracy of truth : how Communist governments manage the news	
HU OSA 300-6-3	Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research	7, 8, 9

OSA Archivum Library- 302.23/09409045 ROT	Moscow prime time : how the Soviet Union built the media empire that lost the cultural Cold War	
OSA Archivum Library- 7/24/2/5	Soviet propaganda trends	7/24/2/5
OSA Archivum Library - 303.37503 COL	International encyclopedia of propaganda	
OSA Archivum Library- 7/1/2/8- 1962, No. 1 - 1968, No. 2	Communist affairs	
OSA Archivum Library	Political communication and persuasion	
OSA Archivum Library- Reference collection- 384.54094 MAC	Poland's war on Radio Free Europe, 1950- 1989	