

Vajda Barnabás et al.
Barnabás Vajda a kol.

**Forms of Political and Media Propaganda in Central Europe,
Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary (1938-1968)**

Formy politicko-mediálnej propagandy v strednej Európe,
Česko-Slovensku a Maďarsku (1938-1968)

A politikai és mediális propaganda formái Közép-Európában,
Cseh-Szlovákiában és Magyarországon (1938-1968)

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David Schriff (National Socialism, Communism and Liberal Democracy. Propaganda, Information and Consumption. Vienna's media influence in Slovakia in the 20th century)

Milan Olejník (Year 1938 – a period since the Anschluss of Austria till the Munich Agreement – in reflections of the Slovak contemporary press)

Simon Attila (For the „Just Borders”. The Issue of the Trianon State Borders in the 1938 Propaganda War between Czechoslovakia and Hungary Targeted on Southern Slovakia)

Tatsuya Nakazawa (The exaltation of the Slovak State and its entry into the Tripartite Pact in Japanese media propaganda, 1939–1940)

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Preface / Úvod / Bevezető

This volume is a result of a three-year-long international research cooperation of nine scholars from five different countries. As part of the final outcomes of an international project, it consists of ten chapters, all dealing with some interesting historical aspects of the medial and political propaganda in the 20th century. Part I is devoted to the nature of the Eastern European political propaganda during turbulent war and revolution times. It includes studies by David Schriffel, Milan Olejník, Attila Simon and Tatsuya Nakazawa, all of whom analyse media propaganda during the second world war, aimed at the Czecho-Slovak, Hungarian, and Japanese societies. Part I also tells us a lot on the nature of the revolutionary propaganda in the revolution years of 1956 and 1968; these three authors, Árpád Popély, Peter Jašek, and Karl Benziger deal with certain forms of media propaganda which seems crucial in accompanying societal changes. Part I closes with Marína Zavacká's and Barnabás Vajda's study on the issue of the question if media has ever been a property of all citizens. In Part II, we look at the ideological character of the political and media propaganda; this is a place where Béla Révész and Barnabás Vajda publish and analyze some primary archival sources.

Táto monografia je výsledkom trojročnej vedeckej spolupráce deviatich expertov z piatich štátov. Ako súčasť záverečnej správy z riešenia medzinárodného projektu, kniha sa skladá z desiatich kapitol, pričom každá kapitola sa zaoberá so špecifickými historickými aspektmi mediálnej a politickej propagandy počas dvadsiateho storočia. Prvá časť knihy je venovaná východoeurópskej politickej propagande počas vojnových a revolučných udalostí. Sú tu štúdie Davida Schriffela, Milana Olejníka, Attilu Simona a Tatsuya Nakazawa, pričom každý z nich povie nám čosi špeciálne o propagande počas vojny, smerovanej na česko-slovenskú, maďarskú a japonskú spoločnosť. Súčasťou prvej časti ďalej sú štúdie Árpáda Popélya a Petra Jaška, ktoré sú venované mediálnej propagande ako kľúčovému faktoru pri vytváraní priaznivej spoločenskej atmosféry počas spoločenských zmien. V závere prvej časti Marína Zavacká a Barnabás Vajda publikujú výsledky ich výskumu o tom, či médiá vôbec niekedy boli „majetkom každého občana“, respektíve celej spoločnosti. V druhej časti

knihy Béla Révész a Barnabás Vajda publikujú a analyzujú primárne pramene, ktoré doteraz neboli známe verejnosti.

A jelen kötet egy hároméves nemzetközi kutatómunka eredménye, amelyben kilenc szakember vett részt öt különböző országból. Könyvünk tíz fejezetből áll, és mindegyik a politikai és a mediális propaganda történetének valamelyik szegmensével foglalkozik a huszadik századot illetően. A könyv első része a kelet-európai háborús propaganda természetét vizsgálja, amennyiben David Schriffl, Milan Olejník, Simon Attila és Tatsuya Nakazawa annak a háborús propagandának a természetéről árulnak el sokat, amely a cseh-szlovák, a magyar és a japán társadalom felé irányult. További három szerző, Popély Árpád, Peter Jašek és Karl Benziger a médiapropaganda azon fajtáit veszik szemügyre, amelyek kulcsfontosságúnak tűnnek az társadalmi változások levezénylésekor. A könyv első részét Marína Zavacká és Vajda Barnabás tanulmánya zárja, akik azt a kérdést járják körül, hogy a modern korban egyáltalán volt-e valaha a média „minden állampolgár tulajdona”. A könyv második részében Révész Béla és Vajda Barnabás publikálnak és elemeznek olyan írott forrásokat, amelyek eddig nem voltak ismertek a nyilvánosság számára.

Part I.

Media propaganda during war and revolution times

Let us set off from one of the main protagonists of the twentieth century political propaganda, from V.I. Lenin who reckoned that *politics are equal with propaganda and vice versa*. Indeed, we could not have found a more appropriate point of departure from Lenin who aptly put it forward like this: „Our propaganda and agitation should be clear – this is an essential condition. Even our foes have admitted that on the field of agitation and propaganda we achieved miraculous things. This should be understood in its true merit, i.e. *through our propaganda actions our truth has successfully carved its way into everybody's consciousness*.” This is a general idea which indicates one of the main messages of our volume, that modern age politics as such, aimed at a wide and very diverse masses of people, fundamentally involves spreading the ‘political truth,’ ‘our truth.’ What more, it involves spreading politically motivated messages to the widest audience as possible – in any time, in any political regime, and almost at any cost.

National Socialism, Communism and Liberal Democracy. Propaganda, Information and Consumption. Vienna's media influence in Slovakia in the 20th century.

by David Schriff



Austria and Vienna have a very specific relation towards their Slovak neighbor. Historically they were connected very closely by living in the same „state” over centuries. On the other hand, within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy both were divided by legal and factual differences. Those differences began to have an impact on political developments from the beginning of the era of nationalism and especially after the Habsburg Monarchy was divided into an Austrian and a Hungarian part.

The then arising conflicts on political level had a deep impact on relations. In the Cisleithanian part of the Monarchy more political rights were granted to the emerging language-based nations, a feature especially the Czechs profited from. However, one effect of the rise of political parties and a civil society was an intensified conflict on the questions of national self-determination, fueled by the nationalist programs of comparably small political elites.

The Slovaks (with all the caution one needs to apply to such denominations for a long period of time ex-post) were part of the Hungarian Kingdom for centuries without a tradition of political self-determination. The conflict here was

directed towards Budapest and less to Vienna. Budapest often seemed to be „the enemy” and Vienna the „arbiter” who was asked to negotiate or protect.

Even though close economic and family-related ties existed (the metropolis of Vienna was always an important market for Slovak agricultural goods and labor) the neighbouring areas „looked” in different directions. Upper Hungary, the name Slovakia was often called before 1918, concentrated its effort in politics towards Budapest; whilst Vienna was often occupied dealing with the Czech resistance against its policies.

After the erection of the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks in 1918, this lack of mutual attention in the political sphere and the media continued to exist. Slovakia „disappeared” in the multinational state of Czechoslovakia even though the Slovaks were regarded as the second nation forming the common state. However, in fact the decisions were predominantly made in Prague. Foreign observers or the Austrian political establishment again found their contacts in Prague, in spite of the political revolution that took place in Central Europe.

Slovakia’s political fate again started to play a major role for its direct Western neighbour when Austria as a state had fallen under German occupation and annexation. The „Anschluss” in March 1938 led to a strategically desperate situation for Czechoslovakia – Hitler’s next target for destabilization and expansion. Part of the destabilization effort was an increased support for the Slovak autonomists, especially within the framework of the *Hlinkova Slovenská ľudová strana* (Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party, abbr. HSĽS). This support first included intelligence and logistical support. But when the conflict between Prague and the Slovaks was to be heated up in order to exert increasing political pressure against the Prague government, *propaganda started to play an important role*. Part of it was the invitation of some Slovak political representatives to the Reich to use them as a „fifth column” in the back of the Czechoslovak government. Prague was pressured therefore by autonomist demands not only by the Sudeten Germans but also by the Slovaks. Both were orchestrated by Berlin.

Towards the Slovaks, this policy was conducted by several different authorities who tried to gain influence in Bratislava both competing and rivalling with each other. In Vienna, the Reichsstatthalter, Arthur Seyss-Inquart played a major role in this game. Besides him also the Gauleiter of Vienna, Josef Bürckel and Ernst Kaltenbrunner (as an important figure of the Security Service of the SS, SD in for-

mer Austria) were active towards Vienna's „Near East". The *propagandistic support* was divided in two major areas: the press and radio broadcasting. In terms of the press, the newspapers of the German minority in Slovakia (since October 1938 provided with special rights within the framework of the Slovak autonomy) were directly and closely guided by Germany, and here especially by envoys of Seyss-Inquart. Already before the area was closely monitored by an agency in Vienna called „PUSTE (*Publikationsstelle*) Wien". *All essential press products from Slovakia and other countries in East- and Southeast Europe were collected and evaluated.*

A very small rest of the collection of this agency is part of the archive of the Institute of Eastern European History in Vienna. It is interesting to see that this influence did not stop in appointing *loyal editors and journalists* (of whom most were active agents of the SD) for the German newspapers. Seyss-Inquart even personally bought a majority of the newspaper of the German minority „Grenzbote" to secure his control over it. After this coup worth 80.000 crowns Seyss-Inquart appointed Ferdinand Meissner-Hohenmeis as editor-in-chief of the „Grenzbote"¹ (SCHRIFFL 2004: 28) and therefore secured that national-socialist views in the „Viennese version", i.e. Seyss-Inquart's perspective was promoted in Slovakia. In February 1939 the newspaper sold from 6.500 to 7.000 copies in Slovakia and in Carpathian-Ukraine.² (SCHRIFFL 2004: 29)

The publications of the HSLS already had been granted a factual monopoly in propaganda in Slovakia after the status of autonomy was established in October 1938, and other parties like the Communists had been banned from the political system. The press of this already authoritarian autonomous Slovakia was closely monitored by the Viennese National Socialists and several other German authorities like the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle or Goebbels's *Ministry of Propaganda*. But most of the orders on how to comply with the German foreign policy came from Vienna. The SD-station there and Seyss-Inquart's lieutenants exerted their factual power quite directly. And it was not necessary to force the Slovaks – or to be more precise, the functionaries of the HSLS – under the guidance of Viennese National Socialist authorities. The first contact was attempted to be established as early as March 1938 by two members of the Slovak Parliament, Karol Sidor and Alexander (Šaňo) Mach.

¹ Bundesarchiv Berlin [further on as Barch] R 70 SLOWAKEI/57, Bl. 141.

² Barch R 70 SLOWAKEI/57, Bl. 138.

They went to Vienna and unsuccessfully tried to meet Seyss-Inquart to seek directions how to conduct the way to a Slovak autonomy according to German wishes.

The second mentioned area was radio broadcasting. The Viennese *radio transmitter on the Bisamberg*, which was built only in 1933 with a then impressive transmitting power, was a key feature for the *German propagandistic influence in Slovakia*. Being much stronger than the radio stations in Slovakia, and given the fact that the majority of the receivers were technically quite outdated, for many people, Vienna was the only station that could be heard.³ (SCHRIFFL 2004: 152) The idea of broadcasts in Slovak language from Vienna was sanctioned by Goebbels already in August 1938, and Joseph Bürckel was the operative figure of this enterprise at the beginning. (FRÖHLICH 1998 I: 63, 65)

On a regular basis, the transmissions from Vienna started on 3 September 1938, in the beginning in Czech language. The program in Slovak started on 15 September 1938 with Ľudovít Mutňanský as the presenter on order to promote the idea of the Slovak autonomy and self-determination *within the framework* of the German foreign policy. This goal became especially important from October 1939 onwards, when the Munich agreement coined the relations between Germany and Czechoslovakia. (SCHRIFFL 2004: 146) In the end of October 1938, the control over the broadcasts in Slovak and Ukrainian went from Bürckel to Seyss-Inquart and his staff. An editorial office was set up which had its seat in Seyss-Inquarts office in the Hofburg. The range of the station in Vienna and the fact that Prague was of course unable to prevent those transmissions led to their importance in influencing the Slovaks in a way favorable for the National-Socialists. It is easy to realize the significance of these programs given the fact that *Vienna was one of the bigger stations in the Reich* and reserved five minutes every day for Slovak news directly after the ten minutes of German news on midday.

This policy even led to protests of Viennese listeners but nevertheless was continued by the authorities; after the entire Slovak minority in Austria could be influenced politically this way, too. (SCHRIFFL 2004: 147) Also the Slovak side was well aware of the political power the „Reichssender Wien” was able to inflict: Vojtech Tuka, a radical Slovak autonomist and separatist, and one of the key figures of the Tiso regime, once compared its effect to the „Dicke Berta” (one of the biggest can-

³ Barch R 70 SLOWAKEI/293, Bl. 197.

nons of World War I) – big impact from big distance. (DELFINER 1974: 14) Between September 1938 and March 1939, some 170 transmissions have been made. The key editorial figure in this game – Ľudovít Mutňanský – was a former member of the Slovak People's Party (HSĽS) who now determined himself completely to the cause of a Slovakia under a strong German influence.

How much impact these transmissions had in Slovakia, is also demonstrated by the fact that between October 1938 and March 1939, some Slovak functionaries tried to intervene in Vienna several times in order to moderate the tone of the broadcasts, or even to end them altogether, like Josef Tiso did in the beginning of March 1939. In a telegram to Seyss-Inquart, Tiso urged to stop the programs „*not to endanger the consolidation of Slovakia by transmissions of this kind*”⁴.

After the declaration of independence by the Slovak assembly in Bratislava, the new government increasingly protested against Mutňanský. In the summer of 1939, this effort was successful and Mutňanský was fired. An important aspect of the „new” program was the incitement of some „new” topics, such as the conflict between Czechs and Slovaks; the promotion of Slovak independence under German protection; and of course anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism.

The „Reichssender Wien” was a visible proof of propagandistic actions that have been taken by Viennese National Socialist authorities partly on their own account. Also internationally this impression became prevalent when for example the British consul in Bratislava wrote: „Agitation in Slovakia is clearly fostered by party in Vienna but motives for so doing are not clear and it is possibly semi-independent action by the party which may or may not be supported by Berlin Government.”⁵

The Viennese radio-station played an interesting role in the chaotic days of March 1939. In the conflict between the Slovak autonomous government in Bratislava and the Prague government, from March 10 1939 onwards, the Viennese station directly interfered in the political battle. Prague declared the Slovak Prime minister Tiso and three of his ministers deposed of their offices. Czech police and military were deployed to Slovakia. The aim of the German policy was, now even more urgently than before, *to incite conflicts on the streets to prove that the government in Prague was not able to maintain order and protect the German minority.*

⁴ Barch NL 1180/39 Telegram Tiso to Seyß-Inquart 4 March 1939.

⁵ Documents on British Foreign Policy [further on as DBFP] 1919-1939, 1951: 235.

Ferdinand Ďurčanský used the Viennese radio station in the evening of 10 March to urge the Slovaks to fight against the Czech troops.⁶ However, on 11 March, a new Slovak cabinet under Karol Sidor – another member of the autonomist movement – was sworn in and order was restored. A part of the most radical and Germanophile Slovak advocates of the independence, like Ďurčanský and Murgaš, went to Vienna calling Sidor a collaborator and a traitor via radio to destabilize his government. Both sides used radio transmission, which led to a short-lived „radio war” between Vienna and Bratislava. (SCHRIFFL 2004: 81)

After World War II, Vienna lost her influence eastwards for a certain period of time. The renewed Austrian Republic was busy maintaining her independence and regaining full sovereignty. The expulsion of the German-speaking minority from Czechoslovakia and the beginning of the Cold War also led to an enormous decrease in mutual contacts. Only the commencement of liberalization in the early the early sixties and the change of Austria's image in Slovakia made a shift possible. In the immediate aftermath of the war, *anti-German sentiments* including Austria were an important factor in Czechoslovakia's interior politics. Besides that the advantages of the Capitalist economic system in comparison to the Socialist system were not that visible yet. Both changed and set the stage for Vienna's renewed (but mostly passive) influence.

The media communicates the neighbor's mutual images. Especially in the early fifties, the Slovak press – not surprisingly given the political climate of the time – promoted the *ideological conflict*. The main topics were the „reactionary forces” in Austria and their influence in politics, and the comparison of the „workers' paradise” to the „sufferings in a capitalist country”.

Thanks to the changes on the international level, i.e. regarding the Soviet policy, since the early sixties, more moderate tones could be noted even in the party press like the „Pravda”, the organ of the Slovak Communist Party. Some new possibilities of cooperation and search for analogies with the neighbor now seemed to be more interesting than conflict or ideology. Titles like „Austria our neighbor” „Unser Nachbar – Österreich”,⁷ etc. in 1968 make the difference quite clear.

⁶ DBFP 1919-1939 1951: 220.

⁷ See e.g. *Pravda* 13.7.1960, p. 5, or “The triangle Vienna-Bratislava-Brno. New aspects of Austrian-Czechoslovak cooperation”, „Das Dreieck Wien—Pressburg-Brünn. Neue Aspekte österreichisch-tschechoslowakischer Kooperation”, *Pravda* 6.7.1968, p. 3.

During the phase of liberalization in the early sixties, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF was one of the most important sources of *unfiltered information* for the Slovaks. This development was even foreseen and closely monitored by the Communist authorities in Bratislava. Already in 1958, the Slovak regional government predicted a *rise of installed TV sets* from 20.000 to 328.000 in 1965. The problem was that a large proportion of Slovaks with a TV set changed the technical settings of their antennas to be able to receive the Austrian programs too. In 1958 already some 70% of all TV sets in Bratislava and within a radius of 60 kilometers had been adapted this way. This was done by „fušeri” (a Slovak denomination that stemmed from the German word „Pfuscher”) meaning a person offering his labour on the black market. And it was of course officially forbidden.

In December 1958, the „Council of Representatives” adopted a secret memorandum of its chairman in which one can read that, *„The content of the broadcasts of the Viennese television is from an ideological standpoint destructive, because it affects the minds of the citizens in a negative way”*⁸. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia developed some various alternatives in dealing with the problem. The outcome seems very interesting. Due to the fact that even TV-sets on the premises owned by the party or the state were receiving ORF already, and the numbers of people undermining the information monopoly of the party in this manner was so big that sanctions against normal citizens was not possible, the party decided just to monitor the development and tried to enhance the quality of the Slovak programs. Their low quality in comparison had been defined as one of the reasons for the Slovaks to prefer ORF.

The number of TV sets continuously rose and the Austrian radio programs were receivable already for longer times. A striking sign for the popularity of them was the fact that the „*Volksstimme*” („People’s voice”, an Austrian Communist gazette and an only Western newspaper admitted to be sold freely in Czechoslovakia) was sold out every Tuesday – because on Tuesdays the program of the ORF was a part of the gazette.

By the medium of electronic media, Austria became even more an idol not only in political but also in economic terms. The picture of a „suffering working class

⁸ Secret decision related to problems with Viennese television, 1958 December 4, Slovenský národný archív [SNA]: Úrad predsedníctva Sboru povereníkov, Box 374.

under brutal Capitalist dictatorship” was no longer able to be kept up due to the fact that *people now could gather information from outside the country independently.*

The Communist propaganda had to adapt to this new situation. An event showing the end of the Communist party’s monopoly on information was Khrushchev’s visit in Bratislava and Vienna in June 1961. A refugee from Romania handed over a letter to Khrushchev in Vienna. Though the TV stations in the Eastern bloc showed only some seconds of the incident, yet in Western Slovakia some people easily could follow *the complete event* via the Austrian TV-programmes. From now on it was more difficult for the regime to conceal unwanted events at home and abroad, for the Western media made comparison possible anytime. (SCHRIFFL 2012: 181)

Austrian activities towards Slovakia in the area of the media were not limited to electronic media. Also more conservative approaches have been made. A very successful example is the Austrian *book exhibition* that took place in Bratislava in 1960. In this still quite early phase of liberalization, Austrian books were not easy to get hand on and a complete exhibition including the possibilities for the visitors to buy directly or order those foreign media products was a premiere. The Austrian Consulate General – being manned again by a diplomat only since 1959 – organized the event, which was very successful. The initiative for such presentation came from the association of some Austrian booksellers.⁹

This exhibition of Austrian books was aimed at improving the knowledge on and the image of Austria in Czechoslovakia. Even though Bratislava was only the third and last station after Prague and Brno, the public response here was much bigger success in the Slovak capital than in the other two cities. Some 1000 books, produced by 68 publishing houses, were displayed between 12th and 21st February 1960, and altogether some 12.000 visitors entered the exhibition. (That sums up to over 1300 visitors per day.) A part of these were elderly people or people having some personal connection with Austria. This book presentation was the very first possibility for many to obtain some information about Austria as a neighboring country.

Part of the program was also a movie on Austria. So many people wanted to see it that it was necessary to initially display it three times, then five times, and in the

⁹ There is a separate chapter on a covert book-sending program to East Europe further on in this book; see *George Minden and his role in the CIA funded Mailing Project.*

end seven times per day. A special cooperation between the Austrian booksellers association and „Artia“, the Czechoslovak organization responsible for the trade of cultural goods made it possible to order the displayed books. 1000 orders were placed after those 9 days.¹⁰

However, propaganda was not uni-directional if we use the word in a broader sense including modern terms like *Advertisement* or *Public Relations*. Austria always tried to improve her image also through the promotion of culture or cultural events connected to professional marketing. The Austrian Consulate General for example accompanied the appearances of big commercial shows like the Viennese ice revue in Bratislava. In cultural and personal terms this revue, which gave guest performances in Bratislava in 1963, seemed to be some kind of „ice-breaker“ between the neighbours. A total of 260.000 visitors from all over Slovakia – including the leading politicians of the country like Alexander Dubček – saw the performances. (The capital Bratislava in comparison had about 280.000 inhabitants at that time.) This success led the Austrian general consul to a report in which he stated that the revue was „the best political promotion that has been made here for Austria since 1945“¹¹.

The result of all these possibilities and activities combined was an even bigger interest of Slovaks to visit the neighbouring country – which was now easier to achieve due to liberalization also in the border regime. In addition, a new issue was added to the increasing need for information: *shopping*. The Slovaks had the fame of not spending much money in Vienna but their buying power must have been a certain factor because a Viennese department store even paid for an advertisement in the „Pravda“, the central organ of the Slovak Communist party. The „Gerngross“ informed about its summer sale in Vienna’s Mariahilferstrasse. The influence of tourism and consumption was definitely twofold and had effects on both sides of the border.

¹⁰ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, Bundeskanzleramt-Auswärtige Angelegenheiten [further on as ÖStA] AdR, BKA-AA, II-Pol/Politische und Residentenberichte, o.Gr.Zl., Zl. 2-Pol/60. Krumhaar an Kreisky vom 25.2.1960. SCHRIFFL 2012: 194.

¹¹ ÖStA, AdR, Generalkonsulat Pressburg, Veranstaltungen, Zl. 2142-A/63, Wiener Eisrevue: Auftreten beider Gruppen in der ČSSR. Generalkonsulat Pressburg an BMfA Wien vom 17.8.1963.

It was not only Austrian advertisements in communist Slovakia that were an interesting feature of these times of closer contact before the end of the „Prague Spring” in 1968. Also the *influx of tourists* from Austria and other Western countries was important for the regime. Developments of the Cold War era, in fact of the *détente* played an important role in the development of the relations of Austria towards her neighbour in terms of border control. In 1963, the visa regime was liberalized, and from then on it was easier for foreigners to enter Czechoslovakia and for the Slovaks it was easier to leave their country temporarily. The party decided to initiate a „test run” for these measures. The functionaries did not trust yet that the increase in cross-border traffic would not lead to social unrest and maybe a collapse of the system (even though already in the early 1960s a functionary stated in a speech in Brno that the Cold War would be over).

The area that had been chosen to test the new system was the border between Austria and Slovakia in the Bratislava region. From now on it was much easier to retrieve a visa to travel from Austria to Czechoslovakia. Special weekend-visa was issued. It was easy to obtain it within 48 hours in the Czechoslovak legation in Vienna for all foreigners that travelled to Czechoslovakia via Austria and entered near Bratislava. The only exception was the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The measure was decided on October 8, 1963 and came into effect eleven days later. Already during the first two days some 2313 Austrians visited the neighboring city of Bratislava. Till the end of the year 40.000 extra visitors were counted (which means 540 persons per day). In 1966, some 28.4455 Austrians visited Slovakia. The tourists were closely monitored by the *Štátna bezpečnosť* (ŠtB).

Of course now the local population in the Communist country was able to gather even more information and impressions from the neighbouring capitalist country and this time through increased personal contact. Thanks to the Austrian and other Western media it was not a „cultural shock” anymore. After the successful test during which tens of thousands of people came to the country, the facilitated visa regime was introduced also on other border-crossings between Austria and Czechoslovakia. The aim of the action was clear: Austrian tourists should bring hard currency to the socialist „Mangelwirtschaft”. And it worked. The Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party wrote detailed reports on the touristic infrastructure of Slovakia, mainly to identify areas with shortcomings and problems.

The Communist party not only suggested improvements in restaurants and recreational facilities; it also urged for an increase in „Heurigenlokale“ (places where young wine is served) because the Austrians would like them so much; and more German-language training for the staff of restaurants, bars and the like. This is maybe one of the most striking symbols of the profound changes in the policy of the state. After the German-speaking minority had been expelled and the use of the German language was – to say the least – a disadvantage, now the party urged fellow Slovaks to learn the language to be able to serve the guests from Austria and Germany better.

Also other touristic features were to be imposed. In 2006, a hydrofoil service between Vienna and Bratislava was started with big echoes in the media promoting the „Vienna region“. In fact this idea was brought up by the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party in May 1964, and a Slovak hydrofoil service has been in operation since the 1970s until now.

The decades after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact states in 1968 brought a halt to the majority of those large scale contacts on a personal level between the Slovak and the Austrian neighbours. The country again became a prison for its own population. However, ORF in combination with other Western media outlets continued to be a major source of information. Furthermore, they helped to achieve what the Communist party wanted at least for their employees in the tourism industry: *a better knowledge of the German language*. During the invasion, the ORF was almost alone in delivering TV-images from Czechoslovakia to the West. This caused grave accusations by the Soviets. One allegation was that ORF would re-broadcast transmissions from the underground stations in Czechoslovakia. The Austrian side of course denied and even measuring stations were installed to make sure that radio-amateurs would not retransmit such programs. (SCHRIFFL 2012: 187) However, at the same time appeals made via the Czechoslovak underground media were of course part of the coverage in the Austrian TV and radio programs. When these appeals were silenced by Soviet tanks, the function of the Austrian broadcasting as a source of unfiltered information was still in operation and important. And it remained important until 1989 when the Slovak neighbours appeared as heroes on Austrian TV for the second time after 1968.

* * * **Archival & Newspaper Sources** * * *

Bundesarchiv Berlin [abbreviated as BArch]: BArch R 70 SLOWAKEI/57, Bl. 141; BArch R 70 SLOWAKEI/57, Bl. 138; BArch R 70 SLOWAKEI/293, Bl. 197; BArch NL 1180/39; Telegram Tiso to Seyß-Inquart 4 March 1939.

Slovenský národný archív [abbreviated as SNA]: Úrad predsedníctva Sboru Povereníkov, Box 374.

Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, Bundeskanzleramt-Auswärtige Angelegenheiten [abbreviated as ÖstA, AdR, BKA-AA]: II-Pol/Politische und Residentenberichte, o.Gr.Zl., Zl. 2-Pol/60; Generalkonsulat Pressburg, Veranstaltungen, Zl. 2142-A/63, Wiener Eisrevue: Auftreten beider Gruppen in der ČSSR. Generalkonsulat Pressburg an BMfaA Wien vom 17.8.1963.

Documents on British Foreign Policy [abbreviated as DBFP]: DBFP 1919-1939, 1951: 235; DBFP 1919-1939, 1951: 220. Editors: Woodward, E.L.–Butler, R.–Bury, J.P.T.–Medlicott, W.N.–Dakin, D.–Lambert, M.E.

Pravda, 13.7.1960 and 6.7.1968

Year 1938 – a period since the Anschluss of Austria till the Munich Agreement – in reflections of the Slovak contemporary press

by Milan Olejník



In the interwar Czechoslovak Republic (ČSR), as in other European states, the periodical press was the most influential medium which brought information and commentaries about political developments at home and abroad to the general public. *Press in a significant measure contributed to formation of ideological attitudes and had a firm place in instruments of political infighting.*¹²

The Czechoslovak Republic was a parliamentary democracy with a number of parties covering a broad specter of political programs from extreme left represented by communists to political parties inclined to fascist ideology. The array of ideologically oriented parties was complemented by religiously and ethnically based associations. A specific nature of periodical press in interwar Czechoslovakia in comparison with presence was its intense political partisanship. Almost every political party, no matter how small or marginal, had its own daily or weekly. Influential political association owned several periodicals including whole networks of regional newspapers. The complexity of the Czechoslovak political system and frequently conflicting relations among political parties were reflected in stormy ways of articles publishing in periodical press not always respecting boundaries of ethics.

¹² A Slovak version of this study was published by Olejník, Milan: *Od anšlusu po Mníchov. Agresia nacistického Nemecka voči Československu v správach a komentároch slovenskej súdobej tlače*. Košice: Spoločenskovedný ústav SAV, 2014.

Czechoslovakia was a democratic republic in which opposition parties had a right to pursue their political programs guaranteed by constitution. However, *freedom of expressing political stands had its limits*. Public gatherings and periodical press – the main forms of insemination of political propaganda – were scrutinized by state authorities. Newspapers were subjected to censure. Because the constitution of CSR did not allow preliminary censure, an alternative form of press control was put in place, so called *repressive* (or subsequent) *censure*. It was a complicated and a cumbersome method of elimination of articles which, in judgment of the state authorities, jeopardized the security of state, attacked state institutions or the legal system, derogated the President of CSR and members of the government, or attacked the moral integrity of political rivals.

Technically speaking, Editorial Boards were obliged to submit printed a copy of to Police Directories in Bratislava and Košice and to county offices located outside the above mentioned cities. The clerks, authorized by control of the press, marked articles judged to be in breach of law, and sent the paper for approval to the office of the procurator for a final decision. In case that suggestion to eliminate the given article was approved, the papers were ordered to be seized. However, because meantime papers were distributed to newspaper stands and other public places, a laborious process of confiscation was initiated. This caused a considerable financial loss to newspapers owners and could result in bankruptcy of papers who frequently criticized government policies.

Repressive censure was thus a permanent threat primary to the oppositional press, such as communist newspapers, or periodicals owned by the parties of ethnic minorities. Despite limitations of censure, political dialogues carried on in newspapers were tolerated, and frequently ended in acrimonious polemics which were especially sharp in pre-election periods. Besides news and commentaries which reacted to developments at home, the Slovak press monitored also situation abroad. A flow of information intensified during the second half of the 1930s as a result of growing tension in Europe, especially after imposition of the Nazi regime in Germany.

Reactions of Slovak press to German occupation of Austria

The growing threat posing by Germany had been anticipated by all Slovak periodicals. Even newspapers representing the views of opposition parties, characterized Germany as menace to peace in Europe. However, the most resolute critics of the Nazi regime and its aggressive policies were leftist periodicals such as the communist *Slovenské zvesti* (Slovak news) and the social democratic *Robotnícke noviny* (Worker newspapers).¹³ Namely *Slovenské zvesti* published highly derogatory commentaries in regard to the nature of the Nazi regime even though some of its articles were eliminated by censure. (*Note of the editor*: We would like to point out here that the scope of newspapers researched here is far from full.)

Since the imposition of the Nazi regime in Germany, Adolf Hitler openly stated his decision to change the political map of Europe. After consolidating his power at home, Hitler started a course of violating the Versailles Treaty one step after another – increase of German Army, plebiscite in the Saar, and violation of the demilitarized status of the left bank of the Rhine – all which were a direct breach of the Versailles Treaty. Nevertheless its principal guarantors, Great Britain and France limited themselves to diplomatic protests. The reluctance of both countries to undertake any cat-

¹³ Political parties active in ČSR can be with a certain degree of simplification divide to two basic lines: to political associations of ruling coalition and to opposition parties. Among the parties of ruling coalition a significant position held “Strana zemedelského a maloroľníckeho ľudu” (Agrarian Party), which besides several regional periodicals owned also dailies *Slovenská politika* (Slovak Politic) and *Slovenský denník* (Slovak Daily). A primary periodical of Czechoslovak Social-democratic Party were *Robotnícke noviny*; Communist Party of Czechoslovakia owned *Slovenské zvesti*. A-Zet was a periodical of the Czechoslovak Nacional-socialist Party, and it published articles in Czech and Slovak language. The most influential political party of Slovak opposition, Hlinka’s Slovak People Party, also owned several periodicals; its official daily was *Slovák*. Slovak National Party owned periodical *Národné noviny*. Beside non-political specialized journals, the Slovak periodical press was complemented also by several regional newspapers such as *Novosti* (News) and periodicals published by associations such as *Slovenská liga* (Slovak League) which it published by-weekly with identical name. *Note of the editor*: As author himself steresses, Czechoslovak political parties, and thus their newspapers, can be divided according to severael theoretical aspects, such as pro-coalitional, oppositional, non-parlamentarian, oriented against the Czechoslovak system, Slovak national or regional parties, etc.

egorical measure against Germany convinced Hitler that he can pursue his aggressive policy further. At the outset of year 1938, he set at course of territorial expansion. During a speech on 20 February¹⁴, Hitler expressed his conviction that ten millions of Germans living in neighboring states are prevented from right to decide their own fate, and Germany will not tolerate this humiliation anymore.¹⁵ It was clear that Hitler meant Austria a Czechoslovakia and that he declared his determination to violate the territorial integrity of these countries. Communist *Slovenské zvesti* sharply criticized Hitler's declaration and refuted his arguments as a shabby demagoguery concocted to justify Germany's aggression.¹⁶ However, for the Czechoslovak authorities a scathing critic of Hitler's speech by *Slovenské zvesti* was an unwelcomed complication, taking into consideration the country's already tense relation with its Western neighbor.

Frequent complains about hostile articles in Czechoslovak periodicals were also voiced by the German Ambassador in Prague, Ernst Eisenlohr. With an aim to curb publishing of articles which would aggravate situation further, the *Ministry of Justice* on 21 of February issued a so called *Press Instruction* in which it ordered all censor offices to monitor in detail periodical press and eliminate articles which were exceedingly critical about situation in Germany.¹⁷

As development of situation in Austria documented in February and at beginning of March, Hitler's threats were not an empty rhetoric. *Slovenský deník* informed about skirmishes between Austrian Nazis and leftist workers in Vienna and other cities in Austria.¹⁸ The Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg was determined to protect the independence of his country and during an evening speech on 24 of February he refused Nazi ideology and exhorted Austrians to protect their freedom and the

¹⁴ All dates are related to year 1938 if not noted otherwise.

¹⁵ *Robotnícke noviny*, 22.II.1938. *Hitlerove chvály a hrozby* (Hitler's accolades and threats)

¹⁶ *Slovenské zvesti*, 22.II.1938. *Hitlerove šílené hrozby* (Hitler's insane threats)

¹⁷ *Slovenský národný archív* (SNA) Bratislava, fond (f.) Policajné riaditeľstvo (PR) Bratislava 1920 -1945 (50), kartón (k.) 335, č. 11180/1938 prez. (Slovak National Archive Bratislava, fund Police Directory Bratislava 1920-1945 (50), box 333, number 11180/1938 prez.

¹⁸ *Slovenský deník*, 23.II.1938. *V Rakúsku umlčujú odpor zákazom zhromaždení* (In Austria resistance is squelched by prohibition of public gatherings)

sovereignty of Austria.¹⁹ With the aim to protect Austrian independence he went even further. Schuschnigg announced that on March 13 a referendum will be initiated, and each Austrian older than 24 years would be permitted to express if he/she supported Austrian independence.

This surprising announcement of a referendum roused an intense reaction in Austria and abroad. According to the *Slovak*, Nazis warned Austrians not to vote 'yes' in the referendum lest communists overcome country, but they were not able to stop referendum.²⁰ *Robotnícke noviny* informed about alleged mass support of referendum among Austrian workers.²¹ Surprisingly, there was no reaction in Germany. *A-Zet* cited remark of Josef Goebbels who said that in certain circumstances it was better to abstain from comment.²²

The silence in Germany did not mean that Hitler accepted Schuschnigg's initiative. German state secretary, Wilhelm Kepler arrived in Vienna conveying to Seyss-Inquart Hitler's ultimatum: Schuschnigg and President Miklas must resign and a new government led by Seyss-Inquart must be formed. And this was not all; Seyss-Inquart must request the entry of the German army into Austria. Official justification of the request was a necessity to prevent bloodshed and the outbreak of a civil war.

Schuschnigg informed the Austrian public about the situation in his speech on 11 March, and asserted that all rumors about disturbances, spread by Germany, were absolutely false.²³ President Miklas initially refused to fulfill the ultimatum, but not having any alternative, on 12 March he named a new government led by Seyss-Inquart.²⁴ According to the German News Agency, cited by *Slovenský denník*,

¹⁹ *Slovenská vlast*, 4.III.1938. *Čo povedal Schuschnigg?* (What Schuschnigg said?)

²⁰ *Slovák*, 11.III. 1938. *Odvážny kancelár dr. Schuschnigg pretromfol nacistov* (Courageous Chancellor Schuschnigg defeated Nazis)

²¹ *Robotnícke noviny*, 12.III.1938. *Búrlivé prípravy k plebiscitu v Rakúsku* (Preparations for the plebiscite)

²² *A-Zet*, 11.III.1938. *Pøed plebiscitem* (Before the plebiscite)

²³ *A-Zet*, 12.III.1938. *Schuschnigg donucen odstoupit* (Schuschnigg pushed to resign)

²⁴ *Novosti*, 13.III.1938. *V noci bola zostavená vláda akú si ženal Berlín* (During the night a government was set-up according to Hitler's wishes). *Novosti* was a regional periodical covering Eastern Slovakia.

the German army crossed the German-Austrian border at the early hours on 12 March.²⁵

The invasion of the German army roused a wave of protests in European states. The Minister President of Great Britain, Neville Chamberlain, on March 15 proclaimed that „the government of Great Britain is not taking events in Austria calmly”.²⁶ Also France limited her reaction to a diplomatic protest.²⁷ Unlike France and Great Britain, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini declared that annexation of Austria was „a deep wish of people of Austria.”²⁸ The Italian consent was a surprise because traditionally Italy acted as a protector of Austria's independence. However, for Mussolini, cordial relationship with Hitler was more important than protection of Austria. (GORDON BROOK-SHEPHERS 1963: 148)

It was clear that annexation of Austria has worsened the geopolitical situation of Czechoslovakia. With aim to diminish negative articles which could spread panic and defeatist attitudes, the District Office in Bratislava, the highest government authority in Slovakia, ordered the elimination of articles published in periodicals which could draw a negative picture of Czechoslovak allies and their determination to assist the CSR in case of a German aggression.

Despite the ambiguous nature of Chamberlain's speech in the British Parliament on March 24, some newspapers owned by parties of the ruling coalition argued that Great Britain is ready and willing to help Czechoslovakia. Even though Chamberlain did not express his determination to assist Czechoslovakia in case of a German attack, *Slovenský denník* argued that the absence of a written agreement is not important, because „peace in Central Europe is in general and therefore also in Britain's interest.”²⁹ *Slovenská politika* quoted Chamberlain's warning that the eruption of war could take unpredictable course, and even countries without concrete obliga-

²⁵ *Slovenská politika*, 13.III.1938. *Vpád Nemcov do Rakúska* (German invasion into Austria)

²⁶ *Robotnícke noviny*, 16.III.1938. *Chamberlain o nemeckých uisteniach* (Chamberlain about German assurances)

²⁷ *Novosti*, 13. III.1938. *Zákrok veľmocí v Berlíne* (Interference of Powers in Berlin)

²⁸ *Novosti*, 17.III.1938. *Mussolini objasňuje prečo Itália nezakročila* (Mussolini is explaining why Italy did not interfere)

²⁹ *Slovenský denník*, 26.III.1938. *Slovo Anglie je cennejšie ako pakt* (The word of England is more valuable than a pact)

tions could be drawn into it.³⁰ *Slovenské zvesti*, expressing its subservient attitude toward the Soviet Union (USSR), argued that only the USSR is a dependable ally of Czechoslovakia, willing „instantly offer a military help if Czechoslovakia was attacked.”³¹ However, in light of the bloody mass purges which were going on in the USSR, many people in Slovakia viewed this country with mistrust and fear. Periodical *Slovak*, referring to the British press, wrote that the Soviet regime is capable to stay in power only by murdering its political opponents.³²

A road to Munich

Similarly like in Austria, after Hitler's coming to power in Germany, a growing number of German minority members in Czechoslovakia were enchanted with Nazism. The Sudeten German Party (SDP), which became their political representative, grew rapidly in popularity. After the parliamentary elections in 1935, the SDP received the highest number of votes in CSR. Even though the chairman of SDP, Konrad Henlein emphasized that his party is loyal to the Republic, it was increasingly clear that he and his followers were hostile to CSR. After Anschluss of Austria, Henlein was openly describing the situation of the German minority in Czechoslovakia as unbearable. It was becoming clear that SDP was acting in accordance with Hitler's orders and actually it was a German Trojan Horse.

The anti-Czechoslovak policy of SDP culminated during the SDP congress in Karlsbad on April 25. Henlein demanded the removal of the humiliating status of Germans in CSR and named eight conditions, fulfillment of which by the Czechoslovak government was necessary to improve the situation of the German population. Henlein demanded not only cultural, legal and territorial autonomy but he also agreed that Germans will have „full freedom to adhere to the German Nation and to the German ideology.”³³

³⁰ *Slovenská politika*, 26.III.1938. *Výstraha z Anglie* (A warning from England)

³¹ *Slovenské zvesti*, 16.III.1938. *SSSR apeluje na Anglicko a Francúzsko* (USSR is appealing to England and France)

³² *Slovak*, 3.III.1938. *Proces s bucharinovcami sa začal* (The trial with adherents of Bucharin began)

³³ *Dokumenty moderní doby*, Praha, s. 315-316.

If the political leadership of CSR consented to these demands, it would have been the end of Czechoslovakia constituted as a national state. Some Slovak periodicals scathingly criticized Henlein as a sworn enemy of Czechoslovakia. According to *Robotnícke noviny*, Henlein openly admitted that he and his party were epigones of the Nazi Germany.³⁴ *Slovenská politika* deemed demands, presented by Henlein as the end of pretensions of SDP to be loyal to CSR.³⁵

By-weekly *Politika* characterized the policy of SDP as a result of the German influence and hesitant approach of Czechoslovak authorities, which were trying to prevent an open conflict with Germany: „It is publicly known that the leader of the Sudeten German party is frequently meeting with German politicians, it is known that he is maintaining contacts with them with the goal to bring a change of organization of our state, or even a change of the Constitution. All this is a criminal acting and there could be no doubt, that every other citizen would be held responsible for this. Henlein is not.”³⁶ Even though activities of SDP were in clear violation of the Czechoslovak laws, the government abstained from any repressive measures. The fear of German aggression, which was growing, led Prime Minister M. Hodža to commence negotiations with the representatives of SDP. *Robotnícke noviny* as well as *Slovák* valued the meeting as a promising start which would lead to solution of the looming conflict.³⁷ Negotiations ended, however, without a result.

Increasing radicalism of German minority members had its political repercussions also in Slovakia. Ethnic Germans living in Slovakia were concentrated mainly in three localities: in Bratislava and its surroundings; in central Slovakia; and in the region of Spiš. Two political parties traditionally held dominant position in German community – *Karpatendeutsche Partei* (KdP) in Bratislava and *Zipser Deutsche Partei* (ZDP) in the region of Zips. Whereas KdP gradually inclined toward SDP and shortly before the elections in 1935 became a part of

³⁴ *Robotnícke noviny*, 26.IV.1938. *Henlein sa otvorene hlási k hitlerizmu* (Henlein is openly proclaiming his adherence to Hitlerism)

³⁵ *Slovenská politika*, 26.IV.1939. *Henlein odkazuje: Nie! Nie!* (Henlein is saying: No!)

³⁶ *Politika*, 1.VI.1938. *ažká skúška* (A Difficult test)

³⁷ *Slovák*, 25.V.1938. *Henlein u Dr. Hodžu* (Henlein is visiting Hodža); *Robotnícke noviny*, 26.V.1938. *Porady predsedu vlády Dr. Hodžu s Konrádom Henleinom* (Consultations of Prime Minister Hodža with K. Henlein)

this political association, ZDP was strongly pro-Hungarian and maintained close ties with Hungarian opposition parties.

The growing popularity of the Nazi ideology among Germans in the Czech part of the Republic changed the political map also in Slovakia. Some activists of KdP commenced in 1938 an aggressive campaign in the Zips region, with the aim to weaken ZDP and became the only party representing Germans in Slovakia. (ĎURKOVSKA: 2012) Surprisingly, „Zipsers“ (a collective name for Germans living in Zips), despite a pressure of Nazi activists from Sudetenland, were refusing to join KdP and remained loyal to the Hungarian United Party. *A-Zet* in a series of articles observed resistance of ZDP to Nazi inroads into Zips.³⁸

In May tense relations between Germans and Slovakia worsened to such a point that an open conflict between both countries threatened to erupt. On 20 May Minister of Defense František Machník and general Ludvík Krejčí visited President Beneš and warned him that unspecified number of German divisions are approaching the Czechoslovak borders and demanding full scale mobilization. The President, aware a possibility of a war, refused this demand and instead he declared „small mobilization“. Approximately 200 000 men was mobilized. The official explanation, as *Robotnícke noviny* informed, was the necessity to train conscripts in use of a new weaponry and to secure the law and order in the border regions.³⁹ As it is shown, the information about German military movements was false, and the German Ambassador Ernst Eisenlohr protested against the mobilization. (PACNER: 2002) In spite of the resentful reaction of the French Minister Bonnet, who warned the Czechoslovak Ambassador that any further measure enacted on part of the Czechoslovak government must beforehand consulted with the French British authorities, the socialist press commented mobilization as a proper measure, which was applauded by the allies.⁴⁰

³⁸ *A-Zet*, 12.IV.1938. *Spišskí Nemci proti Henleinovi* (Germans of Zips are against Henlein); *A-Zet*, 15.V.1938. *Slovenskí Nemci pod terorom* (Slovak Germans are under terror); *A-Zet*, 2.VI.1938. *Slovensko odoláva nacizmu* (Slovakia is resisting Nazism)

³⁹ *Robotnícke noviny*, 22.V.1938. *Jeden ročník zálohy povoláný na mimoriadne cvičenie* (One class of reserves called to extraordinary military training)

⁴⁰ *Robotnícke noviny*, 24.V.1938. *Rozhodnosť Anglie v záujme Československa* (Determination of England in the interest of Czechoslovakia); *A-Zet*, 24.V.1938. *Veřejné mínění Evropy: válka nebude* (Public opinion of Europe : War will not happen); *Slovenské zvesti*,

In order to shore-up the confidence of the population, the periodicals in service of the ruling coalition parties were writing about the preparedness of the Czechoslovak army in superlatives. According to F. Machník, the army was equal to the best military forces in Europe.⁴¹ A weekly *Slovenský juh* (Slovak South) argued that during the last months a deep shift in the Czechoslovak society occurred in regard to the army. The army was allegedly highly valued, kept in esteem and was viewed as a guarantor of the freedom of the Republic.⁴²

Some press devoted a detailed attention to the encouraging speeches of the government representatives. Some prominent place was given to President Edvard Beneš, who in a number of speeches emphasized the peacefulness of Czechoslovakia,⁴³ the necessity to reinforce the unity of the nation,⁴⁴ and his belief that peace in Europe is possible to preserve.⁴⁵ Prime Minister M. Hodža was convinced that the best way to solve ethnic tensions and consequently the looming threat of the conflict between Czechoslovakia and Germany is to elaborate a comprehensive system of rights of ethnic minorities.⁴⁶ The chairman of the social democratic party, Antonín Hampl declared his unshakable determination to defend the Republic.⁴⁷ The most determined proclamations to fight for the CSR were voiced by communists who had vital interests to protect the Republic from the Nazis.

25.V.1938. Ráznosť a spojenci Československa odvrátili blízku katastrofu (Determination and allies of Czechoslovakia foiled close a catastrophe)

⁴¹ *Slovenská politika*, 3.VI.1938. *Naša armáda je najlepšia!* (Our army is the best)

⁴² *Slovenský juh*, 23.VII.1938. *Občan a vojak* (A citizen and a soldier)

⁴³ *Robotnícke noviny*, 20.IV.1938. *Prezidentove slová* (The words of the President)

⁴⁴ *A-Zet*, 22.V.1938. *Prejav prezidenta dr. Beneša* (A speech of President Beneš); *Novosti*, 17.VII.1938. *Prečo je potrebné plné zjednotenie* (Why the complete unity is necessary)

⁴⁵ *Slovenská politika*, 2.VII.1938. *Prezident dr. E. Beneš: „Stále verím, že európsky mier je možné zachrániť“* (President dr. E. Beneš is saying: I believe that the European peace is possible to save)

⁴⁶ *A-Zet*, 21.V.1938. *Prejav predsedu vlády dr. Hodžu k novinárom. U nás nevzbĺčí požiar* (A discourse of Prime Minister dr. Hodža with press representatives. There will be no conflagration in our country)

⁴⁷ *Robotnícke noviny*, 8.VI.1938. *Predseda strany posl. súdr. Ant. Hampl* Ant. Hampl na jubilejnom zjazde o našej práci a boji za Republiku a socializmus (Chairman of the Party dep. comr. Ant. Hampl at the jubilee congress speaking about our work and struggle for the Republic and socialism)

Unlike other political representatives, the communist leaders emphasized the primarily importance of the USSR as a guarantor of the Czechoslovak security and independence vis-à-vis the danger of the German aggression.⁴⁸ In its official statement, the leadership of the Communist party criticized the government of CSR for its unwillingness to „suppress all persons bent on destruction of the Republic and agents of external enemy”.⁴⁹ Unlike the representatives of the ruling coalition parties, who declared their loyalty to the Republic, the chairman of the HSPP, A. Hlinka denounced the government's refusal to grant an autonomy status to Slovakia and threaten to terminate any form of cooperation with the ruling political parties.⁵⁰

After the Anschluss of Austria, the members of the Czechoslovak government came to a conclusion that it is necessary to prepare a comprehensive legislative regulation on the status of the ethnic minorities. The concept of a minorities status, which during the following months was subject of some continuous negotiations of the government with the SdP, became known as „Nationalities Statute”. The unsolvable obstacle in reaching any compromise was the issue of the autonomy. In an interview given on 20 May to some representatives of the press, M. Hodža announced a beginning of negotiations with the leaders of minorities and he asserted that the solution will be achieved on the principle of the self-government and a proportional representation of the minority members in all branches of the state administration. Hodža also declared that the negotiations are „deeply serious”.⁵¹ His optimism was dashed by a Memorandum of the SdP published on 8 June which contained 14 demands. Though the fulfillment of the demands (among others the establishment of an independent legal and executive authority) would have ended the CSR as a centralized state, and therefore for it was unac-

⁴⁸ *Slovenské zvesti*, 19.VII.1938. *Berlín stupňuje útoky proti ČSR* (Berlin is escalating attacks against CSR)

⁴⁹ *Slovenské zvesti*, 26.VII.1938. *Ponaučenie z ďalekého východu. ČSR sa môže spoľahnúť na Sovietsky zväz* (A lesson from the Far East. ČSR can rely upon Soviet Union)

⁵⁰ *Slovák*, 13.IV.1938. *Až do krajných konzekvencií! Hlinkov manifest* (Up to extreme consequences! Hlinka's Manifest)

⁵¹ *A-Zet*, 21.V.1938. *Prejav predsedu vlády dr. Hodžu k novinárom. U nás nevzbĺčí požiar* (A speech of Prime Minister dr. Hodža to press. There will be no conflagration in our country)

ceptable for the Czechoslovak government, yet M. Hodža declared the Memorandum as a base for further negotiations.⁵²

Because the Czechoslovak government was unwilling to grant the Sudeten Germans an autonomous status, negotiations had more or less, as *Robotnícke noviny* stated, an „informative character”.⁵³ *Slovenská politika*, however, openly admitted that the requirements of the SdP would not be accepted by the Czechoslovak government.⁵⁴ By-weekly *Politika* admitted that solving the status of the minorities is so complicated that it would require a „fundamental revision of policy toward the ethnic minorities on part of the state.”⁵⁵

The impasse in negotiations between the emissaries of the SdP and the representatives of the Czechoslovak government prompted an initiative of Great Britain to find a solution. Lord Walter Runciman, a close associate of Prime Minister N. Chamberlain, should have resolved the negotiations. Officially Runciman acted as an *independent* „investigator and negotiator”, acting on behalf of the British government, but it was clear that his mission was enacted in accordance with the decision of Great Britain. President Beneš viewed Runciman’s mission as an unwelcome intrusion into the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, and he agreed to the mission only after an unambiguous warning that in case of refusal the British government would have no further interest in helping to solve the Czechoslovakian crisis. (BENEŠ: 1968)

Some periodicals representing political parties of the ruling coalition viewed Runciman’s mission as a proof that Great Britain *was* interested to assist in solving the crisis.⁵⁶ For *Slovák*, however, the most important aspect of Runciman’s mission was his expected assistance in struggle of the HSPP for the Slovak au-

⁵² A-Zet, 16.VI.1938. U predsedu vlády dr. Hodžu jednanie o národnostnom štatúte (Negotiations in regard to “Nationalities Statute” with Prime Minister dr. Hodža)

⁵³ Robotnícke noviny, 19.VI.1938. Do vyjednávania s henleinovcami zapoja sa aj ďalší členovia vlády (The negotiations will be joined by further members of Henlein party)

⁵⁴ Slovenská politika, 16.VI.1938. Štatút (The Statute)

⁵⁵ Politika, 1.VII.1938. V jednaní o národnostný štatút (Negotiations about the “Nationalities Statute”)

⁵⁶ Slovenský denník, 27.VII. Lord Runciman – posol mieru? (Lord Runciman – a peace Messenger); Slovenská politika, 28.VII.1938. Po dlhom čakaní konečne Chamberlain prehovoril (After a long waiting, Chamberlain finally spoke out)

tonomy.⁵⁷ Communist *Slovenské zvesti* flatly refused Runciman's coming to CSR. In the view of its editorial staff it was an attack of some reactionary forces upon the independence of the Republic which would endanger the security of the state.⁵⁸ On the contrary, *Slovenský deník* criticized the communist periodical, asserting that it was trying to portrait Runciman as a helper of the Nazi Germany. The aim of the *Slovenské zvesti* was allegedly to sabotage the relations with the Western Allies, and present the Soviet Union as the only reliable ally of Czechoslovakia.⁵⁹ The suspicions in regard to Runciman's impartiality were to large extent justified. Since the very first day of Runciman's arrival, the representatives of the SdP took initiative in creating close relations with the British lord. The cordial welcome by the SdP leaders was in a sharp contrast to a cold attitude toward Runciman exhibited by the members of the Czechoslovak government.

Besides representatives of the SdP, also some leaders of the Hungarian minority expected Runciman to rectify the unsatisfactory status of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. On 10 August, chairman of the Hungarian United Party, János Esterházy submitted a memorandum to Lord Runciman. The Memorandum, titled „*The situation of the Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia*”, summarized Hungarian grievances in political, economic, social, educational and cultural spheres. Its authors asserted that their demands were based on their right to self-determination, anchored in the peace agreements signed by Czechoslovakia. (SIMON: 2012)

Despite Runciman's diplomatic activity, no compromise was reached. President Beneš, who led the negotiations, could not bring himself to agree to unswerving demands of the leadership of the SdP to the autonomy status of Sudetenland. Because negotiations were kept secret, the Slovak press commented situation in a vague fashion. *Slovenská politika* with pessimistic foreboding expected that CSR would have, at least to a certain degree, accede to Henlein's demands, and the newspaper asked what price the Republic would have to pay for this.⁶⁰ The latest government proposal

⁵⁷ *Slovák*, 28.VII.1938. *Lord Runciman a slovenská otázka* (Lord Runciman and a question of status of Slovakia)

⁵⁸ *Slovenské zvesti*, 28.VII.1938. *Čo bude robiť Runciman v Prahe?* (What will Runciman do in Prague?)

⁵⁹ *Slovenský deník*, 3.VIII.1938. *Vítame lorda Runcimana* (We welcome Lord Runciman)

⁶⁰ *Slovenská politika*, 4.IX.1938. *Za akú cenu?* (What will be the price?)

was submitted to the representatives of SdP on September. *Robotnícke noviny*, not cognizant about the content of the proposal, wrongly assumed that the definitive solution was approaching.⁶¹ However, what was approaching was not a definitive solution, but a definitive collapse of the negotiations. SdP, which in fact was not interested in any sort of compromise, used disturbances caused by some Sudeten Germans in city of Moravská Ostrava as a pretense to terminate negotiations. According to *Slovenské zvesti* it was the same sort of provocation which was used to justify the occupation of Austria.⁶²

Robotnícke noviny expressed its opinion that there was only a slight chance to resume negotiations.⁶³ The prediction of *Robotnícke noviny* was correct. The definitive disruption of the negotiations between SdP and the Czechoslovak government was caused by an eruption of violence after Hitler's speech at the X. congress of the Nazi party which commenced on 6 September. Hitler's demand of self-determination for the Sudeten Germans triggered a wave of demonstrations which resulted in clashes with the police.⁶⁴ *Robotnícke noviny* laid blame on instigators from Germany.⁶⁵

The government reacted by declaring a martial law in the border counties on September 13.⁶⁶ *Slovenské zvesti* viewed the martial law as a necessary measure, which thwarted the attack upon the Republic.⁶⁷

The definitive end came after Henlein, who left Czechoslovakia for Germany, declared in the German radio that the further coexistence between the Sudeten Germans and Czechs was impossible.

⁶¹ *Robotnícke noviny*, 7.IX.1938. *Výše štvorhodinová porada politických ministrov u prezidenta Republiky schválila definitívne vládne návrhy* (More than four hours lasting session of ministers definitively approved government proposals)

⁶² *Slovenské zvesti*, 9.IX.1938. *Výroba incidentov* (Manufacturing of incidents)

⁶³ *Robotnícke noviny*, 10.IX.1938. *Prezident republiky prehovorí do rozhlasu* (President of the Republic will speak on radio)

⁶⁴ *Slovenský denník*, 14.IX.1938. *Nepokoje po Hitlerovej reči* (Disturbances after Hitler's speech)

⁶⁵ *Robotnícke noviny*, 13.IX.1938. *Henleinovci stupňujú terror v pohraničí*. (Henlein's partisans intensify terror in a border zone.)

⁶⁶ *Slovenský denník*, 14.IX.1938. *Stanné právo v nepokojných okresoch – Zákaz zhromaždení v celej republike* (Martial law in restive counties – Public gatherings in the whole Republic prohibited)

⁶⁷ *Slovenské zvesti*, 15.IX.1938. *Štatárium obnovilo poriadok* (Martial law renewed order)

With an aim to prevent a looming conflict, N. Chamberlain made an unprecedented decision: he visited Hitler in his seat in Berghof.⁶⁸ Before his departure Chamberlain declared his conviction that his visit would pave a road to peace.⁶⁹ *Robotnícke noviny* concluded that Chamberlain's journey with all probability would bring a peaceful solution to the crisis. Even though results of Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler were not known, Anglo–French consultation carried on 18 September gave a firm answer: Czechoslovakia must rescind the Sudetenland to Germany. This was a content of the Memorandum submitted to the Czechoslovak government by the ambassadors of Great Britain and France in the early hours of 19 September. According to his own expression, President Beneš read the Memorandum with „astonishment“. (BENEŠ: 1968)

The Czechoslovak government refused the submitted demand. This, however, was not accepted, and the ambassadors of Great Britain and France on 21 September visited President Beneš once again, and they conveyed to him an ultimatum of both governments: if Czechoslovakia insisted on refusal of the submitted requirements, the governments of Great Britain and France would be disinterested in solving the crisis. (BENEŠ: 1968)

Worrisome rumors in regard to the ultimatum were filling-up Slovak periodicals. *Slovenská politika* argued that the most important is to preserve unity and „not believe to false reports spreading by hostile propaganda“.⁷⁰ *Slovák* asked the question how the government would react to the demands of Great Britain and France.⁷¹ *Slovenské zvesti* were against any sort of compromise and expressed their conviction that France's reaction would be decisive in case of refusing the ultimatum by the Czechoslovak government.⁷²

The unconditional acceptance of the ultimatum became publicly known in the afternoon of 21 September. According to *Slovenský denník* it was a catastrophe.⁷³ The

⁶⁸ *Slovenský denník*, 16.IX.1938 Chamberlain u Hitlera (Chamberlain is visiting Hitler)

⁶⁹ *Novosti*, 16.IX.1938. Anglia odvrátila vojnu (England prevented war)

⁷⁰ *Slovenská politika*, 21.IX.1938. Pozor!...Pozor! (Attention!...Attention!)

⁷¹ *Slovák*, 21.IX.1938. Pred rozhodnutím (Before making a decision)

⁷² *Slovenské zvesti*, 21.IX.1938. „Čo urobí Francúzsko, keď povieme nie? (What will France do if we say no?)

⁷³ *Slovenský denník*, 22.IX.1938. Budme pripravení na všetko (Let's become prepared for every eventuality)

Jovian news roused a wave of demonstrations, namely in Prague. Desperately looking for a solution, the government abdicated and a new administration, headed by general Ján Syrový, was installed.⁷⁴ *Slovenské zvesti* defined demonstrations as a proof that people were decided to fight for the Republic.

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Novosti

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Slovenská vlasť

Slovenské zvesti

Slovenský denník

Slovenský juh

⁷⁴ *Slovenský denník*, 23.IX.1938. *Hodžova vláda podala demisiu* (Hodža's cabinet resigned)

For the „Just Borders”. The Issue of the Trianon State Borders in the 1938 Propaganda War between Czechoslovakia and Hungary Targeted on Southern Slovakia

by Attila Simon



The Czechoslovak–Hungarian state border, delineated in May 1919 by the Supreme Council of the Versailles Peace Settlement, and (with minor modifications) finalized at the Trianon Palace on 4 June 1920, had been from the very beginning caught in a cross-fire of intense emotions and for both of the concerned parties it had quickly gained a symbolic content. Hungarians, living on either side of the new state border, perceived the Versailles system as an embodiment of injustice, while Slovaks and Czechs considered it to be a proof of historical justice. The more than 700 kilometres long state border separating the two countries became a source of destabilization in the region and a target of the *bilateral propaganda*.

As the number one objective of the Kingdom of Hungary in the period between the two World Wars was the revision of the Trianon borders, the task of propaganda to this effect implied, most of all, continuously keeping alive the possibility of having the state borders revised. For Czechoslovakia, however, the priority was the elimination of this danger, and thus the Prague propaganda focused on strengthening the legitimacy of the state border. Although both the Hungarian and Czechoslovak propaganda had targeted an extremely wide audience (including *international public opinion*, the great powers, the country’s own citizens and each other’s citizens as

well), in this chapter I would like to examine the propaganda focused mainly on the Slovak side of the state border, in particular on the citizens living in the region today referred to as southern Slovakia. That is to say, we will mostly discuss below how was Budapest or Prague trying to reach the ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia and, alternatively, the small Czech and Slovak population living in the region.

The Czechoslovak–Hungarian state border delineated during the year 1919 became specific by two important aspects. The first is that this boundary—unlike the other sections of the Czechoslovak border—lacked any historical-administrative antecedent; and the other is that the boundary did not pass along an ethnic dividing line, but stretched deep inside the Hungarian language area, thus separating some 800.000 to 900.000 Hungarian-speaking people from their mother country.⁷⁵ The contemporary southern Slovakia's ethnic relations were characterized by the fact that, according to the 1921 Czechoslovak census, Hungarians had an absolute majority in 14 districts lying near the state border, while in 7 of them Hungarians accounted for more than 90%. (GYURGYÍK 1994: 96)

In other words, a compact Hungarian region had been established on the Czechoslovak side of the border, where Hungarians, legally recognized as a minority, formed in fact a majority, and Czechs and Slovaks—belonging to the constituent nations—the minority. Therefore, this boundary turned out to be very fragile from the very beginning, as it could be supported neither by historical or ethnic, nor by economic or strategic considerations, with the exception of the border section marked by the Danube River in case of the latter two. It is no coincidence that in terms of the Budapest revision ideas⁷⁶—although for the contemporary Hungarian governments it was the retrieval of Transylvania which had always been the most important goal—the retrieval of Slovakia, in Budapest still called Upland⁷⁷, became the first in the order and at the same time the most easily enforceable objective.

⁷⁵ Among the rich literature on the Trianon state border see ZEIDLER 2003; ROMSICS 2001; KIRÁLY–VESZPRÉMY 1995; MICHELA–VÖRÖS 2013.

⁷⁶ For the Hungarian revision plans see ZEIDLER 2009 (in English ZEIDLER 2007) and MICHELA 2011: 435-448.

⁷⁷ The very designation of the affected area was also a part of the fight for the region, because Budapest had consistently avoided the designation of Slovakia and called the area

The Measures of the Bilateral Propaganda

The tools of *propaganda aimed at the fragile state border* were diverse, and both parties (Hungary and Czechoslovakia) had resorted to every means including the *media, education and nationalization of public spaces*. The strength of the propaganda struggle of both parties was changing. During the conflict periods it became more intense, on other occasions it had subsided, but it had been there all the time. It was particularly intense between 1919 and 1921, when Budapest had not yet given up on the immediate change of the state borders by military force.⁷⁸ It became stronger again in 1927, during the Rothermer campaign, so that in the latter half of the thirties, as if it permanently operated at the maximum power.

Both parties had different possibilities how to reach the population living in southern Slovakia. Czechoslovakia was naturally in advantage, it had to approach and convince its own people after all, and it had the school system, the media under strict control, and it also had available the state's other political, economic and social instruments, among them the various *events and celebrations of symbolic significance*. However, as Prague had all over the inter-war period no coherent and developed political concept on ethnic minorities at disposal, nor had it any predefined strategy of reaching its citizens belonging to ethnic minorities. That was, by the way, rather difficult, because the Hungarians of Slovakia formed such a community that was hardly speaking or was not speaking the state language at all. Members of this community—as it is known from Elena Mannová's research (MANNOVÁ 2001: 114–140)—had considerably kept themselves away from the Czechoslovak public life as late as the twenties. They had not participated in public celebrations and events either, which were supposed to strengthen loyalty towards the Czechoslovak state. Therefore, these celebrations and demonstrations were able to reach mostly the Czechs and Slovaks living in the region, while among the Hungarian-speaking population they could address only some small groups. For instance, members of the

Upland, which was perceived as a kind of signal that it does not consider the new constitutional situation to be sustainable.

⁷⁸ For more details on the contemporary Hungarian irredentist ideas of Slovakia see MICHELA 2009; MICHELA 2013: 122-151.

Jewish community, who seemed to be more loyal to the new authority; or some public employees, who had been directly ordered to participate in public events.

The situation was different in education, which was an important tool of the Czechoslovak propaganda targeted at the Hungarians in Slovakia and at the people living near the borders in general. In this regard, *history teaching had acquired a prominent role*, as the Hungarian-language schools could only use translations of the Czech and Slovak textbooks.⁷⁹ Compulsory school celebration of the Czechoslovak state's establishment, or President T.G. Masaryk's birthday⁸⁰ served a similar purpose, while the celebration of Hungarian national holidays (20 August or 15 March) was strictly forbidden.⁸¹

Even though the Hungarian propaganda reached the Hungarian population living in Slovakia with greater difficulties, it found a more receptive environment than the Prague intentions. The biggest obstacle for the Hungarian propaganda was the state boundary itself, after all it was not easy to travel due to visa requirements. Moreover, the Czechoslovak authorities had restricted the already restrained transit traffic during the Hungarian state holidays.⁸² Not only persons but also the press and books could hardly cross the Trianon borders, since Slovakia barely let Hungarian newspapers and books in under its strict customs measures. The restrictions, which had been the toughest in the first years after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, had softened in 1932, but it was still impossible to import Hungarian political newspapers to Slovakia, and the imported press or books were still checked on whether they contained any propaganda which could be classified as irredentist.⁸³

⁷⁹ For the view of history in the Slovak history textbooks see FINDOR 2011; VAJDA 2013e.

⁸⁰ For the cult developed around T. G. Masaryk see MOTAJOVÁ 2006: 306–316.
<http://epa.niif.hu/01000/01019/00005/pdf/303316Motajova.pdf> (February 2016)

⁸¹ For the ban of Hungarian national holidays and symbols see SIMON 2012: 95–107; MICHELA 2013: 97–110.

⁸² *Slovenský národný archív* (henceforth SNA): Fond (henceforth f.) Policajné riaditeľstvo v Bratislave (henceforth PR BA), kartón (henceforth k.). 520, Mat. 249/1. Maďarský národný sviatok 15. marca.

⁸³ AMZV, III. sekce, k. 609, fasc. 3b. In the thirties it was already possible to import to Slovakia such Hungarian newspapers as the *Népszava*, the *Nemzeti Sport*, the *Nyugat* or the *Színházi élet*. *Státny archív v Nitre, pobočka Archív Levice* (ŠaN PL), Okresný úrad v Levicech (f. OÚ), k. 80, no. 1090.

The press, of course, was already considered as the most important agent of propaganda, which was realized in both countries. Due to the prohibition of the Hungarian press import, the Hungarians in Slovakia mostly read Hungarian-language newspapers published in Czechoslovakia. Since the most popular Hungarian press products (see, for example the Prague daily *Prágai Magyar Hírlap*) were under the influence of opposition parties *loyal to Budapest*, the Hungarian propaganda was seemingly in advance. But the strict Czechoslovak laws and censorship paid enough attention to the contents of the newspapers, therefore no items containing open questioning of the state border or the Versailles system could be published. A fair number of newspapers published in Czechoslovakia in the Hungarian language were financed by the Czechoslovak government and *served as its mouthpiece*. These included, for example, the daily *Reggel* or the *Csehszlovákiai Népszava*. But these were far from being as popular as the opposition papers, thus their influence was limited too.

Press censoring was the most powerful in the initial period of the Czechoslovak Republic, which became stronger again during the latter half of the thirties, when authorities put an increasing emphasis on the censorship of the opposition and in particular the German and Hungarian-language press products – while they barely or not checked the pro-government press at all (BYSTRICKÝ 2010: 1). But as prior public press censorship was not allowed, the regime, regarding the aspects of the power, could not function perfectly. Since according to the laws in force, the printing works' owner was obliged to send the obligatory copies to the competent office only at the time of launching the distribution of the printed product itself, in practice it meant that even if the censorship intervened and confiscated a specific edition, it was not possible to prevent its full public disclosure. (Quoted by OLEJNÍK 2014: 93) It was though possible to publish a new edition instead of the confiscated one, but the parts disapproved by the censorship, appeared empty in the new version.

The period between the two World Wars was the first golden age of radio broadcasting in the Central European region, and, at the same time, the first period when the political power used this new media device for propaganda purposes. The Czechoslovak *Rádiojurnal*, belonging among the first in the European context, began its regular broadcasting in 1923, and by the end of the thirties, there were already five Czechoslovak radio stations (Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava and

Košice) broadcasting regular programmes. But the radio subscribers' number had increased only very slowly, because the air time was short (at the beginning only few hours a day), the price of the devices was, however, considerably high (ranging from 1 200 to 4 500 korunas [SABOL 2009: 68], which was not a small price compared to the monthly average salary of some 700 korunas). The number of radios reported in Czechoslovakia had doubled though between 1933 and 1938, and exceeded one million. (VAUGHAN 2008: 19)

It is a fact that Slovakia fell behind the Czech lands in this area, but the increase was evident: in Slovakia, some 106.000 radio devices were registered at the end of 1937,⁸⁴ which meant that already more than one-tenth of the households had radios. The situation was even better in urban settlements, so in the then entirely Hungarian-inhabited Dunajská Streda, with a population of a little more than 6.000, nearly 500 radios had been in operation in the same period, meaning that a significant part of the population had become accessible.

Although the regulations of the Radiojurnal did not allow any open politicising, its operation was still under a strong influence of the great centralist governing parties, the Agrarian Republican Party, the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, and the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party. (DRAXLER 2009: 138–139) Yet they could not really and did not want to approach southern Slovakia, firstly because the Czechoslovak broadcasting was limited along the Hungarian state border, and secondly because the transmitters in Bratislava and Košice had initially broadcasted only in Slovak language. However, once Hungary began its regular broadcasting in 1925, and the Budapest Radio could be received in a high quality on the whole territory of southern Slovakia, there was no other choice for Prague but to make changes, and thus from the end of the twenties, the Bratislava and Košice radio stations started to broadcast programmes even in Hungarian language. (DRAXLER 2009: 145) Their standards had, however, lagged behind the Budapest broadcasting, that is why Budapest was clearly proved to be the winner of the radio propaganda war: the inhabitants of southern Slovakia had mostly listened to the Budapest radio, which was airing a plenty of irredentist content, too.

⁸⁴ *Statistická ročenka republiky Československé*. Praha: Státní úřad statistický, 1938, p. 214.

Naturally, Prague was realising the danger of the Hungarian propaganda being spread through the radio, and it was trying to restrict it. For instance, the circular of the Provincial Office in Bratislava prohibited for those having radio concessions to broadcast foreign programmes with hostile content with respect to Czechoslovakia.⁸⁵ The strictness of this regulation might be demonstrated by the fact that it was prohibited to listen such radio programmes not only *in public places, but also in private houses* if other persons than resident family members were staying there. It is also evident that it was not possible to fully comply with the regulation, thus the *radio became the probably most important tool of the Hungarian propaganda targeted on southern Slovakia*. In the middle of the 1930s the German and Hungarian radio stations had been placed under organized surveillance, and as a part of it, some „listening stations” had been installed in Bratislava and Košice, which were in charge of monitoring the Hungarian broadcasting (BYSTRICKÝ 2010: 4), however, these measures could not impede the dissemination of information.

The Issue of the State Borders in 1938

The year of 1938, when the Czechoslovak Republic was initially preparing to celebrate its 20th anniversary, brought to Czechoslovakia a series of fatal events. Although the events had accelerated due to the Anschluss, the causes of the Czechoslovak crisis were much deeper and were rooted mainly in Prague’s nation-state aspirations and in the unresolved nationality question. One of the sub-plots of the protracted Sudeten German crisis—due to which in the autumn of 1938 there was an imminent danger of war in Europe—was the issue of the Hungarians of Slovakia.

The fact that the Hungarian question was of an utterly different nature than the Sudeten German one, basically arose from the different political systems of the two countries „in the background”, Germany and Hungary, from their dissimilar goals and instruments of foreign policy, and also from the character of the two concerned minorities’ political representation. For the Nazi Germany, the Sudeten German

⁸⁵ Štátny archív v Bratislave, pobočka Archív Šaľa (ŠaBA PŠ), fond Notársky úrad Dunajská Streda (NÚ DS), k. 70, no. 29/1933.

question was merely a tool to deepen the Czechoslovak crisis, while in order to implement its expansive plans far exceeding the territories inhabited by ethnic Germans, it was not deterred even from acts of war. Whereas Hungary, having realized the dangers of the German expansion and being clear about its own military and economic conditions, was striving for such a peaceful and consensual border revision that would have guaranteed the new state borders in the long run.

There was a significant difference, too, between the behaviours of the leading minority parties, the Sudeten German Party (*SdP*) and the United Hungarian Party (*Egyesült Magyar Párt, EMP*). While the former became in 1938 not only the long arm of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*NSDAP*), but it had also imported the Nazi ideology and tools, the United Hungarian Party remained on the path beaten for the previous two decades by the traditional Christian-conservative opposition politics and refused any violent methods.⁸⁶ Budapest and the EMP, too, had recognized the change of the geopolitical context only with difficulties, and until August 1938, they continued to conceive the revision of the borders through Slovakia's autonomy. Only then—partially on Lord Rothermere's urging, who was sent to Prague for the settlement of the German question—they adjusted themselves to the ethnic-based claims of *SdP*, and got the question of southern Slovakia's autonomy in the centre of their political agenda, or consequently, the achievement of the ethnic-based revision through this autonomy. But this still did not mean adoption of Nazi ideology nor resulted in abandonment of parliamentary instruments.⁸⁷

The permanent crisis starting with the *Anschluss* entailed a kind of continuous propaganda war which was naturally not of equal intensity, with its culmination falling on the weeks of municipal elections and on the weeks of the Munich crisis. The first period lasted from May until the beginning of June, the second in September and October, and a fundamental difference was observable between the two phases: in the spring and early summer of 1938 the revision of the Hungarian–Czechoslovak state border arose only as a remote possibility, so then, the concerning

⁸⁶ For the behaviour of the United Hungarian Party and the Hungarians in Slovakia in 1938 see SIMON 2010, in English SIMON 2013.

⁸⁷ Ladislav Deák and some other Slovak historians present a considerably different evaluation of this issue. See e.g. DEÁK 1993: 59–70.

propaganda was filled with indirect content. But during the weeks before and after the Munich Agreement, the modification of the state border was already openly at stake, only its extent and modality remained doubtful, what fundamentally determined the propaganda's content and tools as well.

Unsurprisingly, the first culmination of the *propaganda war* for southern Slovakia was reached before the municipal elections in the period of May and June 1938. It is no surprise because the voting was already considered to be not only a ballot on municipality leaders but also a kind of referendum about the state the population wanted to live in.⁸⁸ This implication was strengthened by the election campaign itself, since national issues were clearly prevailing in it, and each party wanted to prove that the majority of the population supported its platform on state law. While on the national level in Slovakia it was first of all the coalition of the pro-Czechoslovak parties and Hlinka's Slovak People's Party that fought against each other and wanted to demonstrate either the centralist or the autonomist conviction of the voters, the campaign in southern Slovakia was focused on different problems. What was at stake was, whether or not the United Hungarian Party was able to gain the unified support of the Hungarian voters, or the activist subdivisions and the communists keep their positions. As for the EMP's results, however, it was not negligible either, whether or not the party can convince the Germans in Slovakia that they continue to vote for it, or is able to attract the support of the Hungarian-speaking Jewish voters, who, in the previous parliamentary elections, voted for pro-Czechoslovak parties in large numbers.

At that time, Budapest's propaganda addressing the ethnic Hungarians of Slovakia intended to provide sufficient arguments, or create an appropriate atmosphere for the establishment of national unity urged most of all by EMP and concentrated in the slogan: „*One God, one fate, one will, and one camp!*”⁸⁹ They wanted to achieve this first and foremost by questioning the sustainability of the Trianon settlement, and by strengthening the faith in the revision of borders. Essentially, this was the purpose of both the whispering campaign and the leaflets occurring in these weeks

⁸⁸ For the 1938 municipal elections and results see BYSTRICKÝ 1992: 438–456, and SIMON 2010: 99–127.

⁸⁹ *Prágai Magyar Hírlap*, 31 March 1938.

in the Hungarian-inhabited districts of southern Slovakia. According to the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry's security reports, there were rumours—supposedly originating in Hungary—in the period around the announcement of the elections—for example, in the area near Rimavská Sobota and in other parts of southern Slovakia—, according to which important changes were to be expected within six weeks (more precise information on the substance of these was not given), and that locomotives and railcars were already being prepared in Budapest for an invasion of Slovakia (the „Upland”), and that those interested could already apply, for instance, for a permit to operate a tobacconist's kiosk in Košice.⁹⁰

Messages suggestive of the border revision and messages intending to mobilize in this direction or those wanting to demoralize the Czech and Slovak population, were transmitted to the recipients in different ways. One was naturally the spreading of various leaflets. In the course of May, there was a leaflet entitled *Add tovább* („Pass It On”) released in many villages with the following text: *„Precious Bloods of Ours, who own a property, land or house, do not sell it at any price. Neither to Czechs nor to Jews! Do not collect the worthless Czech bills. Those who have excess money, exchange it for anything (sugar, clothes, shoes), but do not put it in a chest of drawers or savings bank! The Czech currency in circulation is false, it has no value abroad. With this dirty money they want to make Czech beggars out of you! Send the Czech fiddlers with their beggar money to the hell! And do not pay taxes!”*⁹¹

Although the text does not explicitly refer to the forthcoming modification of the state border, it suggests that some substantial change is going to happen. The language of the leaflets is also worth noting. The *role of the enemy* was in the Hungarian propaganda never attributed to the Slovaks but to the Czechs, what had obviously filtered into the public discourse of Slovakia's Hungarians as well. The texts of the propaganda contained expressions like „Czech bills”, „Czech beggars”, and „Czech fiddlers”. The same Czechs, who, according to the contemporary Hungarian perception, had forced Upland—both Hungarians and Slovaks living there—under their rule practically against their will.

⁹⁰ NA ČR, f. AMV-PMV 225, k. 1094, 8069/1938. prez. Iredentistická propaganda v pohraničí.

⁹¹ NA ČR, f. AMV-PMV 225, k. 1094, 8069/1938. prez. Iredentistická propaganda v pohraničí.

These expressions were certainly not used unintentionally, after all, they wanted to suggest the same as did the indigenous concept serving the reclaim of the Upland, or the irredentist group of statutes called „Észak” (The North) on the Szabadság square in Budapest. These had suggested that it were not only the Hungarians who became victims of the Czech imperialism, but also the Slovaks, seeking protection from Hungary. The image of the Czechs (Czech „beggars and fiddlers”) implied by the Hungarian propaganda, was a kind of counterpoint to the image shaped by the Hungarian public discourse in connection with „the diligent, hardworking and pious Slovaks”.

Apart from the leaflets getting through the borders, there appeared some other, more static forms of communication in this period of time, too. So were the large images and slogans laid out of stones on the Hungarian side of the state border, which were interpretable from the Slovakian side, too. Hungarian border guards laid out of stones a 3x4 metres map of Greater Hungary, right opposite to the customs office of Péterfala (Petrovce), in the district of Feled (Jesenské). The map contained famous irredentist slogans: „Nem, nem, soha!” („No, No, Never!”), or „Így volt, így lesz!” („So it was, so it will be!”) Another message of a similar type was sent to the „Slovak side” near the village of Ipolybél (Bielovce), where irredentist slogans had been laid out of white stones on the Hungarian side of the river bank of the Ipoly.⁹²

If Czechoslovak security reports are to be believed, the United Hungarian Party had also made a good use of „whispering propaganda” during its campaign. According to one of the reports, the secretary of EMP in the Feled (Jesenské) district, Zoltán Szakall was supposed to disseminate some false information in the villages near Jesenské in April and May, according to which the Hungarians would soon enter Slovakia, and those Slovaks who were not members of the Hungarian party would soon have to face bad times.⁹³ Nevertheless, the authorities had hardly any information about those disseminating such news. They had more often identified the Budapest radio as the source of this whispering propaganda.⁹⁴

⁹² NA ČR, f. AMV-PMV 225, k. 1094, 8069/1938. prez. Iredentistická propaganda v pohraničí.

⁹³ NA ČR, f. PMR, k. 575, 4269/1938.

⁹⁴ NA ČR, f. AMV-PMV 225, k. 1094, 8069/1938. prez. Iredentistická propaganda v pohraničí.

While the aim of the Hungarian propaganda mainly was to make uncertain as wide a circle of the Hungarians in Slovakia as possible about the future of Czechoslovakia, and so to direct them to the unified national camp, Prague was rather trying to address those groups of the Hungarian population whom it wished to definitely separate or detach from the EMP camp. But its tools, in this respect, had been limited, as the Prague-friendly Hungarian press was of poor standards, and the pro-government Hungarian activism⁹⁵—which was often called „traitor” by the opposing camp—had rather maintained a hiding attitude. Among those having to be detached from the voters of the Hungarian party were the Israelites and the Hungarian-speaking state employees. The „persuasion” of the Hungarian-speaking Jewry was important for the Prague government forces because some believed that in the cities lying close to the language border—for example in Košice or Lučenec—they could have stroke the balance, and as it had been proved by election results of many municipalities in the region, the Israelite population with Hungarian language and culture was willing to vote the Czechoslovak governing parties in the previous twenty years, expressing its loyalty towards the Czechoslovak Republic.⁹⁶

In 1938, the political atmosphere began to change in Slovakia too, and brought about the uncertainty of the Jewry. More and more threatening articles were published against them in the Slovak newspapers, which confirms the changing mood, among them also the appeal of the Slovak League published in *Slovenský denník*, a paper close to the government. The article entitled „To Our Jewish Fellow Citizens”⁹⁷ was calling upon Jews to support the government forces, no longer appealed to their loyalty, instead, it contained a moment of threat. The drafters of the appeal accused the Jewry of Slovakia that, even twenty years after the state turnaround, they bear testimony to their Hungarian emotions, and by using the Hungarian language they provide Hungarian character to the Slovak (sic!) towns. This attitude had been interpreted by the authors of the appeal as provocation towards the Slovaks, and, referring to the events

⁹⁵ For functioning of the Hungarian activist sections see SIMON 2013.

⁹⁶ Thanks to this fact, the Czechoslovak parties could obtain up to 40% of the votes, for example, in Dunaszerdahely (Dunajská Streda) with more than 90% of Hungarian-speaking but also with a large proportion of Israelite population. Cf. NAGY A.–NAGY I – NOVÁK–SIMON–VAJDA 2012: 108.

⁹⁷ *Slovenský denník*, 7 May 1938, 4.

taking place in the neighbouring countries (see Austria), they noted that the Jews in Slovakia are „playing with fire” if they do not learn from what had happened next door.

The municipal elections, which ended in a standoff in the dispute between centralism and autonomism, had brought for the United Hungarian Party a strong advance in southern Slovakia, although activism did not disappear down the drain either, and the party—especially in Bratislava—had largely lost its German voters. However, the procedure and the results of the elections had been relatively quickly forgotten in the summer of 1938, in the midst of the disputes around the drafting of the Nationality Statute, when the public life had increasingly been dominated by the tension around the Sudeten German issue. The Sudeten German crisis reached a peak at the beginning of September 1938, when the very last chance for the establishment of the Nationality Statute and, consequently, the settlement of the German issue within the framework of Czechoslovakia had vanished. The seriousness of the situation was indicated by the fact that it threatened with war for a few days, but had finally been solved with the Munich Convention announced on 30 September 1938.

The radicalization of the Sudeten German issue, and the failure of its solution within Czechoslovakia as of an internal issue, created a new situation also in regard to Slovakia’s ethnic Hungarian population. Before the summer of 1938, Budapest wished to retrieve Upland—along the well-worn path familiar from the previous twenty years—primarily through the deterioration in relations between the Slovaks and the Czechs. The United Hungarian Party was a partner in this matter, as it all along demanded autonomy for the entire territory of Slovakia, not only for the regions inhabited by ethnic Hungarians. However, during Lord Runciman’s mission in Prague, Budapest also recognized that the direction of the Sudeten German crisis could bring a chance for Budapest to an immediate implementation of the ethnic-based revision. As a result of this recognition, one of the key demands of the United Hungarian Party became the enforcement of the principle of equal treatment, namely that Prague solves the issue of the Hungarians in Slovakia on the basis of the same principles as of the Sudeten Germans. This is why, in the latter half of August, the claim of autonomy for southern Slovakia became part of the party’s programme, instead of claiming autonomy for the whole of Slovakia.⁹⁸ Moreover, the

⁹⁸ For more details on Egyesült Magyar Párt’s change of direction see SIMON 2010: 151–174.

United Hungarian Party's parliamentary group openly demanded—for the first time in twenty years—in a declaration adopted on 17 September the right of the Hungarians in Slovakia to self-determination, which, according to the interpretation of the party, could have been a tool for revision: „Provide an opportunity for the Hungarian national group to decide in a plebiscite how it wants to position itself in the Central European European space.”⁹⁹

Under the threatening pressure of the outbreak of a possible German-Czechoslovak military conflict, the propaganda aiming at reaching the population living alongside the border, had been filled in by a new content and started to use new tools. One of the signs of it was, after many fruitless debates in the preceding years, that the Czechoslovak government decided to establish a *separate propaganda ministry*, although with little practical benefit. (PEHR 2013: 57–76) However, from the perspective of the Hungarian–Slovak state border, the extraordinary measures introduced by the government on 17 September and envisioned for a period of three months, were of a much greater significance. Among its key elements there were the establishment of a central censorship committee and introduction of a pre-press censorship,¹⁰⁰ which equally applied for all printed products (newspapers, books, leaflets). This provision had considerably hampered the free functioning of the press, and it caused, inter alia, that the papers—including the Hungarian-language prints—were forced to be published in a reduced extent and with a reasonably „cautious” content.

The decision of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Defence about the *confiscation of the radio devices* from the beginning of September 1938, constituted an important element of the protection against the foreign propaganda, and it was considered to be cheaper and more effective in the given situation than the interference against foreign radios. (ČAPLOVIČ 2005: 101) A regulation was issued in southern Slovakia in the last days of September on the compulsory surrender of radio receivers,¹⁰¹ according to which citizens had to personally hand in their radios, wrapped, on designated points, usually in the premises of

⁹⁹ SNA, f. KÚ BA, k. 254, bez.

¹⁰⁰ ŠA Komárno, f. OÚ KN, k. 82, 15531/1938. prez.

¹⁰¹ ŠA Rožňava, f. OÚ RV, k. 48, 2686/1938. prez.

the district offices, without undue delay. Such a regulation would be today, of course, unenforceable, but in 1938, when *holding a radio set was under reporting duty*, the families had no other choice but to comply with the appeal. As a result of the pre-press censorship, the confiscation of radio equipments and the strict control of the state boundaries, the population of southern Slovakia had great difficulties in obtaining any correct news during the tense days of Munich. This had inevitably become a fertile breeding ground for *spreading disinformation* from different sources.

A shining example of this was that during the days following the Munich decision, the tension—until then fermenting under the surface—erupted in southern Slovakia from one moment to another. For neither demonstrations, nor riots had broken out in this area, neither during the summer nor in the tense days of September. What is more, the local population had complied with the general mobilization order of 23 September 1938 in a disciplined way, and it tolerated the internment of dozens of Hungarian public figures.¹⁰² However, local people in several regions of southern Slovakia started to demonstrate from 3 October and they demanded the re-annexation of the settlements inhabited by Hungarians to Hungary. The events—as the available sources indicate—had not begun under a pre-planned scenario, but spontaneously in Šamorín, located in the region of Upper Rye Island (Felső-Csallóköz or Horný Žitný ostrov).

On 3 October, in the morning hours, such news were circulating that the Czechoslovak government agreed to surrender the territories inhabited by Hungarians, and that the Hungarian Army, during the night had even begun the occupation of the affected areas.¹⁰³ The residents of Šamorín, hearing the news, immediately took to the streets, waved flags in the Hungarian national colours, sang the Hungarian national anthem, and cheered the border revision. In the situation of a general lack of information, the false news on the boundaries revision spread rapidly across the region, just as waves spread out when a stone is dropped in the calm water. That afternoon similar incidents to those in Šamorín took place in other localities of the district, too, and the next morning the people in

¹⁰² SNA, f. KÚ BA, k. 254, 2834/1938. prez.

¹⁰³ SNA, f. KÚ BA, k. 255, 62119/1938. prez.; *Somorja és Vidéke*, 8 October 1938, 1.

Dunajská Streda had already started to celebrate the fact that the Hungarian soldiers bringing their freedom are on their way.¹⁰⁴

Although the news about the entry of the Hungarian troops was a disinformation, after the decision taken in Munich it had become more and more apparent for all that the revision of the Hungarian–Slovak state border cannot be delayed for long either. This was obvious equally for Bratislava and Prague, as well as for Budapest, only the form and the time of the revision was in question. Among the possible scenarios, there was equally the execution of the arbitrage decision directly by the great powers and a bilateral agreement, furthermore, the possibility that a referendum would decide about the affiliation of the disputed territories also incurred more and more frequently. This was, of course, a good enough reason for both sides to try to tilt public sympathy in their own favour. As the example of Bratislava—the city, in connection with which the question of the referendum had been raised the most frequently—shows, the local activists had also been heavily involved in the struggle for *winning the favour of the citizens*. In Bratislava it meant that, apart from the Hungarians¹⁰⁵ and Slovaks, the local German inhabitants also wanted the city for themselves,¹⁰⁶ and that their leaders addressed a telegram to the international committee in charge of the enforcement of the Munich Agreement as early as on 2 October, in which they demanded a referendum on behalf of „the 42 thousand Ger-

¹⁰⁴ This moment is well illustrated by the experiences of Lujza Esterházy: “On the streets of Dunaszerdahely there is an indescribable and joyful excitement. The people of this small town expect the Hungarians to march in today. As we are talking in the room of a colleague, we suddenly hear a cry coming through the window: Hungarian soldiers are coming! People start to rush in the direction that they expect the soldiers to come from. In vain do we tell them that they are not coming today; they don’t believe us. They rush there in happy oblivion, wearing red, white and green decorative stands and laden with flowers. No one is concerned with the Czechoslovak gendarmes who make an appearance from time to time. They are a thing of the past...” ESTERHÁZY 1942: 51.

¹⁰⁵ The personal recollection of an eyewitness describes the activities of the local Hungarian forces well: “The town is full of slips of paper with Hungarian tricolour, with inscriptions saying ‘Long live Hungary! Bratislava will be Hungarian!’. These could be found on the most unexpected places: in the shops under the wrapping paper, in the tram, but it happened, too, that the good Czechoslovak man found it in his pocket, or the gendarme on the back of his coat.” FÖLDES 2008: 379.

¹⁰⁶ For details on the German aspirations see SCHVARC 2008: 24–34.

man inhabitants of Bratislava and further 15 thousand Germans living in the surrounding area”. (SCHVARC–HOLÁK–SCHRIFFL 2008: 35) Although it is not the subject of this study, it is noteworthy that the decision was made in Berlin again, and Hitler—in order to ensure for himself the trust and the unconditional support of the Slovak political elite—had eventually given up on the city.¹⁰⁷

In the propaganda war for southern Slovakia, it was undoubtedly the Czechoslovak part who was in a more difficult position, and not only because it had in those days to tackle serious internal political problems (evacuation of Sudetenland, resignation of President Edvard Beneš, proclamation of the autonomy of Slovakia). Prague and Bratislava were supposed to prepare the population concerned for an eventual referendum, whilst they kept reassuring about the stability of the borders, and, in meantime, they had cautiously started the evacuation of the territories affected.

In contrast to that, the communication of Budapest was much simpler and straighter because it had to persuade the population living along the borders that the revision is not only unavoidable, but, at the same time, the best possible solution for those affected. The Hungarian propaganda used „the carrot and the stick”: it offered a better life for those who were to return to Hungary, and it did not forget to emphasize either that its aim was to restore the ethnic relations before 1918. It had been a particularly strong message towards the Moravian and Slovak settlers¹⁰⁸, resettled to the border zone during the twenty years of the Czechoslovak Republic’s existence, in connection with whom the Budapest Ministry of Agriculture’s project of the beginning of October envisaged the goal that the real estates of „foreign settlers” are conferred to „reliable Hungarian owners”.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Budapest had also known that it was impossible to achieve by exclusively legal means, therefore, in the weeks preceding the re-annexation, it did everything in its power in order that the settlers leave their estates voluntarily. One of the means for reaching this goal were the leaflets appearing in southern Slovakia, which encouraged the Hun-

¹⁰⁷ For more about the fight for Bratislava in autumn 1938 see SIMON 2011a: 1455-1473.

¹⁰⁸ For the Slavic colonization taking place in southern Slovakia between the two World Wars see SIMON 2011b: 226-252.

¹⁰⁹ MNL-OL, FM, K184, 1939-35-22303.

garian population to step up against the settlers presented as „Czech occupants”: *„Shake off the Czech tyranny! Exterminate the Czech colonists, destroy their properties! Destroy anything that is Czech!”*¹¹⁰ However, the propaganda against colonization and, in a broader sense, against the Czechoslovak land reform, was to some extent a double-edged sword, since it frightened the settlers and urged them to start packing for a move, but, on the other hand, it might have sown uncertainty among Hungarians, too. This had also been recognized by the Czechoslovak propaganda, which began to agitate against the revision of the boundaries saying that if it would happen, then Budapest would confiscate land not only from the Czechs and Slovaks, but also from the Hungarian farmers, and would give it back to the wealthy landlords again. Uncertainty was tangible among the Hungarians of Slovakia, what was not surprising considering that the Horthy-regime did not have a very good press in Czechoslovakia.

The doubts of the Hungarians in Slovakia had been signalled also by a memorandum drafted by some unknown authors in Komárno on 5 October, in which they actually asked Budapest to guarantee that nothing would happen from among the threats suggested by the Slovak propaganda: the unemployment rate would not rise after the revision of the borders; land property would not be confiscated from the small landowners; the conversion of the Czechoslovak currency to the Hungarian pengő would be made at an equitable rate; and that Hungary on the arbitration territory would not replace the state and public employees with its own people.¹¹¹

The requests included in the memorandum were not put forward without any reason, of course, because Bratislava and Prague attempted to place the ethnic Hungarians in opposition to the official Hungary not only in the press, but also by *spreading leaflets* via different channels. The main message of the texts written on the leaflets was emphasizing the differences between the social security of Slovakia's and Hungary's citizens, while they tried to portray the situation in Hungary—persistence of feudal circumstances, unresolved land question, extreme poverty—in darker colours than the reality was. Meanwhile—as it is indicated in the appeal is-

¹¹⁰ „Cselekednünk kell nekünk is” (“We Too Must Take Action”); leaflet in the possession of the author.

¹¹¹ MOL, Flachbart Ernő miniszteri tanácsos, K-763, Microfilm 16532, dossier d.

sued by the Revúca school inspectorate addressed to the Hungarian teachers in Slovakia—they referred to the achievements of the Czechoslovak democracy.¹¹²

The Hungarian side did not hesitate long to answer, and so it did its best to disprove the Czechoslovak allegations with the help of leaflets—written in Hungarian, Slovak, or even Ruthenian—, which were sometimes smuggled across the border, sometimes scattered by airplanes (GABZDILOVÁ 2010: 62-63), and which were not lacking in promises that—as it time proved later—have never been fulfilled in all aspects: *„The Hungarians grant land to those living in poverty! The trains bringing food are already waiting to depart! All state employees must stay in their places, only the Czechs should buzz off! [...] The Hungarian pengő is worth twenty times the Czech koruna!”*¹¹³

However, as time passed by, it was evidently cleared up that none of the parties concerned considered referendum as a relevant tool for solving the border dispute, and what was perhaps even more important, this method of handling problems did not serve Germany's interest either.¹¹⁴ In the end, the decision about the new Czechoslovak–Hungarian state border was taken on 2 November 1938 in the Vienna Belvedere Castle by the German–Italian arbitration, in the sense of which the southern territories of Slovakia inhabited in a large proportion by ethnic Hungarians were annexed to Hungary.

The perception of the First Vienna Award continues to be controversial to this day, because the decision was made by two fascist powers, but on the other hand, the state borders drawn in the result of this treaty could be better adjusted to the ethnic reality and better accepted by the population affected than the Trianon borders. However, this border had remained to be a source of disputes between the two countries similarly to the previous one, so the propaganda on the border issue did not stop either, it just continued, compared with the previous one, in a transposed „casting”. The Hungarian party sought to strengthen the legitimacy of the new borders, while the Slovak side challenged it.

¹¹² MOL, Flachbart Ernő miniszteri tanácsos, K-763, Microfilm 16532, dossier d.

¹¹³ Leaflet in the possession of the author.

¹¹⁴ For more details on diplomatic negotiations preceding the First Vienna Award see SAL-LAI 2002.

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The exaltation of the Slovak State and its entry into the Tripartite Pact in Japanese media propaganda, 1939–1940

by Tatsuya Nakazawa



An exceptional sense of crisis coexisted with a capricious optimism in the Japanese propaganda in 1939–40. World War II had already broken out in Europe, but the attack on Pearl Harbour had yet to come. At that time, Japan was engaged in a series of tough diplomatic negotiations, mainly with the United States, the Soviet Union and Germany. The outcome was Japan's entry into the *Tripartite Pact* with Germany and Italy in 1940, following on the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936.

It is crucial to point out here that the *Tripartite Pact* did not necessarily enjoy unanimous support at the time, neither within the Japanese government nor within the military, nor among the Japanese population at large. In particular, within the leadership of the Imperial Japanese Navy, and in diplomatic and intellectual circles, there were deeply entrenched groups who advocated preserving the traditional ties of alliance and cooperation which had existed with Great Britain and the United States. (MIYAKE 2000: 110–111)

Indeed, this alliance and cooperation with Britain and America had formed the central pillar of Japanese diplomacy since the Meiji Restoration. Not only had these diplomatic ties functioned effectively during the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–05, they had also been used to the greatest effect during World War I, and had contributed majorly to the rise in Japan's international status after the war. In other words, the shift in diplomatic policy – *abandoning cooperation with Britain and Amer-*

ica in favour of forging a new tripartite alliance with Germany and Italy – caused considerable alarm, not only within the government and the navy, but among large numbers of the Japanese general public as well.

As we shall see later, this is precisely the reason why the Japanese media propaganda gained immensely heightened importance during the years 1939–40 compared to previous times. The media at the time was tasked not only with *reducing public disquiet and mistrust* about the Tripartite Pact; it was also strongly expected to control Japanese public opinion in preparation for a fully war-mobilised society.

In point of fact, neither Germany nor Italy was the country most spotlighted in the coverage of the Japanese media propaganda at the time. Rather, it was *Horthy's Hungary* – a German ally – along with *Antonescu's Romania* and *Tiso's Slovakia*. Why did these three states – rather than Germany – receive such heavy media coverage? Let us discuss the reasons for this later. One thing that is clear, however, is that these three countries were covered in an especially *favourable light* in Japan in the years 1939–40. Among them, Slovakia, the most recently independent state out of the three, held special significance for the Japanese media.

Focusing on the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*,¹¹⁵ the largest mass-circulation newspaper of the time, this paper analyses the Japanese media coverage on Slovakia's independence in 1939, and the Slovak accession to the Tripartite Pact in 1940. Looking at the details of the media coverage of Europe's newest country at the time, this paper aims at clarifying the nature of the Japanese media propaganda prior to World War II.

¹¹⁵ *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* (abbr. TAS) was a daily newspaper founded in 1888. It was one of the five major newspapers in Tokyo (*Tokyo Nichinichi*, *Hochi*, *Jiji*, *Kokumin* and *Tokyo Asahi*), and it became a popular newspaper, having passed 100,000 daily printed copies in 1900. In the years 1939–40, all newspapers were under the control of the Ministry of Communications, the Military Information Agency and from December 6, 1940, the Cabinet Intelligence Bureau.

Japanese – German Diplomatic Relations in the 1930s

The Anti-Comintern Pact

Having withdrawn from the League of Nations in 1933, Japan sought to avoid further international isolation; much discussion (especially within the Imperial Japanese Army) centred on the benefits of drawing closer to Germany, which had also withdrawn from the League of Nations. Both countries at the time saw the USSR as a hypothetical enemy, and the USSR for its part had designated both Japan and Germany as hypothetical enemy states at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, held in July 1935.¹¹⁶ This meant that, given their shared anti-Soviet stance, Japanese and German interests coincided.

It was against this backdrop that Major General Hiroshi Ōshima, a military attaché serving at the Japanese Embassy in Germany, analysed the precedent in which the Russian and German empires had almost established cooperative links in the past due to a secret agreement during the Russo–Japanese War. His conclusions were that any such Soviet–German cooperation in Eurasia had to be resolutely blocked, and that Japan needed to form an alliance with Germany pre-emptively as a matter of urgency. (MIYAKE 2000: 43–45) Subsequently, negotiations with Germany on forming an alliance were handled in secret by the Imperial Japanese Army. Thus, it was only in January of 1936, several years after they had started, that Shigenori Tōgō, director of the Bureau of European and Oceanic Affairs, became aware of the existence of these secret negotiations. Stressing relationships with countries like America and Britain, Tōgō – along with the leadership of the Imperial Japanese Navy – was opposed to the alliance with Germany. (MIYAKE 2000: 110–111) However, the ‘February 26 Incident’ happened that same year, giving the Imperial Army a much more influential voice and accelerating its militarization of

¹¹⁶ Tokyo Nichinichi Sinbun-sha, Osaka Mainichi Shinbun-sha (ed.), *Sekai no senritsu. Sekika no inb?* (*The horror of the world - the conspiracy of communism*), Tokyo, 1936, 75–76.

Japan. Because of this, the Imperial Navy and the Japanese Foreign Ministry were finally forced to give reluctant approval to the negotiations on an alliance with Germany which the Imperial Army was pressing forward with.

On the German side, the chief proponent of establishing closer links with Japan was Joachim von Ribbentrop, a man who enjoyed Hitler's personal confidence. Seeing an alliance with Japan as a tool for constraining the 'arch-enemy' Britain, he worked to prepare such an agreement. The Imperial Japanese Army and the military attaché Ōshima negotiated with Ribbentrop, and pressed forward with their talks. However, fearing that an alliance with Japan would further strain Germany's relations with Britain, Alfred Rosenberg, leader of the Nazi party's foreign political office, hesitated on the question. (MIYAKE 2000: 46)

The German Foreign Ministry was the least enthusiastic about a potential alliance with Japan; not only did they not recognise the newly-created Japanese client state of Manchukuo in northeast China, they also persisted in advocating a non-interventionist stance in East Asian affairs. (MIYAKE 2000: 45) Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath was of the opinion that an alliance with Japan would be of no value to Germany whatsoever. (TAJIMA 1987: 107) With Japan having sided with the Allies in World War I, von Neurath even thought of Japan as an 'enemy state'. Although Ribbentrop sought the post of Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Ministry denied it to him; such circumstances led to rumours about personal animosity between von Neurath and Ribbentrop. (MIYAKE 2000: 159-160) Meanwhile, the German Armed Forces were traditionally pro-Chinese; in addition to the independent agreement to aid China, they attempted to extend this agreement into a full Sino-German alliance. (TAJIMA 1987: 127) In other words, from the perspective of the German Armed Forces, cooperation with Japan was out of the question.

In this way, internal German discussions on cooperation with Japan became increasingly involved and complex in the years 1933-36. If anything, opposition to an alliance was stronger than support for it. Under these circumstances, the Japanese government, which was angling for cooperation with Germany, faced extreme uncertainties. Aware of the pro-Chinese tendencies of the German Armed Forces, the members of the Privy Council of Japan, presided over by Emperor Hirohito, allowed discussions of an alliance with Germany to stagnate during 1935 and 1936. Affairs reached a point where Kintomo Mushanokōji, the Japanese ambassador to Ger-

many, concerned with the drift of events, protested to the German government. (TAJIMA 1987: 130) In the final event, the decision on alliance with Japan was made by Hitler. The German Foreign Ministry, having become concerned with the unchecked behaviour of the German Armed Forces, had now changed its stance and came to regard a treaty with Japan as indispensable. (TAJIMA 1987: 122)

This finally led to the signing of the *Anti-Comintern Pact on November 26, 1936*, with Wilhelm Canaris, chief of the Abwehr, having done his utmost to help achieve it. However, it must be pointed out that, given internal disputes and ulterior motives within Germany, the Pact did not amount to a full military alliance. Above all, and in stark difference to the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902, the Japanese government, military and indeed much of the public had serious reservations about alliance with Germany. The involved nature of the debate within Germany had, if anything, served to heighten these misgivings.

Tripartite Military Alliance between Japan, Germany and Italy

Even subsequently, Japan thought of this anticommunist pact strictly in terms of opposition to the USSR, and sought British involvement in the grouping; British agreement was not, however, forthcoming. (SAKAI 1990: 2299) While these events were in full train, Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact on November 6, 1937, further strengthening the grouping's anti-British character. At the point when Ribbentrop was appointed Foreign Minister the following year, German diplomacy was moving along two coexisting approaches; both shared the aim of strengthening a defensive pact against communism into a full military alliance, but the prospective allies were different.

One approach was the '*Eurasian Alliance*' (quadruple alliance), whose main proponents were Ribbentrop, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the German Navy. In order to oppose British interests, this group envisaged not only alliances with Japan and Italy, but even with the Soviet Union. The other approach, advocated by Hitler, might best be characterised as a pro-British, anti-Soviet, Japanese-German alliance. Meanwhile, the Japanese political leadership persistently placed importance only on Hitler's intentions; thus, with the signing of the *German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact* on August 23, 1939, the Japanese government was left absolutely aghast

at Hitler's sudden shift in policy. Japan was engaged in a border conflict with the USSR at the time. On hearing the news of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, on August 25 the cabinet of Kiichirō Hiranuma took the decision to suspend negotiations toward a Japanese-German alliance. On the 28th, the cabinet resigned *en masse* to take responsibility for the breakdown in talks.

Repeated shifts in Germany's diplomatic policy continued to roil Japan throughout 1940. Following the signature of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, Ribbentrop opened negotiations with Japan for the formation of a full-fledged military alliance, in order to realise his Eurasian vision of a quadruple alliance. Although Japan was an anti-Soviet and anticommunist power of long standing, pro-German officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who agreed with Ribbentrop's approach, such as Toshio Shiratori and Yōsuke Matsuoka, came to support the idea of a quadruple alliance. (MIYAKE 2000: 57) The Imperial Japanese Army, also reacting to Ribbentrop's policy initiative, began to stress the need to add Britain and France to its list of hypothetical enemies. (MIYAKE 2000: 110-111)

However, there was strong resistance from the Imperial Japanese Navy, which placed more emphasis on preserving relations with Britain, along with pro-British and American elements within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (MIYAKE 2000: 110-111) Finally, the Tripartite Pact came into being on September 27, 1940, at the initiative of Matsuoka's group and before public opinion in Japan had had a chance to crystallise; in addition, the *Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact* was signed on April 25, 1941. (However, the opening of the Eastern Front in June 1941 returned the quadruple alliance to the realms of fantasy.)

Apparently, Japanese diplomacy was continuously tossed and turned throughout the 1930s by the vagaries of internal politics of Germany and the shifts in its diplomatic policy. The Imperial Japanese Navy was pro-British, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained divided into a pro-British and American faction versus a pro-German faction. The point to be made above all is that the Tripartite Pact became a reality before Japanese public opinion had become pro-German.

Media Propaganda about Slovakia

Slovak Independence from Czechoslovakia

After the Anti-Comintern Pact had come into force, and while public disquiet with Germany continued to grow, Japanese media attention turned to states that had friendly relations with Germany. In particular, from March 10, 1939 on, the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* newspaper gave detailed coverage of Slovak independence from Czechoslovakia, which was declared on March 14. The article „The Political Situation in Slovakia”, written by the Prague correspondent of the Japanese Dōmei News Agency¹¹⁷ and carried by the newspaper on March 11, covered anti-Prague government demonstrations in Bratislava sympathetically, and was notable in being exceptionally pro-Slovakian overall. The article reported:

From Dōmei News Agency, Prague, [March] 10: In order to resolve the issue of expanding autonomy for the Slovak region, the government of the Czechoslovak Republic has forcibly dismissed the Slovak National Authority. However, in protest at the Czechoslovak government’s highhanded stance, several thousands of incensed demonstrators have taken to the streets of the capital Bratislava, chanting ‘Long live Slovak independence’ with indomitable spirit.¹¹⁸

On the 15th, using a special telegram from Berlin dated two days previously, the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* ran an article headlined „Slovak Crisis Deepens: Ultimatum to the Czechs”:

Arriving in Berlin on the 13th by a special aeroplane, Slovakia’s Tiso went on to meet Führer Hitler in the afternoon of the same day. Briefing the Führer on the sit-

¹¹⁷ Founded in 1936, the Dōmei News Agency provided news stories and articles to newspaper companies, including the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*. Especially in the period around and following World War II, the agency accumulated foreign and domestic information, circulating the Japanese standpoint at home and abroad. It developed into a massive organisation employing roughly 5,500 people, including its staff based overseas. It was under control of the military government’s Ministry of Communications in 1939.

¹¹⁸ TAS, Saturday, March 11, 1939, no. 19012, p.1.

uation in Slovakia, he appealed for the German government's support [...] The Hitler–Tiso meeting ended with a declaration that the German government intended to offer protection to both Slovakia and Carpatho-Ukraine. It was furthermore announced that the German minority inside the Czech state should also be offered protection. This amounts to a strong declaration of intent vis-à-vis the government of Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁹

On March 15, along with running photos of Hitler and Tiso, the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* included a map of Slovakia so as to deepen its readers' awareness of the story. (See Figure 1) The day's coverage of Tiso was extraordinarily long, far surpassing that from M. R. Štefánik's previous stay in Japan in 1918. (NAGAYO 2008: 137-145)

The post-independence period

Shortly after independence on March 14, 1939, the newspaper began *extensive coverage of Slovak independence* in its evening edition from March 16, comparatively early in Japan. It continued *front-page coverage of the story* for days afterwards, examining it as an example of the changing international relations in Europe. The quotation below is from its first, most detailed article on Slovakia, „Slovak Autonomous Oblast Goes for Declaration of Independence: New Tiso Cabinet Set Up”. The article came from a Dōmei News Agency Prague correspondent dispatched to Bratislava:

From Dōmei News Agency, Bratislava, [March] 14: In the morning of March 14, the Slovak parliament, debating the independence of the Slovak Autonomous Oblast, met Premier Tiso, who had hurriedly returned from a meeting with Führer Hitler early that morning, and unanimously voted for the independence of the Slovak Autonomous Oblast.¹²⁰

The article continued with a summary of Slovak history, covering its thousand-year domination by Hungary and its historic relations with the Czechs in detail. Of

¹¹⁹ TAS, Wednesday, March 15, 1939, no. 19016, p. 1.

¹²⁰ TAS, Thursday, March 16, 1939, no. 19017, p. 1.

particular interest is its comparative analysis, on the basis of historical background, of the policies of those states which supported Slovak independence and those which stayed on the sidelines.¹²¹ Slovakia starts being *covered as a country closely related to Japan* in the June 2 1939 evening edition of the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, in the article „The Empire of Japan Recognises Slovak Independence”:

With the breakup of the former Czechoslovakia, Slovakia declared independence on March 14. Maintaining close political and diplomatic relations with Japan’s partner Germany, it has set itself in place as an independent state. In response, the Imperial government has officially recognised the independence of Slovakia. The decision was formally taken at a meeting of the cabinet on May 31, and relayed to the public thereafter. Foreign Minister Hachirō Arita sent a letter of correspondence to the Slovak Foreign Minister Ferdinand Ďurčanský, dated June 1, informing him of the official recognition of independence. A Japanese embassy was to be newly established in Slovakia in the near future. The countries that until then officially recognised Slovakia’s independence were Germany, Poland and Hungary, along with Manchukuo, which also officially announced its recognition of Slovakia on June 1, coordinating its policy with the government of the Empire of Japan. This brings the total number of countries recognising Slovakia to five. *De facto* recognition was also given by Italy, Spain and Britain. Having achieved independence, Slovakia has made an unabashed entry onto the international stage in the space of a bit more than two months.¹²²

This article was followed by the full text of Arita’s letter of correspondence to Ďurčanský, with no omissions.¹²³ Japan’s official recognition of Slovakia’s independence was thus covered in exceptional detail.

Slovakia Joins the Tripartite Pact

The Japanese media’s interest in Slovakia heightened even more after its accession to the Tripartite Pact on November 23, 1940. The *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* of November 25 had Slovakia’s accession on its front page. The headline is highly celebratory

¹²¹ TAS, Thursday, March 16, 1939, no. 19017, p. 1.

¹²² TAS, Friday, June 2, 1939, no. 19094, p. 1.

¹²³ TAS, Friday, June 2, 1939, no. 19094, p. 1.

in tone: „Dōmei News Agency, Berlin, [November] 24: Axis Alliance Reaches Six Members: Slovakia Also Joins; Official Agreement in Berlin Last Night”.¹²⁴ The article ran the details of the Slovak accession protocol, along with an official declaration by Vojtech Tuka.¹²⁵ In addition, there was detailed information on Slovakia’s area, population, ethnic groups, religion, military and industry. This was all contained in the article „*Father of Slovak Independence*”, full of praise for Tuka’s handling of the independence drive.¹²⁶ (See Figure 2)

This panegyric coverage reaches a crescendo in the newspaper’s article of November 28 of the same year, „A Profile of Japan’s New Partner: Marvellous Handicrafts of Slovak Housewives: Slovakia’s Culture and Temperament Comparable to those of Three Prefectures of Tōhoku”. (See Figure 3) Coming out of Tokyo, the article pulls together a number of foreign telegrams on Slovak affairs that have been received:

The quickest way to explain Slovakia is that it is like Japan’s Tōhoku—and the three prefectures of Aomori, Iwate and Akita in particular. Slovakia does not have a coastline, but apart from that, it is very much like these three Tōhoku prefectures [...] Slovakia’s population is about two and a half million, while the three Tōhoku prefectures have three million, roughly similar, and the capital Bratislava is about the same size as Aomori City. It is a very hilly country, with its highest mountain having about the same height as Mount Iwate. Its main industries are agriculture and forestry, and its culture resembles the farming villages of Tōhoku. The people are simple and kind, with little influence from Western Europe. The way that women also engage in farm work is another point of similarity to Tōhoku.¹²⁷

The interesting point here is how the character of the Slovaks is painted as resembling the character of the people of three of the Tōhoku prefectures (Aomori, Iwate and Akita) of Japan. In Japan, the people of Tōhoku are typically *seen as exceptionally simple, honest and earnest*. Above all, Tōhoku has a severe winter, a harsh environment, a lot of mountains, and agriculture as its economic mainstay. With

¹²⁴ TAS, Saturday, November 25, 1939, no. 19632, p. 1.

¹²⁵ TAS, Saturday, November 25, 1939, no. 19632, p. 1.

¹²⁶ TAS, Saturday, November 25, 1939, no. 19632, p. 1.

¹²⁷ TAS, Saturday, November 28, 1939, no. 19635, p. 3.

the buildup of industry in Tokyo from the late nineteenth century, the surplus population of Japan's farming villages had streamed into the city, the majority of them coming from Tōhoku. We can expect that the many of the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun's* readership had their roots in farming villages in Tōhoku and elsewhere. It is quite clear that the newspaper is trying to strengthen its readership's feelings of affection for Slovakia by giving Tōhoku as a familiar point of reference for comparison. Furthermore, in its characterisation of the Slovak people as similar in character to the people of Tōhoku, as 'non-Western European', we can see the influence of 19th century Japanese Romanticism's view of the Slavic peoples, influenced in turn by J. G. Herder. The next point proceeds:

Slovakia's climate is not that cold, although it is as far north as Sakhalin. Here again, it resembles the three Tōhoku prefectures we mentioned, with short hours of daylight and a gloomy cloudy sky. The various areas of Slovakia all have their own costume, dances and songs, and in this way – just like Tōhoku – the customs have not changed much from the old days. Girls do not wear anything on their heads until they get married, but men wear different types of headgear. They have nimble fingertips, and they are skilled at handicrafts. Their embroidery and lace are wonderful, and you can see it decorating the cuffs and so forth of the married ladies, with a simple stylishness. What is more, these handicrafts are a „pastime” for ladies of farming villages who drive horses and brandish hoes in the fields. Slovak ladies truly love handicrafts. When resting in their fields or going on picnics, they always carry knitting or some such thing in their hands, and their hands are always moving if they have any free time at all. Seeing Slovak ladies sitting in a sunlit room doing their knitting is a beautiful, simple sight.¹²⁸

According to this article, the people of Tōhoku and Slovakia are not just vaguely similar. The whole piece exudes sympathy for 'women of Slovakia' – hardworking, enjoying handicrafts as their hobby, with no offence to the established order of things. The text is structured to awaken the sympathy of Japanese women for Slovakia. One purpose of this is to strengthen the ties binding the two countries in the Axis alliance; another reason, one can imagine, is the explicit *inclusion of women as part of a national population in a general state of mobilisation for total war.*

¹²⁸ TAS, Saturday, November 28, 1939, no. 19635, p. 3.

As the article reaches its climax, it sets out to explain why Slovakia – so simple and so resembling T?hoku – has chosen Germany as a partner: Slovakia only achieved its independence as a state in March of last year. Before the Great War, she had suffered oppression under the control of Hungary. Though the Slovaks and the Czechs are both Slavic peoples, they differ in their speech, customs and culture. The Slovaks have long been dominated by the more culturally sophisticated Czechs. Even in Slovakia, the officials and teachers are mostly Czechs, and this was the point at which Slovak youth and the intellectual class felt dissatisfaction. This was the reason why the movement for Slovak independence has thrived, and why the Slovak People's Party under Tiso has been so active, enjoying the support of the entire people. Slovakia suffered under Hungarian control in the past, but she was never oppressed by Germany. This is why a Slovakia for the Slovaks was finally achieved last year, with popular support for receiving German assistance.¹²⁹

Conclusion

The main conclusion we can draw from this examination is that the Japanese media felt compelled to give favourable coverage to Slovakia precisely because it was working under two special conditions: 1) The signature of the Anti-Comintern Pact, and 2) the Tripartite Pact. These agreements had by no means been given a general welcome in Japan. Because of this, the media at the time had to attempt to raise the level of public support for these agreements, with the control of public opinion in mind. This was especially the case with regard to dispelling public disquiet with the Tripartite Pact. The media acted with an exceptional sense of crisis.

Propaganda functioned precisely as a way of raising the level of public support for the pact. This propaganda had three distinguishing characteristics: 1) Rather than attempting a sudden reappraisal of a Germany that had lost trust with the public, favourable coverage of the newly acceded Eastern European Axis states, which had chosen Germany as their partner, was seen as being more effective; 2) While the media focused on Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, it was Slovakia, as an emerging

¹²⁹ TAS, Saturday, November 28, 1939, no. 19635, p. 3.

nation, that received particular attention. The way in which Slovakia was covered was really quite different from the others. It was described as a country closely resembling Japan's familiar and beloved Tōhoku region in all kinds of ways, from climate to customs, to the character of the people; and, 3) The thinking behind this propaganda may well have been to foster a sense in its readership that, since Slovakia – so simple, so earnest, so resembling Tōhoku – had chosen Germany as a partner, Germany in turn also deserved trust.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, one cannot deny that there was an element of capricious optimism at work as well.

We have discussed above the complexity of the 1930s German discussion on forging closer ties with Japan. Along with the element of slapstick in the general debate, the blatant and repeated shifts in German diplomatic policy (from the Anti-Comintern Pact to the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, to the Tripartite Pact) made Germany a difficult topic for the media to present as propaganda. Trying to present a plausibly perfect picture of Germany as propaganda might have been doomed to failure because of all those earlier, unforgotten vacillations. If anything, the material for restoring trust in Germany, which lay at the centre of the Axis alliance, was to be found in the countries which had recently formed ties of alliance with it. The most useful material was to be found in Slovakia. The role that Japanese media propaganda played in the years 1939-40 was, through its coverage of Slovakia, to implant among the Japanese readership an imagined community of the Axis alliance or the Tripartite Pact.

¹³⁰ An article 'Romania and Slovakia: The countries newly joining into the Japanese-German Axis' was covered in a Japanese propaganda magazine *Shashin-shuho* on December 18, 1939 by the Cabinet Intelligence Bureau. It said that the 'polite and humble' Slovak national character was 'very near to Japanese one' and as such they chose the Germans as their 'friendly nation' or 'alliance partner'. *Shashin-shuho* (*Photo Weekly Magazine*), Monday, December 18, 1939, no. 148, 6-7. See Figure 4.

* * * **Archival & Newspaper Sources** * * *

Tokyo Asahi Shinbun (abbr. TAS, Tokyo Asahi Newspaper), Japanese daily founded in 1888.

Shashin-shuho (Photo Weekly Magazine)

The Bratislava Új Szó and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. The Anti-revolutionary Propaganda in the Hungarian-language Daily of the Communist Party of Slovakia

by Árpád Popély



In the autumn of 1956, in terms of the events going on in the neighbouring Hungary, the entire Czechoslovak press, without exception, advocated the official position of the Communist Party. The party press was, of course, regarded as the number one tool of the power's propaganda, and as such, it enjoyed a special status, the activities of which were after the repression of the revolution praised by the party leadership as „our party's strong weapon”. (Quoted by KAPLAN 2005: 477)

The Bratislava daily *Új Szó*, founded in 1948 and still appearing in its capacity as the only daily of the communist Czechoslovakia published in Hungarian language, had also formed an integral part of the propaganda machinery. The paper, although published in Hungarian and meant for the Hungarian population of Slovakia, had been for the four decades of the communist dictatorship – similarly to the Czech-language *Rudé právo* in Prague and the Slovak-language *Pravda* in Bratislava – the mouthpiece of the one-party state, and not that of the country's Hungarian ethnic minority. Its editor-in-chief in autumn 1956 was Ferenc Dénes, one of the most servile representatives of the Hungarian community, who, apart from being one of the vice-chairmen of the Slovak National Council, i.e. the Slovak parliament, he was given a seat also in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia (Komunistická strana Slovenska, KSS).

The involvement of *Új Szó* issued by KSS Central Committee, in the period of the 1956 events differed from that of the Czech and Slovak party papers in two aspects. On the one hand, its propaganda was designed to rather act on the Hungarian minority than on the country's majority nations, the piquancy about which was in the given situation that the newspaper was supposed to spread propaganda against the events taking place in Hungary, which was the mother country of the ethnic minority. On the other hand, this time the paper had to address not only its traditional readership, namely the Hungarian population of southern Slovakia, but at the same time it was designed to influence public opinion in Hungary too, through its special issues, which were to be distributed on Hungarian territory.

In the following chapter we attempt to review, with the help of articles published in *Új Szó* during the revolution and in the period after it was drowned in blood, how the paper reacted on the events taking place in Hungary, and in what way was the propaganda of the power against the revolution presented on its pages.¹³¹

The Party Leadership and the Organization of the Anti-revolutionary Propaganda

Becoming aware of what was happening in Budapest on 23 October, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's (Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ) Central Committee met in Prague on the very next day and daily until 26 October, and it took a number of measures to stop the further spread of the „counter-revolutionary coup d'état” – as the uprising was assessed in line with the opinion of the Soviet leadership – toward Czechoslovakia and for organizing an anti-propaganda against it. The Prague party headquarters, in addition to the decisions on strengthening the Czechoslovak state border with Hungary and on the order of combat readiness for the armed forces of the Ministry of the Interior

¹³¹ On the press coverage of the revolution in Czechoslovakia see also PERNES 1996: 513–516; JANEK 2007: 194–198; BARNOVSKÝ 2006: 28–29; KAPLAN 2005: 475–486; and also the report of József Gábor, Hungarian ambassador to Prague of 22 November, 1956, published by POPÉLY 2014: 533–536.

and for the Home Reserve, it pronounced on 25 October the need for providing appropriate instruction to the counties' party management bodies, to the press and especially to the senior editors, in order that all papers observed the „right line of conduct” in relation to Hungary. The ideological campaign, besides condemning the „counter-revolution” in Hungary, was first of all supposed to emphasize the correctness of the party's policies, praise Czechoslovakia's economic achievements, and to confirm the country's loyalty and friendship towards the Soviet Union.¹³²

Furthermore, on 25 October, Bruno Köhler, one of the most dogmatic members of the Prague leadership was sent to Bratislava to personally conduct the propaganda campaign in Slovakia and to make sure that the Slovak party leaders act according to the guidelines from the Prague centre. (BARNOVSKÝ 2006: 30) However, the concerns of Prague were unfounded. The Bureau of the KSS Central Committee stopped the import of press products from Hungary already on 24 October, it sent the heads of departments to the counties to personally supervise the propaganda campaign on the spot, and it announced readiness for the county and district party committees and ordered that Hungarian-speaking party activists are available at the districts, who may be used for helping with propaganda activities.¹³³

After Köhler's arrival, under his command, a special committee was set up alongside the party leadership, the members of which were representatives of the Slovak party centre, the security forces and the armed forces, and the task of which was the operational management of the activities of state and party bodies on the basis of on-sight information, during the whole period of the revolution. The committee had taken part in the sittings of the Bureau of KSS Central Committee too. Besides this special committee, they also set up a propaganda centre within the Central Committee, which was supposed to conduct „legal and illegal” propaganda towards Hungary, in the work of which they had drew in two representatives of the Hungarian Working People's Party (Magyar Dolgozók Pártja, MDP). As the head of the propaganda centre was nominated – supposedly not unintentionally – Gyula Lőrincz, a member of the Central Committee, who be-

¹³² On the measures of the Prague party leadership see e.g. BÍLEK-PILÁT 1996: 500–501; BARNOVSKÝ 2006: 29–30; KAPLAN 2005: 439–445.

¹³³ On the activities of the Slovak leadership in October and November 1956 see POPÉLY 2006: 58–62.

longed to the Hungarian ethnic minority and who was at the time also chairman of the Cultural Association of Hungarian Workers in Czechoslovakia (Csehszlovákiai Magyar Dolgozók Kultúregyesülete, Csemadok). In the end, though, a separate media committee was entrusted with the management of the press and the radio, as well as with the publication of printed propaganda materials and their distribution in Hungary. (MARUŠIAK 2005: 191–193; BARNOVSKÝ 2006: 30–31)

The issues of *Új Szó* were prepared during the revolution under the strict supervision of the party headquarters. The items were assembled by an operative group of four or five editorial board members. It was only allowed to publish materials provided by the party centre, which had previously been published in the central party daily *Rudé právo* issued in Prague, or the strictly censored news taken over from the Czechoslovak Press Agency (ČTK). Autonomous, original articles written by the editorial board members were allowed to appear in the newspaper very rarely. Before printing, the first impressions had to regularly be taken for approval to the party press room, where all the text had to be translated (into Slovak) and the source of the individual articles identified and proved. (MOLNÁR 2009: 103)

Anti-revolution Propaganda in *Új Szó* after be 1956

The Czechoslovak dailies, among them *Új Szó* too, came out on 24 October without even mentioning the events that happened in Budapest the day before. The only exception was *Rudé právo*, which though did not report on what was happening in Hungary either, but in its extensive editorial¹³⁴ there were already present those specific elements, which had later become the leitmotifs of the anti-revolutionary propaganda: emphasizing the unity of the Czechoslovak society, the country's economic achievements, and the importance of loyalty and friendship towards the Soviet Union.

Új Szó – similarly to the other papers – reported on the events taking place in Budapest for the first time on 25 October. Typically for the party's propaganda, it

¹³⁴ *Rudé právo*, 24 October 1956, p. 1.

published the stance of the party sooner than the news itself, striving to influence the readers' views on the events in this way. On the front page was the somewhat updated version¹³⁵ of the leading article of *Rudé právo* from the previous day, which, in essence, can be considered for the position of the party leadership, while the official report provided by the press agency was only placed on the third page, and, similarly to the other daily papers, it was given the title *Serious events in Hungary* (Komoly események Magyarországon).¹³⁶ The brief summary of the press agency however only informed about some selected details of the incidents from 23 and 24 October. It mentioned the fact of the riots, which were „instigated by counter-revolutionary elements” in order to overthrow the system of people's democracy, it delineated the radio speech of Ernő Gerő, the party first secretary, the changes executed in MDP's leadership, reported on the appointment of Imre Nagy as prime minister, on the proclamation of martial law, on the invitation of the Soviet troops to assist in the restoration of order, and, finally, suggesting that order would soon be restored, the report stated that „the liquidation of counter-revolutionary gangs went successfully”.

Of course, neither then, nor later made the news issued by the agency mention about the Budapest events' antecedents or about the purposes and causes of the demonstrations on 23 October. Therefore, the readers received absolutely no information either about the demands of the university students formulated on 22 October, or about the circumstances and outcomes of the armed conflicts. During the whole time of the revolution, reports run in the foreign policy section of Új Szó on the Hungarian events, were coming to light in the press agency, usually under similar titles (e.g. *The events in Hungary*, *Report on the events in Hungary*; *The situation in Hungary*; *What is the situation in Hungary*). These, however, had all along dealt with the news from Hungary in a very selective way, in accordance with the expectations and instructions of the party leadership: the news – based on the immediate interests of power – had been either withheld, or highlighted and exaggerated.

¹³⁵ The editorial of the *Rudé právo* was, among others, complemented with the following: “Today we received the news that in Hungary, counter-revolutionary elements have attempted to lift their hands against the people's state and gave rise to bloody riots.” Új Szó, 25 October 1956, p. 1.

¹³⁶ *Rudé právo*, 25 October 1956, p. 1. and 4.; *Pravda*, 25 October 1956, p. 2.

The tone of the first day news summaries was, on the whole, typically optimistic. The news issued by the press agency usually informed about the successful restoration of order and the liquidation of the „counter-revolutionary gangs”. For instance, the issue of *Új Szó* on 28 October, in its optimistic news entitled *People’s democracy in Hungary reinforces its power* (A népi demokrácia Magyarországon megszilárdítja hatalmát), communicated as an accomplished fact that „the resistance of the counter-revolutionary evildoers in Budapest was broken.”¹³⁷ By the end of October, the press coverage presented the reader a constantly improving image. On 29 October, the papers reported, among others, about the continuing successful liquidation of the armed groups in Budapest; on 30 October about the opening of the shops; on 31 October, besides the news on unblocking the Budapest bridges, about the restart of works’ and schools’ operation in some rural towns.

The press initially portrayed about Imre Nagy’s newly appointed government on 27 October also a favourable or at least a neutral image. The report in the 28 October issue of *Új Szó*, which has been cited earlier, while informing about the composition of the new government, did not comment on the fact that, for instance, there had also been former smallholder politicians (Zoltán Tildy and Béla Kovács) among its members; moreover, the next day editorial point-blank expressed pleasure over its establishment, only saying that the new government was „representing all the strata of the Hungarian working people.”¹³⁸ The letter of the KSČ Central Committee addressed to the Central Committee of MDP and the letter of the Czechoslovak government to the Hungarian government dated 29 October – and also published in the press – equally signalled that the Nagy government and the re-established leadership of MDP headed by János Kádár has been accepted. The two letters welcomed the measures of the new Hungarian government for putting an end to the bloodshed, and expressed the conviction that the interests of the people’s democratic power would successfully be protected.¹³⁹

A radical shift came about in the perception of the events in Hungary and of Imre Nagy after the prime minister’s announcement of 30 October. Nagy’s an-

¹³⁷ *Új Szó*, 28 October 1956, p. 3.

¹³⁸ *Új Szó*, 29 October 1956, p. 1.

¹³⁹ *Új Szó*, 29 October 1956, p. 1.

nouncement about the establishment of a smaller cabinet within the government where representatives of former coalition parties of 1945 would also get seats, was seen according to the press agency's news as „a step backwards in the matter of the Hungarian working class and of all the working people of Hungary”.¹⁴⁰ The commentary to the news item was formulated in a similar way, saying that the Hungarian government had derogated from the Leninist principle of the leading role of the working class and with the planned reconstruction of the social democratic party it disrupted the unity of the working class.¹⁴¹

The press reports and the accompanying commentaries wrote on the first days of November with a growing concern about the developments in Hungary, and portrayed the situation in an increasingly negative way. All this, of course, cannot be observed separately from the Soviet party leadership's decision of 31 October on further military intervention. Subsequently, news followed one after another about plotting of several emigrant groups, „fascist elements”, „Horthyst officers” and former members of the Nyilas party having returned to Hungary, as well as about the coalescing of the domestic and foreign reaction and the „unrestrained terror” against the working class. According to the commentary cited above, these events proved that „the Hungarian working class and all the working people have run into a struggle against a well-organized enemy supported from the West.”

The number one targets of the media's attacks were the smallholder politicians and Cardinal József Mindszenty, Archbishop of Esztergom. Former prime minister Ferenc Nagy, who was forced into exile in 1947 and who arrived to Austria during the revolution, was portrayed in the press as a representative of „the Horthy-type fascist bourgeois groups” and that of the „reactionary anti-people policies”. It had presumed about Béla Kovács, the new minister of agriculture that he was having talks about the removal of Imre Nagy from office, the agricultural circles, however, did not agree with his nomination as prime minister and that in the position they would have rather seen Ferenc Nagy.¹⁴² It called József Mindszenty, who was released from captivity, „the unrepentant enemy of the Hungarian people's democracy”,

¹⁴⁰ Új Szó, 1 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ Új Szó, 1 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴² Új Szó, 4 November 1956, p. 3.

whose arrival to Budapest „strengthens the reactionary forces”. The press had also been aware of the intention of certain circles to replace the government of Imre Nagy for a new, „fascist government”, and that they would put Cardinal Mindszenty, „the representative of the dark Vatican reaction”, in the place of the prime minister.¹⁴³ In the end, other personalities had also been attacked by the press, among them Miklós Horthy Jr., who requested support for the revolutionaries in a telegram addressed to American president Eisenhower; as well as Otto von Habsburg, for having stated that the Holy Crown must be returned to Hungary, and also Prince Pál Esterházy, earlier sentenced by the communist authorities for 15 years of imprisonment, who reportedly came to Hungary after his being released from captivity „to attempt to gain back his latifundios”.¹⁴⁴

Previous news about opening of stores and reopening of factories and schools were replaced by reports on Budapest turning into ruins, devastation of the headquarters of *Szabad Nép* (the daily of MDP), and on factories, offices and schools remaining closed. According to the news coverage, „There are bonfires of books burning [...] on the streets of Budapest”, the aim of the re-establishment of the „bourgeois parties” and their papers is to „fight with the utmost vigour against the socialist principles and the achievements of the workers and peasants”, and the situation has come to this state because the leadership of MDP did not rise to the task in the decisive moments”.¹⁴⁵

On the first days of November, Imre Nagy and his government also got caught in the crossfire of the press. *Új Szó* on 3 November, in a piece coming from the press agency entitled *The unfortunate step of the Hungarian government* (A magyar kormány sajnálatraméltó lépése) published the information that on 1 November the Hungarian government denounced the Warsaw Pact with an immediate effect, and by this step – as it was put in the article – it „backed down more and more from the country’s reactionary forces”.¹⁴⁶ The same applied to the request of the Hungarian government that the plea of Hungary on the guarantees of its neutrality by the great powers be placed on the agenda of the UN General Assembly: in its commentary,

¹⁴³ *Új Szó*, 3 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ *Új Szó*, 2 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ *Új Szó*, 2 November 1956, p. 3.; *Új Szó*, 3 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶ *Új Szó*, 3 November 1956, p. 3.

the paper assessed the motion as an „egregious deed” and an open violation of the socialist ideals.¹⁴⁷

Commentaries attached to the reports on the events in Hungary became routine in Új Szó from 1 November. However, their authors were not the correspondents or staffers of the paper, but were written – one and all – by Čestmír Suchý, publicist of *Rudé právo*, whose articles were released the day before in the central party paper.¹⁴⁸ As there was no reference on this fact in Új Szó, the readers could have no idea about that they were actually reading the commentaries of the Czech party paper, not those of the Hungarian one.

Új Szó, similarly to the other Czechoslovak newspapers, had occasionally published press reviews on the Hungarian situation from the „friendly countries” as well. For instance, on 29 October it carried an article from *Pravda* (Moscow) and from *Izvestia* (Leningrad). The first one assessed the „anti-people adventure” as a result of the „long-standing subversive activity of the great imperialist powers”, and the latest implied behind the events in Hungary Béla Varga, „the reactionary Hungarian emigrant”, the former Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, coming from the Smallholder’s Party and emigrating in 1947.¹⁴⁹ On 3 November the daily published an editorial commentary from *Borba* (Belgrade), saying that „the clerical and reactionary elements, moreover, Horthy’s supporters” want to give the developments in Hungary an anti-socialist drive; and on the next day it issued a leader from the Beijing *Zhenmin Zhibao*, which praised the 30 October statement of the Soviet government on placing its relations with the countries of the socialist camp on a new foundation.¹⁵⁰

News issued by Western news agencies (e.g. the French AFP, the West German DPA and the British Reuters) and newspapers (the French *Libération*, the Austrian *Bildtelegraph*, the West German *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, as well as the American *New York Times*) were sometimes also factored into the news and commentaries of ČTK, but of course, if, and only if they were found uti-

¹⁴⁷ Új Szó, 3 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ See *Rudé právo*, 31 October 1956, p. 3.; *Rudé právo*, 1 November 1956, p. 3.; *Rudé právo*, 3 Nov. 1956, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Új Szó, 29 October 1956, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ Új Szó, 3 November 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 4 November 1956, p. 3.

lizable for underpinning theses about „counter-revolution” and „imperialist conspiracy” against the people’s democratic system.

According to special literature, the Czechoslovak anti-revolutionary propaganda had been deliberately feeding fear of the Czech and Slovak population from the revival of Hungarian revisionism, and thus tried to present the 1956 uprising as a nationalist movement having territorial claims against the neighbours of Hungary. (BLAIVE 2001: 296–299; SZESZTAY 2003: 71; JANEK 2007: 189–190) Pieces about the revival of the Hungarian revisionist efforts had indeed shown up in the Czech, and especially in the Slovak press,¹⁵¹ but in *Új Szó* we can only see a minimum evidence of such pieces. During the whole time of the revolution there were only two items – and even those were taken over from the Czech *Rudé právo* – implying the alleged revival of Hungarian irredentism. One said that among the slogans of the rebels there were those demanding Greater Hungary, which would include Slovakia and Transylvania, and the other had formulated accusations of revisionism against the rebels’ radio stations in Sopron and Miskolc.¹⁵²

The volume of news on Hungary provided by the Czechoslovak Press Agency during the whole period of the revolution was significantly dwarfed by that of the editorials and declarations of loyalty, to which had also been devoted a rather considerable space. Both the editorials and commentaries published in *Új Szó* during the revolution had usually been taken over from the previous or same day issues of the Czech daily *Rudé právo*.¹⁵³ Initially, there had been made references to the source of the items, but after a while, these were omitted, thus giving the readers a false impression that they were reading original articles written by editors of the Hungarian party paper.

As the titles of the editorials clearly implied – for example *Strongly and surely; The whole country unified under the party’s leadership; The right way; The most solid friend-*

¹⁵¹ See e.g. *Pravda*, 3 November 1956, p. 3. These, in József Bényi’s opinion, the interim head of the Hungarian General Consulate in Bratislava, had contributed to the antipathy developed against the revolution indeed. Bényi’s report has been published by POPÉLY 2014: 537–539.

¹⁵² *Új Szó*, 1 November 1956, p. 3.; *Új Szó*, 4 November 1956, p. 2.

¹⁵³ The only original editorial of the *Új Szó* was issued on 29 October, with the title *As one man, under the party’s leadership!* (Egy emberként, a párt vezetésével!).

ship; As one man, under the party's leadership!; Watchfulness - the command of today; The enemies of socialism do not reach their goal –, special emphasis was put on vigilance, unity, the citizens' loyalty to the government and the party, the different economic positions of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and on the unbreakable friendship with the Soviet Union. The latter was formulated in an article with the paper's intern authorship in the following resolute statement: „Our relationship with the Soviet Union is more than a friendship. [...] Our people do not allow laying a finger on it and they do not let anybody either to lift hands against our revolutionary achievements. They are united and determined to support their unity by deeds under all circumstances and in every way. Everybody take note of this, who might want to attempt the impossible from abroad, everyone who has not yet realized this fact.”¹⁵⁴

One of the key elements of the anti-revolutionary propaganda were the so called loyalty declarations, with which the Czechoslovak press rooms, among them Új Szó, were literally inundated, not only during the revolution, but also after its defeat. The adoption of the loyalty declarations, which were meant to demonstrate the unity of the Czechoslovak society and its stand up for the communist party, was carried out within an organized campaign, launched under the immediate command of the party leadership. The resolutions adopted by working teams on meetings held in the presence of instructors appointed by the party, contained condemnation of the „counter-revolution” in Hungary and expression of solidarity with the Hungarian people, as well as declaration of loyalty to the Czechoslovak government, the party leadership and the Soviet Union. Apart from these, the declarations of employees of companies, plants and factories involved commitments and pledges concerning plan fulfilment, which they made in the period starting from the last days of October and the first days of November not only in connection with the events in Hungary, but often also on the occasion of the forthcoming anniversary of the „Great October Socialist Revolution”, and even with regard to the Suez crisis. For instance, as an article of Új Szó of 29 November informed, the members of the United Agricultural Cooperative in Horné Mýto made an undertaking that they would fulfil the plan of sending in pork meat instead of the end of year as early as before 10 December, milk by 1 December; the workers of the Lučenec brick factory offered to produce,

¹⁵⁴ Új Szó, 28 October 1956, p. 2.

in addition to the plan, 470 thousand raw bricks, 56 thousand burnt bricks and 37,5 thousand roof tiles and several thousands of other products by the end of the year, in a total value of 145 thousand czechoslovak crowns.¹⁵⁵

The party headquarters had received by mid-November some 18 thousand declarations of loyalty (KAPLAN 2005: 465), and *Új Szó*, from 26 October on – as was the case with other dailies and weeklies – also published or reviewed dozens of them, each day. The individual declarations were bond under high-sounding headlines. For example, the 27 October issue of the paper published the declarations and commitments of companies under the following title: *The united voice of workers, farmers and intellectuals: with loyalty to the party and socialism – with hatred towards the enemy* (Munkások, parasztok, értelmiségiek egységes hangja: Hűséggel a párthoz és a szocializmushoz – gyűlölettel az ellenséggel szemben). Then followed the list of the work teams offering undertakings: members of the United Agricultural Co-operative in Podunajské Biskupice, workers of the High Construction Company in Košice, railwaymen from the Košice Railway Directorate, miners from Pôtor and Rudňany, party organization of the Czechoslovak Writers' Association, leadership of the Czechoslovak People's Party, students of the Prague Technical University and the Charles University. The 28 October issue of *Új Szó*, in its column entitled *Our people firmly solidarized with the party and the government* (Népünk szilárdan tömörül a párt és a kormány köré), listed the declarations and commitments of the following work teams and employees' collectives: the Klement Gottwald Engineering Works in Brno, the Křížik-Dukla Plant in Prešov, the Institute of Technology and Physics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, the United Agricultural Co-operative of Kalonda.

The scope of declarations published or extracted in *Új Szó* differed from those issued in the Czech and Slovak papers only minimally. It is perhaps natural that while the Czech papers informed about the loyalty of the Czech work teams, the Hungarian paper – and, of course, the Slovak ones – wrote about the workers' communities of Slovakia. However, the most important, but by no means surprising difference was that *Új Szó* provided a somewhat broader space to declarations arriving from the Hungarian-inhabited regions, and it occasionally even referred to

¹⁵⁵ *Új Szó*, 29 October 1956, p. 2.

the Hungarian ethnicity of the work teams' members in hand. This is what happened, among others, when the declaration of the Elektrovit Company of Nové Zámky was published, where Új Szó – unlike the Slovak *Pravda* – commented on that „most part of the employees working in the plant are ethnic Hungarians”,¹⁵⁶ or, in the review of the letter from the Kalonda United Agricultural Cooperative, the title itself had incorporated information that it were „ethnic Hungarian cooperative members” who protested (against the Budapest events).¹⁵⁷ However, it had also happened that Új Szó referred to *Rudé právo*, which was the first to mention that it were Hungarians – inhabitants of Hucín and Moča, personnel of the Komárno state farm, secondary grammar schools students of Štúrovo and Nové Zámky – whose declarations of loyalty were taken over from the Czech central party paper.¹⁵⁸

One of the most typical examples of condemnation of the Hungarian „counter-revolution” and, at the same time, of servilism towards power was the appeal of the Presidium of the Csemadok's Central Committee adopted on 29 October and published in Új Szó the next day, which is worth to look at more in depth because of the important role Csemadok played in the life of Slovakia's Hungarians. Beyond dispute, there had also been minority advocacy efforts present in the activities of the cultural association founded in 1949, but its leadership had in the 1950s – so in the autumn of 1956 – much rather represented the interests of the single party than those of the minority community of Hungarians. (SIMON 2006: 45)

It belongs among the antecedents of the declaration that the Presidium of the Csemadok Central Committee had held a meeting three days after the revolution's outbreak, but then no resolution was adopted in connection with the events; and although we can consider for utmost impossible that they would have not even touched upon the issue, no record has been preserved on it in the minutes of the meeting of 26 October. (SZESZTAY 2003: 42) In the end, the Presidium of the association adopted its declaration condemning the revolution in Hungary only after the Bureau of the KSS Central Committee ordered to convene the associa-

¹⁵⁶ Új Szó, 26 October 1956, p. 1.; *Pravda*, 26 October 1956, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Új Szó, 28 October 1956, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Rudé právo*, 2 November 1956, p. 1.; Új Szó, 4 November 1956, p. 1.

tion's leading officials and instructed them on how to act among the Hungarian population in Slovakia in connection with the Hungarian events.¹⁵⁹

After all, the declaration of the Presidium of the Csemadok Central Committee published on 30 October in *Új Szó* and reviewed the next day by *Rudé právo*, strongly criticized and condemned the Hungarian uprising, calling it a „anti-people experiment of counter-revolutionary gangs allied with international reactionary forces”, and suggested that its aim was to set against industrialists, landowners, bankers, earls and barons on the Hungarian people. In the essential part of its declaration, the leadership of Csemadok ensured the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the government about the loyalty of the Hungarian working people of the country and called on the Hungarian population to gather „even more devotedly and resolutely” around the communist party and to further „foster and protect” the alliance with the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁰ The declaration of the central board was soon followed by resolutions of similar content and tone of the county presidiums of Csemadok in Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Nitra and Košice.¹⁶¹

Anti-revolutionary Propaganda in *Új Szó* after 4 November 1956

Új Szó, together with the other Czechoslovak media products, celebrated the defeat of the revolution with great enthusiasm. *Rudé právo* and *Pravda* informed about the crushing of the „counter-revolution” – both in a special edition – already in the afternoon of 4 November, while *Új Szó* only on 5 November, with the same headline as *Pravda* from the previous day: *The Hungarian people have broken down the counter-revolution* (A magyar nép letörte az ellenforradalmat). The paper published on its

¹⁵⁹ Slovenský národný archív, Bratislava (Slovak National Archives, hereafter: SNA),

Ústredný výbor Komunistickej strany Slovenska (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, hereafter: ÚV KSS), box 932, Zápis zo zasadnutia Byra ÚV KSS dňa 29. októbra 1956.

¹⁶⁰ *Új Szó*, 30 October 1956, p. 2.; *Rudé právo*, 31 October 1956, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Új Szó*, 30 October 1956, p. 2.; *Új Szó*, 1 November 1956, p. 2.

front page the appeal of the so called „Hungarian Revolutionary Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” headed by János Kádár, who was put into power by the Soviet tanks. The paper introduced the appeal, inter alia, with an untrue subheading: „Imre Nagy’s traitor government has resigned”.¹⁶² By that time, in the anti-revolutionary propaganda, the figure of Imre Nagy had clearly taken the shape of a traitor. As the editorial of Új Szó taken over from *Rudé právo* put it: Imre Nagy was „a vile traitor to the people” and the „liquidator of the workers’ class party”, who „had sold himself to the reactionary forces”.¹⁶³

News from Hungary or those relating to Hungary had preserved their position as cover stories in the days and weeks long after 4 November. Új Szó published the reports of the press agency on the consolidation of the situation in Hungary, on normalization, on restoration of order and calm, on remedying the damage, on rebuilding of Budapest, on elimination of shortages, and on the allegedly good supply of the Budapest stores on the approaching Christmas.¹⁶⁴ From the end of November onwards, Új Szó wrote more and more about the serious situation and vulnerability of Hungarians having fled to the West, and also about their intention to return back to their homeland.¹⁶⁵

Naturally, the paper followed and welcomed the consolidation of the Kádár government and of the new single-party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt, MSZMP). In the beginning of December it released, inter alia, the resolution of MSZMP’s interim Central Committee about the reasons and antecedents of the events before 23 October,¹⁶⁶ and, in the middle of December, it had brought several days a burst of „revealing” articles attempting to discredit the Central Workers’ Council of Greater Budapest, which had been dissolved for leading the resistance against the Kádár government and was accused from having connections with the „foreign reactionary forces”.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand,

¹⁶² Új Szó, 5 November 1956, p. 1.

¹⁶³ *Rudé právo*, 5 November 1956, p. 1.; Új Szó, 5 November 1956, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ On the latter see e.g. Új Szó, 23 Dec. 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 25 Dec. 1956, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ E.g. Új Szó, 29 November 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 10 December 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 28 December 1956, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ Új Szó, 11 December 1956, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ See e.g. Új Szó, 12 December 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 14 December 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 20 December 1956, p. 5.

it was silent about the fate of Imre Nagy and his fellows, fleeing after the Soviet military intervention to the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest. Only after the abduction of Imre Nagy and his comrades on 22 November it claimed – referring to the Yugoslav TANJUG News Agency – that the members of the group had left the embassy and „returned to their home”; then it took over from the Hungarian Radio the evidently lying news that they had left Hungary and on 23 November „travelled” to Romania on their own request.¹⁶⁸

Considerable space was devoted in the press also to the measures taken by the Czechoslovak state and party administration to provide economic and political help for the Kádár Government. *Új Szó* informed on 7 November about the Solidarity Fund established with the aim to „help the working people of the Hungarian People’s Republic”, and on the following day it brought on its first page the appeal of the Central Committee’s Presidium of the Slovak National Front on fundrasing.¹⁶⁹ In the following weeks, the paper brought news almost daily – usually under the title *We help the Hungarian people* – about the donations and pledges of different Czechoslovak work teams, industrial and agricultural workers’ communities, but it also kept informed about the economic aid arriving to Hungary from the Soviet Union, Poland, GDR, China, Mongolia and the other socialist countries. On 16 November it informed about the start of a trainset from Komárno transporting Czechoslovak donations,¹⁷⁰ and in the interval of 3–4 days it reported about the volume of the financial assistance accumulated on the account of the Solidarity Fund No. 999, which amounted on 17 November up to 6,6 million, on 28 November it was already 23,5 million, and on 27 December as much as 55,2 million crowns.¹⁷¹ Finally, the Czechoslovak government’s aid of 90 million crowns had served the Hungarian economy as well: *Új Szó* informed about it on its front page on 15 November, while the visit of a Czechoslovak government delegation led by Prime Minister Viliam Široký on November 15–16 was meant to demonstrate political support for the Kádár gov-

¹⁶⁸ *Új Szó*, 24 November 1956, p. 6.; *Új Szó*, 25 November 1956, p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ *Új Szó*, 7 November 1956, p. 5.; *Új Szó*, 8 November 1956, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Új Szó*, 16 November 1956, pp. 1–2.

¹⁷¹ The overall amount accumulated on the account was some 60 million crowns. JANEK 2007: 200.

ernment, the information about which was posted also among the leading news of the paper.¹⁷²

Articles pillorying domestic and foreign organizers of the „counter-revolution” were still frequent, their principal targets were usually former factory owners, landowners, „Hortyst” generals, former smallholder politicians and „American imperialists”.¹⁷³ A number of entries described atrocities committed by the „counter-revolution”, dealt with the responsibility of the Western radio stations – first of all that of the Radio Free Europe in Munich and the Voice of America –, and published „revealing” items even about weapons smuggled to Hungary with (humanitarian) consignments of the Red Cross.¹⁷⁴ One of the priority targets remained Cardinal József Mindszenty – having found refuge after the Soviet occupation at the American Embassy in Budapest –, who had, according to the press, „just started where he left off in 1948”, and whose „only hope was the return of Hitler’s Germany”.¹⁷⁵

Új Szó, similarly to the other Czechoslovak media, permanently monitored the United Nations’ debate on the Hungarian situation, which was put on the agenda of the General Assembly of the world organization despite the protest of the Soviet Union and the Kádár government, and which, according to the assumption of the press, only served to distract attention away from the Suez question, and, on the other hand, it was a crude interference into the internal affairs of Hungary.¹⁷⁶ Új Szó announced already on 29 November that the Hungarian government is intended to publish a so called white book on the events in Hungary, and as soon as on 15 December – while the Czech and Slovak party paper confined to only reviewing its content¹⁷⁷ – it started running the book in chapters, under the title

¹⁷² Új Szó, 15 Nov. 1956, 1.; Új Szó, 17 Nov. 1956, pp. 1–2.; Új Szó, 18. Nov. 1956, 1.

¹⁷³ E.g. Új Szó, 7 Nov. 1956, 7.; Új Szó, 10 Nov. 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 11 Nov. 1956, p. 4.

¹⁷⁴ E.g. Új Szó, 11 Nov. 1956, p. 4.; Új Szó, 14 November 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 22 November 1956, p. 2.; Új Szó, 23 November 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 28 Nov. 1956, p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ Új Szó, 13 November 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 20 November 1956, p. 5.; Új Szó, 27 November 1956, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ Új Szó, 11 November 1956, p. 3.; Új Szó, 15 December 1956, p. 5. On the position of Czechoslovakia in the UN debate on the situation in Hungary see VAJDA 2006b.

¹⁷⁷ *Rudé právo*, 15 December 1956, p. 3.; *Rudé právo*, 16 December 1956, p. 5.; *Pravda*, 16 Dec. 1956, p. 4.

Counter-revolutionary forces in the Hungarian October events (Ellenforradalmi erők a magyar októberi eseményekben).¹⁷⁸

The number of articles devoted to Hungary started to somewhat decrease in the latter half of November, and although it temporarily increased again in the middle of December, when the Kádár government launched its actions of „imposing order”, their number fell to their former fraction by the end of December. However, the tone and the content of the articles of *Új Szó* had not differed from those published in the Czech and Slovak party papers, not even after the crushing of the revolution. For its smaller volume, it could obviously publish lesser items about Hungary, but the overwhelming majority of the published texts were still not written by its editors, were taken over from the press agency or from the Czech *Rudé právo*.

Special Issues of *Új Szó* Distributed in Hungary

As already mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, the involvement of *Új Szó* in 1956 had not exhausted in the propaganda targeted to the Hungarian population of Slovakia, as the paper, through its special issues to be distributed in Hungary, had also been engaged in the propaganda towards Hungary, as well as in the support of the pro-Soviet forces there. The accurate background of the initiative is unknown. As László Zsilka, former publicist of the paper put it in his memoirs, there is no credible information available whether the publication of special issues was a direct initiative of the Czechoslovak party leaders, or it was run on the request of the Hungarian party leadership or on a Soviet directive. (ZSILKA 1994: 24)

The publication of special issues started on 28 October and lasted until 2 December, while, according to our knowledge, there were printed twenty-five numbers with an average of fifty-thousand copies. There was only one longer period lasting eight days – between 12 and 19 November – when the printing was paused, apart from this, it only ceased to be published on 4, 24 and 26 November. The individual numbers usually consisted of two pages, the only exception was the one-page issue on 5 November announcing the defeat of the „counter-revolution”, and those published on 7 and 25 November, both in the volume of four

¹⁷⁸ *Új Szó*, 29 November 1956, p. 3.; *Új Szó*, 15 December 1956, p. 4.

pages. The extended volume of the first was justified by the anniversary of the October Revolution, and the second by the publishing of the topical two-page editorial of the Moscow *Pravda*.¹⁷⁹

Regarding their content, the special issues did not differ much from the regular ones, they were mostly selections of articles dealing with Hungary. Besides the news by the Czechoslovak Press Agency, there were published editorials and commentaries taken over from *Rudé právo* – of course, without indicating the source –, as well as declarations of loyalty, among them an extract from the declaration of Cse-madok of 29 November.¹⁸⁰ It happened that the special issue brought an own item which had not been published in the regular issue,¹⁸¹ but this was rather an exception, so the texts were usually taken over one-on-one or scraped, and the paper had often not even changed their title. At the same time, they published several caricatures displeasing „counter-revolutionaries”, which were not incorporated in the Slovakian numbers of the paper.¹⁸²

The one-page special issue of 5 November welcomed the defeat of the „counter-revolution” by an editorial entitled *The Hungarian people have won!* (Győzött a magyar nép!) and by another article with the following title: *The workers’ and peasants’ government has smashed the counter-revolution* (A munkás-parasztkormány megsemmisítette az ellenforradalmat). In the issues coming out later, there were, among others, pledges of support for Hungary, reports on the consolidation of the situation in the country, coverage of the UN debate on the Hungarian question, as well as special reports unpublished in the regular numbers, such as the appeal of the Soviet military headquarters to the Hungarian working people, soldiers and army officers and their command No. 1 of November 6 on mandatory firearms surrender and curfew imposition.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Új Szó, 25 November 1956 – special issue, pp. 2–3.

¹⁸⁰ Új Szó, 31 October 1956 – special issue, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ E.g. Új Szó, 30 October 1956 – special issue, p. 1.; Új Szó, 1 November 1956 – special issue, p. 2.; Új Szó, 2 November 1956 – special issue, p. 1.

¹⁸² Új Szó, 1 November 1956 – special issue, p. 2.; Új Szó, 2 November 1956 – special issue, p. 2.; Új Szó, 3 November 1956 – special issue, p. 2.

¹⁸³ Új Szó, 6 November 1956 – special issue, p. 1.; Új Szó, 9 November 1956 – special issue, p. 1.

It had already happened before that the special issues for Hungary brought reports on events not affecting Hungary directly, for instance, on the situation in Poland or on the Suez crisis, but the number and volume of such topics gradually prevailed over news about Hungary, which, starting from the latter half of November, began to disappear from both of the regular and the special issues of the paper. At this time, the special issues for Hungary were dominated by news on global world politics and Czechoslovak domestic and economy issues, and it was not rare that they brought extensive reports on the ongoing Melbourne Olympic Games.

The special issues designed for distribution in Hungary were produced in the newsroom by a tight circle of staffers, under the direct leadership of the editor-in-chief, Ferenc Dénes; the content of the special numbers—just as that of the regular ones—was consulted beforehand with the ideological department of the party centre. The special issues were distributed first of all to the northern regions of Hungary situated along the Slovak border; mainly to Komárom and Nógrád counties. The distribution of the paper in Hungary was performed illegally, usually with the help of reliable people who smuggled the newspaper across the state border, while the task itself was mainly entrusted, for their knowledge of the language, to Slovakia's ethnic Hungarians. Part of the smuggled newspapers was simply dispersed in the borderzone settlements and the hand-out of the rest was taken care of through friendly connections of individuals. Nevertheless, László Zsilka reports on unofficial information that the special issues were allegedly scattered also by Czechoslovak aircrafts across the territory of Hungary's northern regions. (ZSILKA 1994: 24)

The special issue of *Új Szó* in Hungary – according to the unanimous opinion of several sources – got a hostile reception. A piece of *Szabad Nógrád*, the daily of the Nógrád County, expressed its indignation already on 30 October for the content of the special issue of 28 October calling the Hungarian uprising „counter-revolution”,¹⁸⁴ and two days later it was the revolutionary military council's meeting of the district police department in Balassagyarmat that raised objection against the fact that there are such press products transferred from Czechoslovakia to Hungary which classify the events taking place in the country as a fascist counter-revolution.

¹⁸⁴ As *Szabad Nógrád* put it, people had given their verdict on *Új Szó* themselves when after reading the paper they “crumpled it into a ball, tore it up and trampled underfoot”.

(Á. VARGA-PÁSZTOR 2001: 120–121; Á. VARGA 1996: 138) According to László Zsilka, cited before on more occasions, the editor had received letters from Hungary even several months after the crushing of the revolution, the authors of which named the special issues a writers' rag. (ZSILKA 1994: 25)

One of the Slovak communist party leaders, Jozef Valo criticized the misguided phraseology of the special issues on the 9 November meeting of the Bureau of KSS Central Committee. On his opinion, the special issues were no too much help for Hungary, and he said that „to start right with the Soviet Union” when a general anti-Soviet atmosphere is prevailing in the country, actually has the opposite effect and the people immediately tear up the paper. Valo therefore suggested that the appearance of the special issues is stopped,¹⁸⁵ but Karol Bacílek, First Secretary of KSS Central Committee advocated for the further distribution of the paper in Hungary, so the special issues were printed also after 9 November. Proofs about the fact that the special issues for Hungary caused displeasure also among Slovakia's ethnic Hungarians can be found in the contemporary records of the Czechoslovak homeland security. According to one of its reports, for example, participants of the Cse-madok meeting in Šamorín on 5 November sharply criticized the distribution of Új Szó in Hungary in the presence of the Bratislava party delegate and called it a „dirty action” aimed at „misleading the population of Hungary”. (MARUŠIAK 2005: 205; KAPLAN 2005: 529)

It also belongs to the history of the special issues of Új Szó distributed in Hungary that its editor-in-chief, Ferenc Dénes, had half-officially initiated several times in later years that the Hungarian party management bodies acknowledge the activities of the paper in some way, by an award, for instance, but the relevant Hungarian authorities never responded to the request. (ZSILKA 1994: 25)

As regards the overall picture of the Czechoslovak propaganda towards Hungary, it is certainly worth mentioning that it was far from being exhausted by the special issues of Új Szó. Apart from these, four special issues of the Bratislava youth weekly Új Ifjúság were also transferred to Hungary in twenty thousand copies, three thousand copies of the women's magazine Dolgozó Nő (also appearing in Bratislava),

¹⁸⁵ SNA, ÚV KSS, box 933, Záznam z diskusie členov Byra ÚV KSS na zasadnutí dňa 9. nov. 1956 k otázkam vyhodnotenia udalostí v Maďarsku.

two posters in ten thousand copies each, and besides these, pro-Soviet propaganda was broadcasted from southern Slovakia to Hungary by two long-range and four short-range Hungarian-language radio stations as well.¹⁸⁶ Even the district papers were involved in propaganda, for example, the Komárno-district farmers' paper, which had ten extraordinary numbers to be distributed in Hungary by the end of November. (SIMON 2006: 48) Because of the printers' strike in Hungary, some issues of the daily *Észak-Magyarország* published in the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County were printed in the Slovak city of Košice. (JANEK 2007: 195)

Conclusions

As we are reading the 1956 issues of *Új Szó*, a one-sided image might unfold before us that the Hungarians in Slovakia – as well as the Czechoslovak society as a whole – remained loyal to the regime, and that they had not only condemned and rejected the „counter-revolution” in Hungary, but also participated in the activities of the propaganda machine against the uprising. It was spread by the propaganda that all strata of the Czechoslovak society, among them the Hungarian population, stood by the communist party, and the same was concluded on the December 1956 sessions both of the KSC Central Committee and that of the KSS Central Committee, which had made a positive assessment of the Hungarian minority's conduct during the revolutionary events. (POPÉLY 2006: 63)

However, the one-sided view suggested by the power is considerably nuanced by the contemporary Czechoslovak homeland security reports mentioned earlier, which had often admitted that the Hungarian population of southern Slovakia followed the events in the neighbouring Hungary with keen interest and sympathy, and we

¹⁸⁶ SNA, ÚV KSS, box 933, Záznam z diskusie členov Byra ÚV KSS na zasadnutí dňa 9. nov. 1956 k otázkam vyhodnotenia udalostí v Maďarsku; box 934, Zpráva o činnosti Komunistickéj strany Slovenska a uplatňovaní jej vedúcej úlohy na Slovensku počas udalostí v Maďarsku.

¹⁸⁷ Selection on the homeland security reports are, among others, brought by KAPLAN 2005; SIMON 2006; on the black ribbon action of the Hungarian pedagogical school in Bratislava by VAJDA 2006a; on the students' attitude in the Komarno eleven years' secondary (grammar) school GÁSPÁR 2003.

know about several cases when Hungarian students appeared at their school wearing black ribbons as a display of their grief for the crushed revolution or when they refused to sign the declaration of loyalty condemning the „counter-revolution”.¹⁸⁷

The evidence that things did not go smooth in Új Szó either, although it was considered for the Hungarian-language mouthpiece of the communist party, was testified by the speech of the editor-in-chief, Ferenc Dénes on the session of the KSS Central Committee on 12–13 December. Dénes, when reviewing the activities of Új Szó during the „counter-revolution”, could not conceal that there were members of the editorial board who had „faltered” and who „got under the influence of nationalistic slogans”. There were some staffers among them who „welcomed the return of Imre Nagy” and considered the events in Hungary for a „national revolution” and a „justified uprising”. They expressed their ideological position on the meeting of the Hungarian section of the Slovak Writers’ Association and wanted to make the editors of Új Szó publish their resolution, in which they condemned the mistakes of the former MDP leadership more sharply than the „barbaric-fascist acts concluded by the counter-revolution”.¹⁸⁸

Of course, there was not the slightest chance that an opinion opposing with the official evaluation of the „counter-revolution” in Hungary could see the light of day in Czechoslovak papers – among them in Új Szó –, which were censored and supervised by the party centre. But those events taking place in Új Szó provide one of the most eloquent evidences about the falseness that the single-party state propaganda spread also by Slovakia’s Hungarian party paper.

¹⁸⁸ SNA, ÚV KSS, box 1836, Zasadanie ÚV KSS, konané v dňoch 12–13. decembra 1956.

* * * **Archival & Newspaper Sources** * * *

Slovenský národný archív, Bratislava (Slovak National Archives, Bratislava; abbreviated as SNA) – Ústredný výbor Komunistickej strany Slovenska (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia), among others Box 932.

Pravda (Bratislava)

Rudé právo (Prague)

Új Szó (Bratislava)

Year 1968 in the broadcasting of the *Radio Vaticana Slovak Desk* - focusing on the situation in Czecho-slovakia from January to August

by Peter Jašek



This chapter¹⁸⁹ focuses on the question how the Slovak Desk of the *Radio Vaticana* perceived and dealt with the famous year 1968 in Czechoslovakia, especially with the democratization process within the society following the occupation. In history of Czechoslovakia, year 1968 stands out for an attempt to create 'socialism with a human face', meaning the efforts to make the Communist totalitarian regime 'more human'. Communist Party leadership implemented a number of measures leading to democratization, which were welcomed and supported by citizens. That policy was unacceptable for the Soviet Union, as democratisation was considered a 'counterrevolution' and the Soviet Union feared Czechoslovakia might leave the Soviet Bloc. On the night of 20–21 August 1968, occupation troops of the Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia and occupied the country for the following 20 years. Due to the invasion, the democratisation process was stopped.

¹⁸⁹ I would like to thank the Slovak Historical Institute in Rome for supporting my scholarship in Rome. I would also like to thank Mr. Jozef Bartkoviak, Head of the Slovak Desk of Vatican Radio, allowing my research in the archive of the Slovak desk.

In spite of the fact that the focus of this chapter will be on the events in Czechoslovakia, we also need to keep in mind that 1968 was the „year that rocked the world”, according to popular book of an American writer Mark Kurlansky. We can agree: it was a year when several crucial events happened that changed the world. For example, in the U.S. a popular senator and a presidential candidate Robert Kennedy was assassinated, as well as the leader of the African-American Civil Rights Movement Martin Luther King Jr. The U.S. administration escalated the war in Vietnam, and the whole country was involved in race riots, and in unprecedented demonstrations of students, anti-war rallies and anti-establishment events. Western European countries, especially France and West Germany, were hit by some waves of student protests of „the new generation”, which peaked by the closing of the several universities and public protests. The Eastern bloc was hit by „socialism with a human face” in Czechoslovakia, by student demonstrations in Poland, and by Soviet-Chinese tension.

And the most important for the whole world, a new generation of the 60s aroused, with different opinions and values than the generation of their parents. In general, we can agree with Kurlansky’s opinion about four historical factors that caused „year 1968”: movement for human rights; arouse of the new generation that felt different and refused any authority; war hated by the whole world; television in which live broadcasting was considered as a miracle. (KURLANSKY 2004: 16)

The focus of this paper is on the Slovak Desk of the *Radio Vaticana*, which means that the interpretation of the situation in Czechoslovakia will be the most important. Of course, the Slovak Desk reflected upon the events that took place in the world, because the Vatican Radio was (rightly) considered as „the voice of the Pope” to whole world.

Reform process (democratization) in Czechoslovakia 1968

The democratization in Czechoslovakia in 1968 is quite well known among researchers, and even the general public is aware to some extent with the general political course of year 1968 in Czechoslovakia. During the 60s there was a gradual easing of the political regime in the country. Even though the Constitution of 1960 proclaimed the victory of the socialism, problems in Czechoslovakia began to grow

and accumulate, visible mainly in the economy and the stagnation of living standards. The country underwent a wave of de-Stalinization and rehabilitation. In addition to this, the violence of the 50s began to be openly talked about, leading to political upheavals and the departure of some functionaries with significant ties to the repressions of the 50s. They were replaced by new officials who were in favour of economic reforms and easing of the ideological control in the areas of science and culture. Significant impetus for democratization came from the fields of culture and social sciences, associated in Slovakia with the periodical *Kultúrny život* (Cultural Life). The political easing made it possible to raise the question of Slovakia's status within the joint state as the centralist arrangement was mostly looked upon unfavourably.

The foreign policy developments in the 60s also supported the situation in Czechoslovakia, as the second half of the 60s was characterised by reduced tensions in the relations between democratic and socialist countries, resulting in the policy of *détente*. The reform process of 1968 was the most visible evidence and the new regime type was known as 'socialism with a human face'. In January, Alexander Dubček¹⁹⁰ was appointed the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czecho-

¹⁹⁰ Alexander Dubček (1921-1968), Slovak communist and social democratic politician. He came from a communist family and was a member of the communist party since 1939. During the World War II he supported the illegal activities of the communist underground movement and as a soldier he took part in the Slovak National Uprising. After the war he worked within the Communist Party (CP) apparatus and studied in Moscow in the late 50s, during the period of the criticism of the Stalinism. After he returned home, he climbed to the highest party offices. In 1963 he became the first Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, at a time when several democratization measures were introduced within the regime in Slovakia, mostly known as a "Bratislava's Early-Spring". In 1968, he became the First Secretary of the CP's Central Committee and the symbol of the Prague Spring, which brought a previously unprecedented democratization of the communist regime. In 1968, Dubček was "*the human face of socialism with a human face*" and the most popular politician in Czechoslovakia. The occupation of the Warsaw Pact troops brought about his downfall. The normalization regime gradually demoted him all the way to the position of that as a common labourer in a lumber mill. He found himself at the top of the list of right-wing opportunists, as the normalization regime attempted to vilify those communists who had supported the democratic process. In 1989, he actively participated in civic activities, which led to the fall of the communist regime. Dubček was elected the Speaker of the Federal Assembly and he remained in this post until his tragic death in a car accident in 1992.

slovakia Presidium (in those days the most powerful man in the country) and other personnel changes followed within both party and state administration bodies, bringing supporters of the reform process into position. In April the *Action Programme of the CPC* was approved, providing legitimacy to the new political regime line, and democratic tendencies started to clearly be shown in society, e.g. censorship removal; free travel; rehabilitation of the victims of the Communist terror in the 50s; loosening of pressure over the churches; economic reforms which endorsed small enterprises; increased competencies of governmental bodies in comparison to party bodies; and the establishment of some non-communist organisations. The equal position of Slovakia in the joint Czecho-Slovak state was an important part of democratisation measures that succeeded in the adoption of the *Law on Federalisation*. All these steps were supported by the citizens and at the same time they strengthened the authority of the reform politicians. The expectations of the public grew gradually and sometimes they even exceeded the framework of the *Action Programme*.

From the very beginning and not hiding its reservations, the Soviet Union observed the events in Czechoslovakia which it considered an integral part of its sphere of influence. Leaderships in other Warsaw Pact member states – Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and German Democratic Republic – shared Soviet reservations, with fears that the reform process might have influence on their own countries, too. Western democracies perceived the Czechoslovak attempt for reforms with deliberate feelings of understanding with fully respecting that Czechoslovakia belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviets interpreted the situation that the development in Czechoslovakia was destabilising the whole region and the country was gradually advancing toward leaving the Soviet bloc. Seeing that in spite of many forcible warnings and urgent requests emphasising ‘*the concerns about the fate of socialism*’ and warning against ‘*danger of the counterrevolution*’, the situation in Czechoslovakia did not change, the Soviets decided to reverse the situation through a military action. They did so, although the Czechoslovak leadership had never questioned key Communist principles, such as the alliance with the Soviet Union within the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact, or the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in society.

The military invasion was launched on the night of 20–21 August, 1968. The total strength of the Warsaw Pact troops was more than 500,000 men and a heavy

military equipment including 6,300 tanks, 2,000 cannons and 800 airplanes. Prior to the invasion, Soviets provided a 'letter of invitation' signed by dogmatic Czechoslovak Communists asking the 'fraternal socialist countries' for help from the alleged counter-revolution. However, the leading Communist Party and state bodies denounced the military invasion in their declaration and exposed it as an occupation in front of the whole world. This is how it was perceived also by the citizens. In spite of appeals to keep calm and not to resist, unarmed masses of people tried to stop Soviet tanks in many locations. The occupation armies' soldiers were surprised by that spontaneous resistance and they often started to shoot unarmed citizens, which resulted in casualties. During the occupation, the military actions caused at least 108 civilians, citizens of Czechoslovakia to be killed, 37 of them in Slovakia.¹⁹¹

By the occupation armies' invasion and signing of the Moscow Protocol on August 26, 1968, the period of the so-called *Normalisation* was launched. Normalisation brought the exclusion of the process of democratization in the 60s, re-introduction of the censorship and political screening of all citizens, and the regime came back to emphasising the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in society as well as the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and started to apply it. Normalisation was based on repressing the protests of citizens against the occupation symbolised by the voluntary self-immolation of the student Jan Palach in January 1969 in Prague. Protests of citizens culminated in mass demonstrations in August 1969, but those were brutally suppressed resulting in a number of casualties. This was the ultimate and sad end of the Prague Spring, as the violence definitely broke the citizens' resistance, brought resignation and forced reconciliation with the new regime, which lasted for the next twenty years.

The Slovak Desk of the Vatican Radio

The Vatican started using the *radio as a new invention* very early, already in the interwar period. *Radio Vaticana* was founded in 1931 by Pope Pius XI. Technical

¹⁹¹ For the list of the victims see the website of the Nation's Memory Institute and Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes at: <http://www.ustrcr.cz/cs/obeti-okupace>
http://www.upn.gov.sk/data/pdf/august_obete.pdf.

support and matters were provided by Guglielmo Marconi, who used to be credited as an inventor of the radio. The ceremonial start of broadcasting took place on 12 February 1931 by introductory notice of Marconi and the speech of Pope Pius XI in Latin language, in which he among others said: „*Let it be our first word: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to all people.*” (SOČUFKA 2004: 23) By his speech, the Holy Father expressed a sense of mission of the Vatican Radio: to spread the voice of the Pope to the whole world. Holy Father tasked Jesuits by leading the Vatican Radio. During the late 1930s, the development of the Vatican Radio brought everyday broadcasting in several languages.

Historically, the first broadcasting of the Vatican Radio in Slovak language was on Christmas 1943, with the transmission of Pius XII's Christmas Message on 25 December. The regular broadcasting of the Slovak Desk started with regular broadcasting on Christmas 1947, and from 3 July 1949 everyday Slovak broadcasting started with a 15-minutes program.

Another important milestone in the history of the Slovak Desk was that the Slovak broadcasting became independent from the Czech(Czechoslovak) Desk, which happened during late the 1940s. One of the long-serving commentator of the Vatican Radio, František Sočufka, describes the main aim of the Slovak Desk broadcasting, especially during the period of communism:

„The Slovak Desk of the Radio Vaticana strove to find an appropriate response to the religious situation in Slovakia, which required it. Radio Vaticana sought to be the voice of the truth, since man has the right for truth. Nobody can live permanently from the lies.” (SOČUFKA 2004: 11)

During the second half of the 20th century, the Slovak Desk became an important instrument of evangelization in Slovakia, especially during the period of the Communism. The Slovak Desk brought to the listeners the coverage of the Pope's words, his encyclicals and messages. It also brought news about the persecution of church and believers behind the Iron Curtain, which was the reason why the Communist regime turned its efforts towards *blocking reception of Western programs*. In the times when the free flow of information was banned and obstructed (in this case by radio jamming) by the Communist party and government authorities, Radio Vaticana, as well as the broadcasting of each western radio, represented the original and uncensored source of the information for the people in the Soviet bloc countries.

The Slovak Desk in 1968

In the late 1960s, the Slovak Desk broadcasted every evening at 21:15 and in the afternoon at 13:00. (SOČUFKA 2004: 33-34) In 1968, the head of the Slovak Desk was Stanislav Polčín,¹⁹² who served at this position during the years 1957 to 1974. Another member of the Slovak Desk was Vincent Dančo,¹⁹³ who served in the years 1967-1973. Other important person was maestro Ladislav Pudiš, a well known opera singer, who served as a radio broadcaster from 1968 until 1989. There were also several other Slovak personalities, who lived and worked in Rome and co-operated with the Slovak Desk, like Felix Litva, Mons. Pavol Hnilica, Michal Lacko, Jozef Tomko, Štefan Náhalka or Dominik Hrušovský. (SOČUFKA 2004: 34) One of the long-serving commentator of the Slovak Desk, František Sočufka, described broadcasting of the Slovak Desk of *Radio Vaticana* as „a blessing. It was a luck that we were able to listen. The police, which otherwise had everything in their hands, couldn't ban it and even couldn't prevent it.” (SOČUFKA 2004: 5)

The program structure of the Slovak Desk was focused mostly on religious issues, which was also mirrored in the program structure of the Slovak Desk. Based on the analysis of the broadcasting records from 1968, we can define four key parts of the programme structure, such as (a) Regular columns/programs, mostly focused on religious issues, like program about the religious education of children; church history; spiritual texts connected with religious anniversaries, feast days or period of fast; Holy Mass broadcast on Sunday including Slovak sermon¹⁹⁴ and several others.

¹⁹² Stanislav Polčín (1921–1976), Slovak priest and Jesuit. He studied at theological faculty in Bratislava, in 1941 he joined the Jesuits. He left Slovakia in 1946 and studied in Belgium; in 1948 he was ordained as a priest. He finished his theology study at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. In 1953-1976 he served at the Slovak Desk of Radio Vaticana, from 1957 as a head.

¹⁹³ Vincent Dančo (1922–1996), Slovak priest and Jesuit. He joined Jesuits in 1939, later studied theology at Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he was ordained as a priest in 1951. In the years 1953–1967 he served as a missionary among the Slovak emigrants in Canada and during 1967–1973 as a commentator of the Slovak Desk of the Radio Vaticana. In 1973 he came back to Canada and worked at the publishing house of the Slovak Jesuits in Cambridge. In 1981 he became the head of the Slovak parish in Toronto.

¹⁹⁴ Part of this program were some topics like Epiphany (Three Kings Day) from 6 Jan.

(b) Comments on the actual situation in Vatican through speeches, prayers, pronouncements and various activities of the Pontiff. (c) News from the catholic world and events related to the Catholic Church worldwide. (d) News regarding the situation of Catholic Church in Slovakia and among Slovaks abroad. In that respect we will examine in the individual chapters also how they perceive democratization process in (Czecho)Slovakia.

The first Vatican Radio broadcasting of the year 1968 took place on January 1, by announcing the dedication of New Year Day to a Peace. After the Christian greetings *'In nomine Domini'* (by which the Slovak desk started its broadcast at that time every day), the radio broadcaster greeted the audience:

*„Although there are clouds over the horizon, and the forecast is not too glamorous, yet we start with great hope in our hearts. After all, this is the first New Year Day in the history which is, based on the initiative of the Holy Father Paul VI dedicated to the peace on the whole world: and this initiative was joined not only by Christians, but also by the people of good will regardless of confession.”*¹⁹⁵

The Slovak Desk informed about the International Peace Day ceremony on 1 January at Vatican. Due to the weather conditions, the ceremony took place at the Papal Basilica of St. Peter in Vatican. Pope Paul VI emphasized difficulties erected to the path of peace, especially at Vietnam. He invited states participated at the conflict to do what is possible to find the straight solution of this painful affaire and resolve an armistice, which will *„permanently stop heavy and fierce fights.”*¹⁹⁶ After the pray for peace and Apostolic blessing, the Pope expressed his New Year wishes in 11 languages including Polish, Russian, Greek, Chinese and Vietnamese.

Regular Programs/Columns

As it was mentioned earlier, the broadcasting structure of the Slovak Desk included several regular programs which mostly focused on religious issues and on the Catholic view on the current social situation and challenges. Majority programs

¹⁹⁵ Archive of the Vatican Radio Slovak Desk (further AVR–SD), record from 1 Jan, 1968.

¹⁹⁶ AVR–SD, record from 1 January 1968.

of the Slovak Desk were focused on some religious issues, like *Thought on Sunday* (most frequently prepared and read by bishop Dominik Hrušovský), which included religious contemplations over the Bible. Regular parts of the programme structure were Italian Holy Masses with Slovak sermon broadcasted on every Sunday. In 1968 'Ideas about the Year of the Faith' became a regular column.¹⁹⁷ During 1968, the Slovak Desk set up the programme *The Light of the Nations*, which dealt with the Second Vatican Council, with its preparations, course and key ideas of the final documents. (SOČUFKA 2004: 81) At that time, these informations about the Second Vatican Council were vital for Catholics believers, isolated behind the Iron Curtain.

On 2 January 1968, the Slovak Desk broadcasted some short comments about the Human Rights due to the 20th anniversary of adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was the reason why year 1968 was celebrated as a Year of the Human rights, and the Catholic Church had joined this movement. The commentator promised that the Slovak Desk would examine the human rights issues during the year, because also the Second Vatican Council dealt intensely with human rights, especially formulated in the Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*.¹⁹⁸ The Catholic Church supposed that it had the right as well as the obligation to speak up for human rights and called for their respect. At this comment, the Slovak Desk introduced some key statements on the Constitution dealing with human rights to the Slovak audience and promised to follow the questions of the human rights during the 1968.¹⁹⁹ This promise was fulfilled later in individual programs, and since March were broadcasted through reports focused on the individual articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,²⁰⁰ dealing with freedom of speech, press and media, etc.

The programme called *Questions of today* used to bring information about current „hot” topics, like it was the question of the ecumenism (discussed at the Slovak broadcast from 13 February)²⁰¹ ; how the Catholic morality considers the cardiac

¹⁹⁷ AVR–SD, record from 7 January 1968.

¹⁹⁸ For the English translation of the constitution see

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. (March 2014)

¹⁹⁹ AVR–SD, record from 2 January 1968.

²⁰⁰ AVR–SD, record from 26 March 1968, p. 86/1.

²⁰¹ AVR–SD, record from 13 February 1968, p. 44/1.

transplant; or the role of the Catholic laymen within the society.²⁰² The program dealt with the social challenges of the late 1960s, with specific issues like the question of the meaning of the labour and their place in our life; the Church's attitude towards the problems of Latin America; the divorce and its consequences; the role of the modern family in the society, etc.²⁰³ The Slovak Desk also understood the necessity of perceiving scientific-technical revolution of the 60s and broadcasted some information about the scientific news from the world and how catholic church perceived it (e. g. reports about the Earth, the Universe, etc.).²⁰⁴ During May, the Slovak Desk intensely informed about the student riots in Western Europe and in the U.S., for instance on 28 May in the column *Questions of Today* was discussed general issue of youth and students. There were thoughts not only about current students revolt, but in general about some negative features typical for the young generation that grew up in late 60s and about their attitude towards established way of life of their parents, especially in favouring material values over spiritual.²⁰⁵

There were also programs dealing with the history of the Church and some its personalities from the Slovak history. Example of such program was broadcasting about Nicolaus Olahus, archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary in the 16th century, who became famous as a most influential catholic during the period of counter-reformation. In the late 60s, the head of the Slovak Desk, Stanislav Polčín set up regular programs in cooperation with the Slovak historian living in Rome, Michal Lacko, focusing on the mission of Saint Cyril and Methodius to Great Moravia. (SOČUFKA 2004: 83)

Activities of the Pope

The Vatican Radio has been worldwide known as a „Voice of the Pope” and one of his main aim has been to share and spread Pope's greetings, speeches and opinion. The Slovak Desk used to inform every day about the Pope's activities, including

²⁰² AVR–SD, record from 20 Feb. 1968, p. 51/1; AVR–SD, from 11 June 1968, p. 163/2.

²⁰³ For all programs see SOČUFKA 2004: 92-94.

²⁰⁴ See e.g. comments about the Earth from 4 January 1968.

²⁰⁵ AVR–SD, record from 28 May 1968, p. 149.

General Audiences and important speeches, in which Paul VI expressed his opinion about crucial contemporary events.

On 6 February, the Slovak Desk broadcasted the Pope's blessing to the participants of the 10th Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble, France, in which the Pope appreciated „*the importance of sport activities which help to preserve mental strength of both the teams and the individuals.*”²⁰⁶ Later he also blessed the representatives of the European Football Federation during the final tournament of the European Championship, and he highlighted the role and the usefulness of the sport competitions, held in a fair-play spirit. Such sport events, he said, encourage fraternal relations between people of different nationalities, classes and races.²⁰⁷

As it has already been mentioned, year 1968 was abundant on the historical events, and this fact was reflected also by the Pope. His opinion on such events were later on broadcasted to the Slovak listeners. On 5 April, the Pope expressed his grief and condolences over the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Slovak Desk brought information about Luther's funeral and sent condolences to American Catholics.²⁰⁸

During the General Audience on 5 June, the Pope paid attention to the assassination of the American Senator Robert Kennedy. The Pope condemned this „*another act of violence and terror*”, while at the same time he prayed for the life of the young senator.²⁰⁹ Next day, the Slovak Desk referred about the condolences of the Pope to the President of the U.S. and to the wife of Robert Kennedy. A bit later, they published a statement by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Cicognani, who had served in the U.S. and knew Robert Kennedy and his family.²¹⁰ The Pope condemned the assassination once again in his speech before the Sunday pray of The Angelus, and he also mentioned the cases of the former U.S. President John F. Kennedy (brother of Robert) and Marthin Luther King. He particularly emphasized to the listeners that „*for us is important [...] as people and as Christians to condemn violence and crimes.*”²¹¹

²⁰⁶ AVR–SD, record from 6 February 1968, p. 37/4.

²⁰⁷ AVR–SD, record from 8 June 1968, p. 160/3.

²⁰⁸ AVR–SD, record from 9 June 1968, p. 100/3.

²⁰⁹ AVR–SD, record from 5 June 1938, p. 157/1.

²¹⁰ AVR–SD, record from 7 June 1968, p. 159/1.

²¹¹ AVR–SD, record from 9 June 1968, p. 161/1.

The Slovak Desk used to inform about the speeches of the Pope during his General Audiences, and it emphasized his words to the Slovak pilgrims. Democratization and freedom of travel in 1968 caused that *an increasing number of Slovaks were able to travel to West Europe, and especially to Rome*, which was reflected in increased numbers of the Pope's blessing to Slovaks. On 25 April, the Slovak Desk brought information about the Pope's General Audience, where also approximately some 80 Slovaks took part, and where the Pope turned to them with these words: „*We have Slovaks here. Beloved sons, thank you for your visit.*”²¹² On the General Audience on 19 June, some 60 Slovak members of the folklore ensemble 'Stavbar' took part. The Pope greeted them by a cordial speech and for the first time has said several words in Slovak language, using the greeting formula: „*Vítame a pozdravujeme milých Slovákov*” – We welcome and greet dear Slovaks. After the audience, the Pope met with the Slovaks, who were sitting in the first row in traditional costumes, and who gave him a book about Slovakia, and sung him a patriotic song „*Kto za pravdu horí*”.²¹³

During another General Audience, the Pope greeted a group of Slovak artists. Some of them met him after the audience individually; he shook hands with actor Gustáv Valach, artists Alexander Trizuljak and Julián Fila.²¹⁴ The Pope paid attention to the pilgrims from Slovakia especially in August, and the commentator of the Slovak Desk emphasized that after the introduction of the pilgrims from Czechoslovakia, there followed a huge applause „*as an echo of the attention paid by the world public to the events in recent weeks in Czechoslovakia.*”²¹⁵

News from the Catholic World

Various radio news focused on the events related to the situation of the Catholic Church worldwide, including the situation of the Catholic Church in the Communist states. This created an important part of the Slovak Desk broadcasting with

²¹² AVR–SD, record from 25 April 1968, p. 116/4.

²¹³ AVR–SD, record from 19 June 1968, p. 171/1.

²¹⁴ AVR–SD, record from 17 July 1968, p. 199/1.

²¹⁵ AVR–SD, record from 7 August 1968, p. 220/2.

the aim to elucidate it into the Slovak Listeners behind the Iron Curtain. We will focus on the news from the Soviet bloc countries and will examine some examples of such news in 1968 to figure out the political structure of the Slovak Desk.

On 2 January 1968, the Slovak Desk notified about a Pastoral Letter of the Polish Bishops in which they warned that Catholics in Poland didn't have the same rights as the non-believers.²¹⁶ The Slovak Desk informed also about the Pastoral letter of the Polish cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, in which he pilloried forced state-atheism as a „*shame of our times*”.²¹⁷ On 3 January, the commentator informed that the Metropolitan of Leningrad (St. Petersburg, Russia) initiated the publishing the Holy Bible, claiming that it would be the first complete edition of the Holy Bible in the Soviet Union since the October revolution in 1917.²¹⁸

The Slovak Desk paid attention to the persecution of the priests and believers in the Soviet bloc. Although year 1968 was in Czechoslovakia famous for „democratization” and „socialism with a human face”, in another communist countries the situation was quite different. We also need to keep in mind that Karl Marx's opinion about religion as a opiate of the masses was still part of the official ideology in Czechoslovakia as well as in all Soviet bloc countries. On 13 January the Slovak Desk informed that in Hungary several Roman Catholic activists were arrested and accused for teaching religion.²¹⁹ The Slovak Desk also informed about some „*sad news of the religious situation*” in Albania, in the first self-declared officially atheistic state of the world; spreading announcements about *closing churches as well as mosques*, and liquidation of the clergy by „transferring workers”, i.e. moving them into the labour camps.²²⁰

Though it was not a direct persecution of believers, the Slovak Desk informed that in Leipzig (German Democratic Republic) the City Council decided to liquidate the historical University Church in the centre of the city, used by both Catholics and Lutherans. „The Church should be liquidated”, according to the official statement, „*to make room for the new, socialist layout of the square*”. The commentator added

²¹⁶ AVR–SD, record from 2 January 1968.

²¹⁷ AVR–SD, record from 4 March 1968, p. 64/3.

²¹⁸ AVR–SD, record from 3 January 1968.

²¹⁹ AVR–SD, record from 13 January 1968, p. 13/5.

²²⁰ AVR–SD, record from 16 February 1968, p. 47/3.

to this an information that the local press promised to use all relevant legal tools against those who adverted on the democratization process in Czechoslovakia in this context.”²²¹

The Catholic Church in Slovakia and Slovaks abroad

The phenomenon of „socialism with a human face” was visible also at the Slovak Desk of the Vatican Radio in Rome. Freedom of travel and opening-up of the borders have caused increasing number of Slovak pilgrims in Rome, as well as an increasing number of letters from Slovak listeners. On 1 April the radio broadcaster thanked those who contacted the Slovak Desk and felt sorry for not responding everyone. The inquiries of listeners were dominated by *need for supplications of Slovak religious books and literature*.²²² Radio commentators regularly informed about the publishing activities of Slovaks abroad with focus on the publications of the Slovak Institute of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Rome, and regularly brought news about the published Slovak books and periodicals.²²³

Broadcasters warned listeners that when addressing any mail to the broadcast station in Rome, they should prefer word „radio”, which is comprehensible in several languages, over the Slovak word „rozhlas”. Also any data written on the envelope should be in Italian and not in Slovak language.²²⁴ A few days later the commentator had to ask patience from those listeners who asked for Slovak religious and prayer books, because, as it was stated, although the publishing house of the Slovak Institute of St. Cyril and St. Methodius tried to supply all demands, it took them more time to fulfill the increased number of requests.²²⁵

The Slovak Desk regularly informed about the current development and situation of the Slovak Catholics abroad with a particular focus on the Slovaks living in

²²¹ AVR – SD, record from 5 June 1968, p. 157/3.

²²² There is a separate chapter on a covert book-sending program to East Europe further on in this book; see *George Minden and his role in the CIA funded Mailing Project*.

²²³ See e.g. AVR–SD, record from 10 June 1968, p. 162/1.

²²⁴ AVR–SD, record from 1 April 1968, p. 92/4.

²²⁵ AVR–SD, record from 6 April 1968, p. 97/4.

Rome. On 7 January, the Slovak Desk notified that Slovak bishop Pavol Hnilica celebrated Midnight Mass at the Church of the Nativity (at the cave of the Lord Jesus Birth), and later he celebrated a holy mass for the Slovak missionaries in Jerusalem, which was probably the first Slovak mass in the Holy Land celebrated by the new liturgy.²²⁶

On 6 May they announced that Msgr. Štefan Náhalka, head of the Slovak Institute of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Rome, has been appointed as a prelate, as well as Msgr. Jozef Vavrovič. On that occasion the Slovak Desk brought to the listeners some short information about these Slovak personalities. The nomination of the newly appointed prelates was read by bishop Pavol Hnilica and in a presence of another Slovak personalities, like Greek-Catholic bishop Michal Rusnák or Stefan B. Roman, a Slovak businessman and industrialist from Canada.²²⁷

The Slovak Desk paid special attention to significant anniversaries that influenced religious and social life of Slovaks. In May it was the 5th anniversary of the audience of Slovak delegation (members were Slovaks abroad) by Pope John XXIII in 1963. This audience took place on the occasion of the 1100 anniversary of the missionaries of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and their arrival to Great Moravia. During the audience John XXIII sanctified the corner-stone of the Slovak Institute of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Rome, which was an „*unforgettable and historical event*“. At the same time, John XXIII signed an Apostolic letter for the bishops of Slavic nations to commemorate the arrival of the missionaries to Great Moravia.²²⁸

Another important event was the 25th anniversary of Eduard Nécsey's bishop ordination on 15 May. The radio broadcaster read out the letter of the Holy Father Paul VI and the speech of bishop Pavol Hnilica. He pointed out that in was not an easy task to be a bishop in recent times „*and we don't want to deal in with harassment, isolation or threats*“. The commentary also included some important information about the life of Nécsey.²²⁹ In the following days, unfortunately, some remarks popped up regarding bishop Nécsey's deteriorating health condition. The Pope later

²²⁶ AVR–SD, record from 7 January 1968, p. 5.

²²⁷ AVR–SD, record from 6 May 1968, p. 127/1.

²²⁸ AVR–SD, record from 13 May 1968, p. 134/1.

²²⁹ AVR–SD, record from 15 May 1968, p. 136.

sent his special Apostolic blessing²³⁰, and Nécsey was appointed an archbishop. Unfortunately, on 20 June the commentator must have informed the radio audience about the death of archbishop Nécsey, one of the most important Slovak bishops of his times. On the following day the program of the Slovak Desk was dedicated to the archbishop and all national desks of the Vatican Radio brought information about his life and death.²³¹

The Slovak Desk regularly informed about the religious life in Slovakia and about the most important events. At the beginning of June they notified the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Sorrows in Šaštín with remarks that the „*Slovak Catholics will express gratitude to their patron for protection in difficult times of Church and will ask for the help in the future*”.²³² They informed about the pilgrimage in Mariánska Hora at Levoča on 6–7 July in a similar sense, bringing some information about the famous history of this significant pilgrimage.²³³

On 18 April, a group of Slovak Catholic priests in Rome arranged some meetings and discussions on the situation of religion in Czechoslovakia. They prepared a document called *Reflection of the Slovak Catholic Public*, and the content of the document was broadcasted by the Slovak Desk.²³⁴ The *Reflection* stated that approximately one third of the Slovak nation lived abroad, and several Slovaks acquired influential positions in their respective countries, including representatives of the Catholic Church. In that respect, *Reflection* mentioned Slovak bishops and especially the Slovak Institute of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Rome. *Reflection* emphasized that Slovaks abroad tried to help their homeland and they deserved respect. In its second part, *Reflection* endorsed the democratization process in Czechoslovakia, especially the „*reform attempts of the Slovak clergy in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council*.” In addition, *Reflection* asked for respect for a free development of religious life, rectification of injustices, Christian dialogue and free exchange of religious and cultural values between Slovaks at homeland and abroad.²³⁵

²³⁰ AVR–SD, record from 18 May 1968, p. 137/5.

²³¹ AVR–SD, record from 21 June 1968, p. 173/4.

²³² AVR–SD, record from 1 June 1968, p. 158/3.

²³³ AVR–SD, record from 6 July 1968, p. 188/3.

²³⁴ AVR–SD, record from 18 April 1968, p. 109/5.

²³⁵ AVR–SD, record from 6 May 1968, p. 127/2.

On 12 May the Slovak Desk informed about the speech of the Slovak Greek Catholic bishop in Canada, Michal Rusnák, accompanied by information about the situation of the Greek-Catholic church in Slovakia in form of questions and answers. In the framework of the questions, the commentator discussed some differences between the Greek-Catholics, Roman-Catholics and Orthodox, the genesis of the mutual relationship and situation of the Greek-Catholics in the times of their liquidation and the following persecutions.²³⁶

During the 1968 and the democratization, the Slovak Desk also brought information about the sufferings of the Catholic Church in Slovakia in its recent history, especially in the 1950s. The number of priests in Slovakia, which went down drastically in comparison with the numbers in 1948, testified clearly about the impact of these persecutions on the church. As to the numbers, there were 2,465 priests in 1948, compared to 1,210 in 1968. The commentator urged rehabilitation of about 1,500 priests and monks and allowing church education as a solution for the situation.²³⁷ At the end of July and beginning of August, the Slovak Desk brought detailed information about the persecuted bishops, Ján Vojtaššák and Pavol Gojdič. In Vojtaššák's case, the radio report focused on his activities for the Church and the Slovak nation during the difficult times of communism and magyarization at the beginning of the 20th century.²³⁸ The life and the personality of bishop Gojdič were shown through his imprisonment.²³⁹

Democratization in Czechoslovakia and Slovak Desk of Radio Vaticana

The program structure of the Slovak Desk was focused mostly on religious issues, but it also reflected some social and political issues regarding Slovakia during 1968. The focus was especially on the *religious freedoms*, which were considered as a key component of the general democratization process of „socialism with a human face”.

²³⁶ AVR–SD, record from 12 May 1968, p. 133/1.

²³⁷ AVR–SD, record from 11 May 1968, p. 132/3.

²³⁸ AVR–SD, record from 2 August 1968, pp. 215/1-215/3.

²³⁹ AVR–SD, record from 26 July 1968, p. 208/2.

The first information about the democratization in Czechoslovakia were broadcasted on 16 March. It was a review of a statement issued by the *Office for Church Issues*, which claimed that priests persecuted in the period of Stalinism had the right for rehabilitation and reinstatement into the pastoral activities. The commentator emphasized that this was important especially for the Catholics, who did not seek for revenge, but still could not forget that 'harsh period'. Some news mentioned the names of persecuted and imprisoned bishops of Pavol Gojdič, Ján Vojtaššák, and Michal Buzalka, and the radio commentaries expressed a hope that „*such open and authoritative confession will result in concrete actions, that will heal deep wounds suffered by the Church and Justice, as well as it will pave the way to new relationship between the Catholic Church and the Czechoslovak Republic.*”²⁴⁰

As the democratization process in Czechoslovakia heated up, it drew increasing attention by the world media including the Vatican Radio. In the News on March 19, the Slovak Desk informed that *Western media outlets drew great attention to the events in Czechoslovakia*, and they received satisfactory comments from Czechoslovak officials, who promised more freedom and justice also for the religion, clergy and monks.²⁴¹ Several day later the Slovak Desk pointed out to the persecution against the Church in the 1950s, including orchestrated trials against bishops, liquidation of religious orders, interruption of the contacts with the Pope and persecution of believers.²⁴² The Slovak Desk also informed about the demission of the head of Catholic Clergy Peace Movement,²⁴³ which was in fact a clergy organization that collaborated with the regime in the 50s and 60s. Some information appeared about an interview with Cardinal František Tomášek, in which he claimed that restoration of the religious freedom would help the democratization process. The next day the commentator read parts from Tomášek's letter about the persecutions of the church and believers in the 50s, and the radio expressed its hope for improving situation in the close future and called for a general respect for religious rights.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ AVR–SD, record from 16 March 1968, p. 76/2a.

²⁴¹ AVR–SD, record from 19 March 1968, p. 79/3.

²⁴² AVR–SD, record from 22 March 1968, p. 82/2.

²⁴³ AVR–SD, record from 22 March 1968, p. 82/3.

Such information were a clear sign that the situation is changing, and more positive news would follow. On 5 April the Slovak Desk quoted a letter from an Eastern-Slovakia based newspaper, in which the author highlighted his/her hopes that the new regime would rectify grievances and injustices of the previous era. The author was concerned that nobody was speaking about persecutions committed in Eastern Slovakia due to the violation of religious freedom, especially liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church and its forced transition into the Orthodoxy. Greek-Catholic priests asked for unveiling the truth about their liquidation in the 1950s, to examine the legality of the show trial against bishops Pavol Gojdič and Vasil' Hopko as well as to restoration of the Greek-Catholic Church including their full rehabilitation. The radio commentator expressed the hope that in such cases „activities will follow the words”.²⁴⁵ This letter and the demands of the Slovak Greek-Catholics were broadcasted by all national desks of the Vatican Radio worldwide.²⁴⁶

On 10 April the Slovak Desk brought an interview with Erika Kadlecová, the newly appointed head of the Office for Religious Issues in Czechoslovakia. She claimed that the poor state of relationship between the state and the believers was caused by the misuse of power in recent times. Injustice and religious oppression must be eliminated and the rehabilitation of victims, especially of the highest church officials, must take place. The commentator also informed about the inquiry of prohibited monks for rehabilitation and restoration. The radio promised to keep its eye on this topic, and expressed their hope that the relationship of state and church in Czechoslovakia would settle on an equitable basis.²⁴⁷

On 19 April the Slovak Desk brought interesting information about the article of Eduard Nécsey, bishop of the Diocese of Nitra, in *Kultúrny život*²⁴⁸, titled

²⁴⁴ AVR–SD, record from 25 March 1968, p. 85/2. In general we should keep in mind the general attitude of the Holy See to the democratization process. The Holy See observed democratization with cautious optimism and preferred the careful approach. See HRABOVEC 2016: 92-94.

²⁴⁵ AVR–SD, record from 5 April 1968, p. 96/1.

²⁴⁶ AVR–SD, record from 6 April 1968, p. 97/2.

²⁴⁷ AVR–SD, record from 10 April 1968, p. 100/4.

²⁴⁸ *Kultúrny život* (Cultural Life) was the main tribute of the democratization in Slovakia during the 1960s and the most prestigious journal at that time.

Catholics and Nowadays. Nécsey called for a follow-up of a friendly dialogue and recalled some injustices from the recent years. Most importantly, he put forward the most urgent demand of the Catholic Church: to allow the Holy See to occupy vacant bishop offices; to allow contacts between Czechoslovak bishops and the Holy See; to recognize the right of the Church to educate youth; to retrieve injustices caused to Greek-Catholics and monks; to ensure religious education and freedom for St. Adalbert Association; to broadcast religious programs in radio and television and to remove discrimination of believers in public life.²⁴⁹ Later in April, the Slovak Desk broadcasted intercession of some Slovak bishops, in which they called for forgiveness to those who have caused suffering to believers.²⁵⁰ It was clear from these reports that the situation in Czechoslovakia became more dramatic, and that the democratization process opened up the public space for rectifying injustices of recent past. In that sense, the Slovak Desk gave special attention to the establishment of Action for (Vatican) Council Renewal, including its demands.²⁵¹ Later they informed about the assemblies in Bratislava and Velehrad.

During April, bishops Tomášek and Ambróz Lazík arrived to Rome, which drawn great attention of the media. The Slovak Desk noted that it was the first official visit of Czechoslovak bishops „after recent political changes”. Both of them expressed their joy over the changes in the attitude of relationship between the state and the Catholic Church, and also their hope that the Church Laws from 1949 would be revised and the Greek-Catholic church would be restored.²⁵² On 2 May, there was a private audience scheduled for bishops Tomášek and Lazík with the Pope. The Slovak Desk reported about this „joyful news”, and the next day the Pope welcomed Slovak bishop Pavol Hnilica on a private audience as well.²⁵³ On 4 May the Slovak Desk brought an interview with bishop Ambróz Lazík who came to Rome for the session of the Liturgical Council and who described his audience at the Pope as an „unforgettable” event, during which the Pope „expressed his great joy over the favourable developments of church issues and the solution of important matters

²⁴⁹ AVR–SD, record from 19 April 1968, p. 110/2.

²⁵⁰ AVR–SD, record from 26 April 1968, p. 117/2.

²⁵¹ AVR–SD, record from 18 May 1968, p. 139/1.

²⁵² AVR–SD, record from 20 April 1968, p. 111/4.

²⁵³ AVR–SD, record from 3 May 1968, p. 124/1.

of the religious life.”²⁵⁴ Lazík repeated the words of the Pope addressed to the Slovak pilgrims in Rome: „*You are aware of our interest, and how we follow up the events in your homeland, and that we are proud on your fidelity to Faith and the Catholic Church.*” The Pope emphasized his prayer for Czechoslovakia and wished good luck in peace to all people.²⁵⁵

In the late-spring and early-summer of 1968, the democratization process accelerated. The Catholic Church in Slovakia became an integral part of this process, tried to solve previous injustices and called for full religious freedom. This process is clearly visible on the Slovak Desk of the Vatican Radio. On 27 May they brought a report titled *Religious Renewal in the frame of Democratization Process in our Country*, in which they referred to the role of the religious freedom within democratization. This report was based on the TV appearance of Archbishop Nécsey as well as on the program statement of new Czechoslovak government. They quoted Nécsey's opinion:

*„It is our demand that our new constitution, to be drawn up in the foreseeable future, should clearly and specifically guarantee the ensuring of religious freedom [...] For the Church it requires the freedom to manage their own affaires under the constitution and church laws, the right of Church for education of students, the religious orders, religious education etc. This requires the appropriate press and the right to use radio and television, because these media are property of all citizens, including believers. Therefore we call upon a new constitution [...] which clearly expresses the right of the Church to the full religious freedom, not only the freedom of confession.”*²⁵⁶ Commentaries could rightly say that „the words of Archbishop implicitly showed the change for better in understanding and practise of religious freedom [...] We can register steps for better by each week.” The report also mentioned news about the restoration of the St. Abalbert Association activities.

On 15 June the Slovak Desk informed about the Czechoslovak government decree – by which the government officially approved the restoration of the Greek-Catholic Church – including the following brief statement: „*The news fulfilled us*

²⁵⁴ AVR–SD, record from 4 May 1968, p. 125/1.

²⁵⁵ AVR–SD, record from 4 May 1968, p. 125/2.

²⁵⁶ AVR–SD, record from 27 May 1968, p. 148/1.

with joy and they are the proof of the honesty of the democratization process running in Czechoslovakia."²⁵⁷ We can consider this moment as a peak of the democratization process and its reflection in the broadcasting of the Slovak Desk.

The Desk welcomed the fact that „*the Catholic News were after a nearly 20-years-long break really catholic once again.*”²⁵⁸ From March 1968, the Slovak Desk used Catholic News (*Katolícké noviny*) as a source of the broadcasted information. On 18 July a report was broadcast about the article in the *Catholic News* stating that believers expected that as soon as ‘deformations in civic life’ were corrected, so shall be with the religious life too. At the same time, however, an author pointed out that up to that day almost nothing from the demands of the Catholic Church has been realised in Slovakia.²⁵⁹

The occupation of the country on 21 August 1968 was given an outstanding attention at the Desk. Paul VI scheduled his way into the 39th Eucharistic Congress in Bogota, Columbia on 22–24 August, and was supposed to leave Rome in the early hours of 22 August. On the morning of 21 August, during a General Audience in Castel Gandolfo, the Pope welcomed pilgrims from Czechoslovakia by the following words: „*We hear [...] that difficult events rolled into your country, into Czechoslovakia and are accompanied by the violence. This arouses fear in our hearts connected with those which filling whole nation and outraged the world public opinion. We hope that we will be able to avoid violent and bloody collisions and that the human dignity and freedom of people will not be violated. We wish that the rationality prevails over any motive for fight and to provide space for the civilized coexistence of the fraternal nations.*”²⁶⁰ The Pope also clearly spoke about the occupation of Czechoslovakia and emphatically protested against the violation of freedom and dignity of the peoples of Czechoslovakia.

The Pope dealt with the situation in Czechoslovakia also before his departure to Bogota during his speech at the airport, where he among others said: „*We would have to renounce this journey if we knew that our presence and our action could serve the aim of hindering of the evils that annoy such a dear people and to stave off the terrible*

²⁵⁷ AVR–SD, record from 15 June 1968, p. 167/3.

²⁵⁸ AVR–SD, record from 27 May 1968, p. 148/2.

²⁵⁹ AVR–SD, record from 18 July 1968, p. 200/1.

²⁶⁰ AVR–SD, record from 21 August 1968, p. 234/1a.

consequences that can be predicted. Such violation of good relations among nations and the principles that mankind has achieved during his history caused us the deep grief [...] We bear in our heart these bitter thoughts, but above them is still the light of the human and Christian hope, that there will be a fair and peaceful way to resolve this regrettable conflict."²⁶¹ This speech of the Pope was broadcasted in Slovak translation.

Conclusion

This study, which analyses the situation in Czechoslovakia, and their reflection in the broadcasting of the Slovak desk of the Vatican Radio, is not a comprehensive study. It is rather a case study about how one of the Western radio stations considered and reflected year 1968, the democratization process, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in its media materials.

One of our main findings is that *we could not find any news about the hectic political situation in the country*, such as the historically most crucial events like appointing Alexander Dubček (or even information about his personality); appointing of the new government; the presidential election; adoption of the Action Programme; news on the „letter of invitation”; the dramatic meetings with the representatives of the Soviet Union and another Varsaw Pact countries; etc. It's quite clear from this research that the Vatican Radio was different from those political radio stations, such as the *Voice of America* or the *Radio Free Europe*, which dealt with explicit political issues and were indeed in the front line of the Cold War.

The Vatican Radio focused on the situation of Catholics worldwide, and also broadcasted into the communist countries, where the Catholics (and also another churches and believers) were persecuted. It provided important information for the people behind the Iron Curtain in general, and for a highly religious Slovakia in particular. But at the same time we can find many useful information about the development of the famous year 1968, from the perspective of the Catholics in Rome – which is a view that almost nobody has deal with so far. Such a view shows some

²⁶¹ AVR–SD, record from 22 August 1968, p. 235/2.

limitation of the democratization process and it underlines the difference between *democracy* and the *democratization process*.

* * * **Archival & Newspaper Sources** * * *

Archive of the *Slovak Desk of Radio Vaticana*, Rome (Vatican Radio Slovak Desk, abbr. AVR–SD)

Propaganda and Dissent: The American War in Vietnam, Hungary, and the Narrative of Dissent

by Karl P. Benziger



The American War in Vietnam intensified under President John F. Kennedy and ultimately led to a dramatic escalation of the American effort under Lyndon B. Johnson. Between 1963 and January 1966 American troop levels rose from 16,300 to over 184,000, with more yet to follow. Driven by a policy of containment and a genuine fear that communism would only spread further into the rest of resource rich Southeast Asia, the United States risked its prestige as leader of the free world to thwart the „red tide.” Domestic dissent intensified in correspondence with the American escalation.

By January 1966, the new left exemplified by organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), had framed a narrative of dissent in the context of the global non-aligned movement, branding American policy towards Vietnam as yet another form of neo-colonialism. This was the same narrative utilized for propaganda by Movements of National Liberation who more often than not were supported by the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and their suzerains. This fact led many within the American government to suspect that new left organizations had been infiltrated by their communist nemeses, and in this light consigned their critique of the war to a naïve flirtation with the enemy or worse.

The People's Republic of Hungary party organs, such as the journal *Társadalmi Szemle* and the newspaper *Népszabadság*, provide us with an unflattering official interpretation of the war by the government, reporting not only on American foreign

policy in Vietnam, but domestic dissent inside the United States. This debate charged that those in dissent were in collusion with the enemy and was responsible for breaking up the liberal Cold War consensus that had unfailingly supported American foreign policy. This served to sow deep divisions within the American polity. An investigation of the Hungarian interpretation of Vietnam in contrast to new left dissent leads us into the heart of these red scare politics that continued to resonate with many Americans on the left and the right in the mid nineteen sixties, and raises important questions for students studying this highly contested chapter of history about the role propaganda played in the Cold War.

In what ways does Hungarian reporting confirm suspicions of communist infiltration feared by those within the United States government? How did the Hungarian interpretation of the American War in Vietnam accord with that of the new left, in what ways do they differ? How do we separate propaganda from genuine dissent?

Cold War and Indochina

The early Cold War separated the world into an ideological dichotomy that posed the forces of freedom and opportunity led by the United States against the authoritarian politics of Joseph Stalin. According to the Americans the world could once again be plunged into depression and cataclysmic destruction should Stalin prevail. President Harry Truman's Doctrine of March 1947 helped mobilize Americans from the Democratic and Republican parties to form a Cold War consensus in which matters of American security enjoyed broad support. Containing communism would remain, with variation, the central goal of American foreign policy until the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. At the same time, it undergirded red scare politics domestically that were used to subdue criticism of American foreign policy. The Smith Act of 1940 that was followed by Truman's loyalty review program, 1947 provided vehicles for agencies such as the House Un-American Affairs Committee to search for the enemy within. Domestic issues such as civil rights were subordinated to the sidelines and dissent in the realm of foreign policy was viewed with suspicion and the possibility of severe sanction.

The ascension of the Stalinists in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1948 seemed to confirm the worst of the American's fears about Stalin's expansionist intentions,

and events in Asia soon assured Americans that the worse was yet to come. The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 followed by the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 demonstrated communism's ability to spread across the globe if left unchecked. It is no wonder then that the French, bogged down in their bid to reestablish hegemony in their colony of Indochina since the ending of World War II, were able to draw the United States into the conflict, setting decolonization concerns aside in order to bolster an ally critical to the newly established North Atlantic Treaty Organization and containing communism in Southeast Asia. Between 1950 and 1954 the United States would support the French effort in Indochina to the tune of 2.6 billion dollars. (LAWRENCE 2005: 272-273, 276-277; HERRING 1996: 44)

The Vietnamese were led by Ho Chi Minh, a national communist whose charismatic personality and patriotism gained him a wide following. Dominated by the communist party the Vietminh was a coalition of political and religious factions dedicated to national liberation. Though Stalin recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), he was largely disinterested in the Vietminh struggle with the French. He preferred instead to let the Chinese directly aid the freedom struggle. It was only after the death of Stalin in 1953 and the ascension of Nikita Khrushchev that Soviet policy towards the Vietminh improved. (PIKE 1987: 34-35, 37-40)

At the same time the Americans intensified their efforts to fortify the French effort; the French, meanwhile, had become increasingly frustrated with what they called the „dirty war.“ According to John Prados, the number of troops needed to perform operations in the Vietnamese countryside increased over time as the intensity of fighting grew progressively sharper. Coupled to this, France had passed a law in 1950 that prohibited French conscripts from serving in Vietnam. By February 1954, 18% of the French people favored withdrawal, while 42% wanted a negotiated settlement. In this light, the French commander in Vietnam, General Henri Navarre, was given the task of creating the conditions that would provide the French with a way out of the war. (PRADOS 2007: 216-218)

Critique of American foreign policy towards Korea and Southeast Asia came from such pacifists as the Quaker American Friends Committee, and from parts of the American civil rights community. For example, W.E.B. DuBois, who had encouraged African Americans to fight against fascism during World War II in hopes of forging a peaceful world that would finally rid the world of the color line across

the globe, viewed the Cold War as a prelude to the next global conflagration. In this light the Cold War would only preserve the status quo for people of color. (PHILLIPS 2012: 158-160)

Many civil rights activists had flirted with or cooperated with the communists during the interwar years, especially during the Great Depression. The Soviet Union was notable to people of color during this time for its promotion of the universal man over enforcement of a color line. Though many were disillusioned by Stalin's authoritarian politics and alliance with the Third Reich in 1939, some like actor and singer *Paul Robeson* overlooked these politics given the unending brutality of segregationist politics in the United States.

Robeson actively campaigned for world peace after World War II and expressed these sentiments at a Paris Peace Conference in 1949, claiming that African Americans would never fight in a war against the Soviet Union. He was excoriated in the press by venerable institutions such as the National Urban League. (GODONOO 2008: 48-66; GREENBERG 1949: 15) Matters were made worse when he left a world tour to lend support to members of the American Communist Party being prosecuted under the Smith Act. The prosecution of the Communist 11 (eleven leaders of the American Communist Party) in 1949 included charges that they were actively engaged in promoting the overthrow of the United States „sometime in the future.“ Robeson was not allowed to testify and the charges were sustained in a 1951 Supreme Court appeal, and ten of the eleven were sentenced to five years in prison and given \$10,000 fines. (FONER 1998: 217, 256; PORTER 1949: 18, *New York Times* 2 May 1950: 8) In spite of the explicit threat resulting from the trial, Robeson only intensified his critique of American foreign policy which would ultimately result in his being blacklisted and losing his passport.

Cutting through the heated rhetoric of the Eisenhower administration's Cold War posturing and intensive support of the French in 1953, Robeson exclaimed:

„Will dropping some bombs on Vietnamese patriots who want to be free of French domination help American Negroes reach a plane of equality with their fellow white citizens? [...] Mr. Eisenhower or Senator McCarthy would have us believe that this is necessary to 'save' the so called 'free world' from 'communism.' But the man who keeps that Negro share – cropper for more than a few hundred dollars a year is not a communist – it's the landlord [...] the man who prevents his son from attending school is not a communist – it's Governor Talmadge or Governor Byrnes

[...] We must not approve the squandering of billions of American tax payers money on the dirty war in Indochina [...] We must insist that the French [...] leave the Vietnamese to govern themselves." (FONER 1978: 367)

Journalist William Worthy followed hard on Robeson's critique in the February 1954 edition of *The Crisis*. After reviewing the history of America's support for the French effort in Vietnam he asked, "What are we going to do about all this?" Acutely aware of the impact red scare politics was having on foreign policy, he launched into an attack on liberal America's, "conspiracy of silence about not only the internal slavery to which our witch hunters are leading us step by step; but also slavery's external counterpart: namely, [the] counter-revolutionary direction of American policies among darker peoples." He concluded: "When and how in this managed society of 'top secrets' and public relations handouts does a citizen brace his feet and ask why?" (WORTHY 1954: 83)

To further complicate American foreign policy in Vietnam the Soviet Union, England, and France agreed to bring Indochina to the table at Geneva. General Henri Navarre's strategy to create the opportune conditions for a pullout would now be put to the test. Navarre planned to draw the Viet Minh into a set piece battle by placing a major military base over an important supply route to Laos at *Dien Bien Phu*. Viet Minh General Vo Giap obliged and attacked the garrison on 13 March, 1954 after enveloping the base with artillery. The ability of the Viet Minh to successfully besiege the French took them by surprise, and as the odds turned against them a crisis soon developed. The Eisenhower administration contemplated military intervention and attempted to sell the idea to the American public. Wary U.S. Senators argued for a multilateral approach to the problem, but historian John Prados claims that Eisenhower continued to consider unilateral action even after the Geneva Conference started. (PRADOS 2009: 29; MORRIS 1954: 1-2)

However, as historian Bruce Franklin has pointed out, the American public disfavored intervention in Vietnam by a margin of 68% by mid-May. According to Franklin, American distaste for colonialism (at least temporarily) trumped the American appetite to contain communism. (FRANKLIN 2000: 51-52) But the public debate never considered connecting America's seeming intransigent problem with race to the plight of the Vietnamese. In this way the critique served up by Worthy and Robeson that connected the civil rights struggle within the neo-colonial critique seemed radical and out of step with mainstream American politics.

America Stays the Course

The collapse of the French at Dien Bien Phu on 7 May, 1954 provided the Viet Minh with a stunning victory and only intensified the French people's desire to leave. The terms formulated at the Geneva Conference provided the French with a way out, but at the same time sowed the seeds for continuing discord by temporarily dividing Vietnam at the 17th parallel and leaving the French backed government in place south of the line until an election could decide Vietnam's fate in 1956.

Unwilling to accept communist domination of Vietnam, the United States decided to take the reins in Vietnam and began by placing Ngo Dinh Diem in power. The United States believed Diem would provide a realistic counter to Ho Chi Minh. In addition, the United States also created the Southeast Asia Treaty (SEATO) that would allow them to circumvent the Geneva Accords. (McMAHON 1999: 63-68, 95-96, 159) In variance with Geneva's plan to neutralize the former French territories, SEATO offered assistance and protection against (communist) aggression for Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam south of the 17th Parallel. This new policy had to be sold to the American people, and this included stifling dissent. John Prados asserts that the counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) that we associate with the 1960's and 70's actually began under Eisenhower; and as Franklin points out that radical dissenters with access to big audiences (like P. Robeson) were targeted. (PRADOS 2009: 56; FRANKLIN 2000: 53)

The fear of the enemy within seemed to be confirmed by Soviet posturing. *Társadalmi Szemle*, the Communist Party organ for the Hungarian Worker's Party (MSZP), framed the settlement as a victory for Soviet foreign policy. The ensuing critique seemed consonant with the neo-colonial critique being offered by American notables such as Robeson and Worthy. *Társadalmi Szemle* asserted that the United States' imperialist policies had been defeated in Geneva. The conference demonstrated the differences in historic changes in Asia and the plans of the American imperialists. Independence movements, such as the Vietminh, had thwarted American designs. Instead of the People's Republic of China being isolated at the conference, it had been the Americans who were isolated at the conference. (GÖMÖRI 1954: 173-174, 177; KENYERES 1954: 103-104, 108-109, 111-113, 115)

Diem's staying power as leader of the Republic of Vietnam south of the 17th Parallel was premised on a brutal patron-client system supported by the United

States. By November 1955 it was clear that Diem had no intention of negotiating with Ho Chi Minh. József Mikolai noted that the demarcation line between north and south was meant to be temporary until national elections could be held in 1956. By encouraging South Vietnam to accept the protection offered by the SEATO treaty, the United States was violating the principle of neutrality enshrined in the Geneva Accords. The national elections promised in the Accords would never take place and Diem staged a referendum in which he won 98.2% of the vote. (MIKOLAI 1955: 98-99; JACOBS 2006: 85-86) For Mikolai, American intentions were clearly at odds not only with the peace agreement established at Geneva, but the principals of peaceful co-existence as laid out in New Delhi. (MIKOLAI 1955: 100-103) These principals were enshrined at the Afro Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia on 18 April, 1955. The American novelist Richard Wright claimed that this sentiment stemmed from their shared „colonial experience, subjection, and color consciousness.” (WRIGHT 1994: 176) In this light, the United States actions in Vietnam only served to isolate it from the international community.

According to historian Robert K. Brigham, Diem was initially successful in his campaign against the communists, but continued pressure within the communist party from cadres in the south led to the establishment of the *National Liberation Front* (NLF) on 19 December, 1960. Utilizing a popular front strategy that included non-communists, they would attempt to separate the people from the regime based on the strategy of People's Warfare that combined guerilla tactics with education and nation building. (BRIGHAM 1999: 6-12) Diem lacked the charisma of the Communist Party's founder and President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, and his policies seemed only to further distance him from many of the South Vietnamese. For example, Diem, a devout Roman Catholic, increased the political power of Catholics and the Church through patronage at the expense of Buddhists, who represented 80% of the population. Diem's Decree No. 10 declared Buddhism an association rather than a religion. Buddhists believed in democratic systems as a way of expressing popular will and as a way to protest widespread corruption they found throughout the country. Though some attempts were made at land reform the peasants of rural Vietnam continued to suffer exploitation at the hands of village and district officials connected to the Diem regime. The ensuing disaffection created fertile ground for NLF programs that created shadow governments willing to confront the regime. (TOPMILLER 2002: 2, 8; JACOBS 2006: 99-100, 116, 120-121)

Escalation

By 1961 American foreign policy in Vietnam was veering towards a crisis just as the NLF successfully began unfolding their strategy, leaving the newly elected administration under John F. Kennedy to find a resolution. Convinced that the insurrection in the south was directed from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, American policy innovations were largely centered on thwarting northern aggression with little understanding of the organic nature of the NLF. The insurrection had to be stymied before real nation building could begin. In spite of recommendations for the insertion of American combat forces, the administration chose a middle path that significantly bolstered the Army of South Vietnam with weapons that included napalm and defoliants and the insertion of over 14,000 advisors who often times engaged directly in combat operations. (PRESTON 2006: 76-78, 92-93, 101-102; HERRING 1996: 94-96) Initially, the innovation seemed to be working, but all too soon the escalation of the American effort seemed to come undone.

1963 began inauspiciously for the Americans in the hamlet of Ap Bac where American advisors had led ARVYN troops in a bid to destroy an NLF battalion. Though the ARVYN were able to claim the field the next morning, the NLF had pinned down the ARVYN forces for the entire day, destroyed five helicopters, killed 61 and wounded 100 at the cost of 3 of its own. The NLF battalion would return to fight again in the same locality. The Americans had lost three advisors and most importantly many of the troops they had trained refused to fight. This created headline news in the United States. The military claimed a victory given the fact that the ARVYN had seized their objective while news outlets such as the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Washington Post* pointed out the problems in securing such a victory. (KAISER 2002: 180-184, 224-225; HAMMOND 1998: 8-9; HERRING 1996: 97-98)

Counterinsurgency proved difficult for the Americans as exemplified by the Strategic Hamlets program. Rural hamlets were fortified, or in many cases whole villages would be relocated to newly constructed fortified villages in a bid to keep the NLF separated from the villagers and to gradually restore government control in the countryside where the NLF exerted the most influence. The strategy backfired as villagers were loathe to leave their homes and ancestral shrines behind. The promise of educational opportunities and a way out of poverty remained elusive for most peasants. Finally, the NLF easily infiltrated the hamlets and their promise to let vil-

lagers return home found a receptive audience. (PRESTON 2006: 108-109; JACOBS 2006: 125-127)

Perhaps nothing exemplified the Diem regime's distance from the Vietnamese more than the Buddhist Crisis that unfolded on 8 May, 1963. Diem had forbidden the display of religious flags by the Buddhists, and a student rally on that day in the city of Hue staged in defiance of the regime's edict was fired upon by security forces leaving eight dead, thus setting off countrywide protests against the regime that lasted into the fall and revealed the magnitude of the opposition. The pathos of self-sacrifice demonstrated by multiple self-immolations coupled by pictures of the savage attempts by the state to quell the disorder disgusted many Americans who viewed the Diem's reaction as religious persecution. (JACOBS 2006: 144-149; TOPMILLER 2002: 2-3) It also served to foster dissent with American foreign policy. The Student Peace Union (SPU) had critiqued United States Southeast Asian policy since its founding in 1959 and by 1963 was demanding that American policy towards Vietnam adhere to the Geneva Accords.²⁶² On 16 May, 1963 SPU sponsored a small, but telling anti-war demonstration in New York City that included 12 demonstrators who burned their draft cards.²⁶³ The callousness that the Diem family displayed towards the Buddhists during the Buddhist Crisis only amplified the crisis of legitimacy that undermined American policy. Later that year, when Tran Le Xuan, also known as Madame Nhu who was Diem's sister in law, visited New York City she was met with SPU signs that read „No Nhus is Good News” in front of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and pelted with eggs.²⁶⁴

American dissatisfaction with Diem had festered for years and the Buddhist Crisis provided an opportunity to initiate political change that would stabilize Vietnam and American interests in the region. Unfortunately the coup against the Diem family had the unintended consequence of sending the country into chaos and after the death of Kennedy in November 1963 Lyndon Johnson was left with the difficult choice of negotiating with the NLF or further deepening American commitment. (KAISER 2002: 213-247; BERMAN 1982: 28-30) Movement towards a more

²⁶² *Tamiment* (hereafter TAM), Resolution on Vietnam, SPU National Convention, 1963.

²⁶³ TAM, SPU News Notes 7, May 1963.

²⁶⁴ TAM, Bulletin, November 1963.

robust American escalation built throughout 1964 and Johnson was advised to seek a congressional resolution that would allow the administration to act selectively to assuage the crisis. In a memo to the President on 25 May, 1964 the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy, recommended military escalation backed by a congressional resolution that had already been prepared by the State Department. Fully aware of the potential volatility of such a resolution Bundy recommended that the administration wait until after the Republican Convention before introducing such a measure.²⁶⁵ (PRESTON 2006: 141-149; BERMAN 1982: 32)

1964 was a presidential election year that would pit Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater against Johnson. Escalation, however, ignored the more fundamental problem of political legitimacy in Vietnam both for the Americans and more importantly for South Vietnam's current president Nguyen Khanh. The desperateness of the situation is revealed in a memo to the president on 4 June, 1964 from Carl Rowan, Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in which he suggested that Khanh give regular „fireside chats“ to the people of Vietnam emphasizing „what the government is doing to help Vietnam instead of what Khanh the individual is doing..“ The „fireside chats“ and news would be heard on US distributed transistor radios. In an interesting return to the Tom Dooley stories following the Geneva Accords, Rowan advised that information officers „watch alertly for Viet Cong atrocities [for example], if a VC murdered a Vietnamese teaching school [...] the story could be used to [...] arouse contempt for the Viet Cong“²⁶⁶. (JACOBS 2006: 46-48; PRYOR 1956: 27)

Tom Dooley stories enshrined in the book and later movie entitled *Deliver us from Evil* was part of a *propaganda campaign* designed to spread terror among the North Vietnamese and encourage them to abandon the North for the South after the settlement at Geneva in 1954.

Because of the American escalation, the Soviet Union's interest in Vietnam intensified in the mid nineteen sixties. The Soviet's would continue to work on Soviet-American cooperation, but at the same time would provide their „fraternal“

²⁶⁵ Draft Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to the President, Foreign Relations of the United States; hereafter FRUS.

²⁶⁶ Memorandum from the Director of the USIA to the President, FRUS.

partner the DRV with the aid it needed to conduct war against the Americans. (GAIDUK 1996: 17-21) Not surprisingly a biting critique of United States foreign policy by Miklos Gardos appeared in *Társadalmi Szemle* in November 1964, utilizing interviews with Southeast Asian expert Professor Bernard Fall from Howard University as a prop. Fall had been investigated by the FBI during the Kennedy administration because of his critique of American foreign policy in Vietnam. His assessments, based on in-country field work, were nevertheless persuasive to many within the military, especially at Fort Bragg, where American Special Forces refined tactics in counter insurgency. The Kennedys ultimately called off their surveillance. (GARDOS 1964: 94)

Gardos began his story with the question: „What is the truth about the war that the U.S. is going to lose?” Fall complained that the problem of political legitimacy was evident from the outset of the Diem regime when landlords returned from Paris and the Riviera demanding their land back from the peasants of South Vietnam. Unable to pay the rent demanded by the landlords, many of the peasants then joined the Viet Cong. Fall continued, claiming that Americans didn’t know the enemy they faced such as the civic leader of the National Liberation Front (NLF) Nguyen Hu Tho, and were particularly uninterested in knowing about the ordinary peasants who had joined the Viet Cong. Fall estimated that half the population lived in areas controlled by the NLF and that in these areas land reform had begun along with work on health and education initiatives. (GARDOS 1964: 94-95, 98) According to Gardos, the regime of Nguyen Khanh was only supported by the bourgeoisie and the landlords. Peasants had lost hope and looked instead to efforts made to build (communism) as a way to alleviate the suffering caused by war. The United States hadn’t realized that the NLF had popular well trained leaders as opposed to the puppet regimes of South Vietnam. (GARDOS 2014: 95, 100)

The opportunity that the Johnson administration sought for Congressional authorization to escalate the war came on 2 August, 1964. The American destroyer Maddox was attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin by North Vietnamese patrol boats in retaliation for a clandestine raid and surveillance activities she had participated in as part of American covert operations off the coast of North Vietnam known as OPLAN 34 A. Another attack against the Maddox and a sister ship the Turner Joy was reported on August 4. Though the second attack was later found to have not taken place, the Johnson administration responded with airstrikes against North

Vietnam and Congress passed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution authorizing the President to „take all necessary measures [...] to prevent further aggression [...] including the use of armed force” to assist any SEATO member, including South Vietnam.

85% of the American population responded favorably to Johnson’s handling of the situation. (PRADOS 2009: 92-101; McMAHON 2003: 164-165) Only two United States Senators opposed the legislation. Senator Wayne Morse’ very public opposition towards American foreign policy disposition in Vietnam was used to conclude Gardos’ article. Morse had asserted that the United States did not comply with the Geneva Accords, and in this sense South Vietnam doesn’t have a government that was elected by the people. Furthermore, United States policy in Vietnam didn’t accord with the Charter of the United Nations. Utilizing Fall and Morse, both members of the elite, Gardos claimed that the United States had isolated itself from the international community and that „Americans are openly talking about a lost war”. (GARDOS 2014: 101)

The demand for neutrality found in the Geneva Accords gained wide backing in the international community and when in July 1964 the Secretary General of the United Nations *U Thant* called for another Geneva Conference to resolve the conflict he was supported by the National Liberation Front, France, The People’s Republic of China, and the Soviet Union. (BRIGHAM 1999: 34-35) *U Thant*’s call seemed to confirm Gardos’ assessment that the United States policy enjoyed little support from the international community. Seemingly in synch with hostile media, civil rights activist Malcolm X mocked the United States’ ambition to control the leaders of South Vietnam, claiming that they had rid themselves of Ngo Diem and those who followed because they wouldn’t follow the American plan for containment. „You know, when the puppet starts talking back to the puppeteer, the puppeteer is in trouble.” (KATSIAFICAS 1992: 119-120)

Dissent against America’s role in Vietnam was small, but as the American effort intensified so did the challenge to its policy. In December 1964 the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) called for a March on Washington D.C. set for 17 April, 1965. The document called for American adherence to the Geneva Accords of 1954 and questioned the legitimacy of the American backed government. According to SDS the United States had misunderstood the political nature of the war. Drawing a connection to poverty and civil rights, SDS questioned how the United States could afford to spend two million dollars a day fighting against an impoverished

people when poverty needed to be addressed at home. „What kind of America is it whose response to poverty and oppression in South Vietnam is napalm and defoliation, whose response to poverty and oppression in Mississippi is [...] silence.” (KATSIAFICAS 1992: 120-121) The SDS March was the first five figure anti-war demonstration; approximately twenty thousand people came to the American capital. Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Field Secretary Robert Paris Moses was a keynote speaker at the rally. Harkening back to the earlier critique of Paul Robeson, Moses highlighted the connection between civil rights and American foreign policy claiming: „The rationale this nation uses to justify war in Vietnam turns out to be amazingly similar to the rationale used by the white south to justify its opposition to the freedom movement. He [*the nation*] condones murder in Vietnam as he sees it as a threat to his civilization.” (MOSES 1965: 82; SMALL 2002: 26-29)

One of the great mobilizers of the antiwar movements were teach-ins held at Colleges and Universities across the United States designed to heighten campus awareness of American Foreign Policy and the history and politics of Vietnam and Southeast Asia. One of the largest was held at the University of California Berkeley campus 21-22 May, 1965 attended by approximately 30,000 people. Robert Moses reiterated the connection between the oppression in Vietnam with that wrought upon African Americans in the United States where he likened a captured „communist rebel” with an African American child „standing against a wire fence with big huge white marine with a gun in his back”. (PETRAS 1965: 1-5, 151)

Yale University Professor Staughton Lynd claimed that the United States became engulfed in a constitutional crisis when Congress handed over authority for war (through the Tonkin Gulf Resolution) to the President. Not only was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) left unrepresented, „it is now all of us who are left unrepresented.” The MFDP had been refused credentials at the Democratic Party’s National Convention in 1964. He concluded by asserting that what was needed to successfully confront America’s Vietnam policy of escalation was a „strategy of non-violent civil disobedience”. (PETRAS 1965: 154, 157) The theme of moral conscience and self-sacrifice was trumpeted by civil rights activist and comedian Dick Gregory when he claimed that he would allow himself to be drafted, but if sent off to fight would not carry a gun. Seemingly hearkening back to the self-immolations during the Buddhist Crisis in 1963 he said: „If I can give up life on the

front line for all of this wrong, I would much rather do that than kill a man.” (PETRAS 1965: 135)

SNCC field workers seemed to encapsulate the sentiments espoused at Berkeley in reaction to the death of John D. Shaw a resident of McComb County, Mississippi who had been killed on a tour of duty while in Vietnam. In a pamphlet entitled „A McComb Mississippi Protest” African Americans were encouraged to resist the draft and stand up to attempts at the federal and state level to enforce the draft law. (PHILLIPS 2012: 240-241; GRANT 1996: 415-416)

Echoing Malcolm X, Miklós Lehel wrote in *Társadalmi Szemle*, June 1965 and claimed that after the Americans had „sacrificed Diem” the situation had become worse, because they couldn’t find the right person who would support the American goals in Vietnam. The Americans hadn’t been able to keep up with the peasants. (LEHEL 1965: 65) Lehel reiterated the fact that the U.S. lacked international support, „while Great Britain, West Germany, and Italy supported Johnson [...] [their] support never exceeded words”. (LEHEL 1965: 66) The „aggressive” Johnson Doctrine, that asserted the United States’ right to act alone to maintain the „Cold War status quo”, had wider implications that could lead to superpower confrontation, a point also made by the SDS. (LEHEL 1965: 67, 69) At this point the magazine largely discounted the burgeoning antiwar movement pointing to American reporter James Reston’s *New York Times* story of March, 1965 who reported hearing no serious debate about America’s foreign policy disposition towards Vietnam. (LEHEL 1965: 67)

Interestingly, many parts of the neo-colonial critique leveled against United States foreign policy were carefully considered in secret by the elite. For example, on 8 April, 1965 North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, broadcast Hanoi’s Four Points for negotiations with the United States in a bid to end the war. Chief among the conditions was adherence to the Geneva Accords of 1954 and inclusion of the NLF program as representative of the wishes of the people of South Vietnam.

The offer to negotiate came at a time when the Johnson administration was initiating a massive escalation. There would be close to 84,000 U.S. soldiers in Vietnam by June, 1965. American policy gambled that overwhelming force would forestall Saigon’s collapse and enable the U.S. to negotiate from a point of strength, a position forcefully supported by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Secretary of

State, Dean Rusk.²⁶⁷ Undersecretary of State George Ball vigorously disagreed with this strategy, as he had in 1961 asserting that escalation could very well lead to a sustained effort in Vietnam that might strain both international and domestic support similar to the French experience. Instead, he recommended a peace plan that called for a halt to offensive operations, amnesty for NLF forces willing to lay down their arms, and general elections.²⁶⁸ (PRESTON 2006: 93-94)

The plan was received negatively in Saigon by American Ambassador Maxwell Taylor, who argued that the South Vietnamese would never accede to NLF participation in a peace settlement. The President ultimately sided with his Secretaries of Defense and State, which then led to a dramatic escalation of the war. (BERMAN 1992: 105-129) When the decision for a sustained escalation was debated in June-July 1965, Ball was even more adamant in his dissent, stating:

„No one has demonstrated that a white ground force [...] can win a guerilla war [...] No matter how many white, foreign [U.S.] troops we deploy [...] in the midst of a population that refuses cooperation [...] Once we deploy substantial numbers of troops in combat it will become a war between the U.S. and a large part of the population of South Vietnam.” (McMAHON 2003: 171-173)

Ball was not alone in making these connections. Senate Majority leader Mike Mansfield agreed with Ball's stance and reiterated Ball's 1961 warning to Kennedy privately after travelling to Vietnam on a fact finding mission in December 1962. In January 1965 he wrote to Johnson encouraging him to find a way to diplomatically neutralize Vietnam, warning that further escalation would place Johnson's Great Society programs at risk. Vice President Hubert Humphrey re-emphasized this point in a memo dated 17 February, 1965, warning that escalation and the attendant defense expenditures „would tend to shift the Administration's emphasis from its Great Society oriented programs to further military outlays; [...] It would damage the image of the President [...] and that of the United States”. In each case these internal objections were sidelined by McNamara, Rusk, and Bundy, who held fast to the Cold War rhetoric of falling dominos and American prestige.²⁶⁹ (PRES-

²⁶⁷ Memorandum from Secretary of Def. McNamara to President Johnson, 1965, FRUS.

²⁶⁸ Memorandum from the Under Secretary of State to President Johnson, 1965, FRUS.

²⁶⁹ Memorandum from Vice President Humphrey to President Johnson, 1965, FRUS.

TON 2006: 137, 181, 205-207; HERRING 1992: 102) On July 28, Johnson announced a further escalation of troops that would result in 184,000 American troops stationed in Vietnam by the end of 1965 stating: „We will stand in Vietnam.” (KAISER 2002: 443-483) The American people would learn only later about internal dissent during the Kennedy and Johnson years.

Challenging Johnson’s call for unity and asserting the need for participatory democracy in relation to foreign policy decisions, the Assembly of Un-Represented People came together 6-9 August, 1965 in Washington D.C. The assembly was a coalition that included groups such as SDS, SNCC, Student Peace Union, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and included a series of workshops, sit-ins, and a march on the Capital on the last day. A.J. Muste, a long time peace activist and organizer of the Assembly, claimed that the significance of the demonstration was that it brought together groups, „identified with action on civil rights issues with those who had concentrated on anti-war and anti-imperialist action.” Anti-war activist Staughton Lynd claimed that the Assembly demonstrated, „visible dissent [...] and helped prevent the congealing of this [...] stand together mood [*expressed by President Johnson*].” (MUSTE and LYND 1965: 26-27; SMALL 2002: 31) In fact, this demonstration clearly anchored issues of civil rights with the world wide movements of national liberation and human rights in a way that was understandable to the diverse groups present.

The dramatic escalation of the War in Vietnam was accompanied by increased international scrutiny of American foreign and domestic policy. France and much of Europe strongly favored neutrality for Vietnam, but began to echo the NLF demand for the withdrawal of American troops. (BRIGHAM 1999: 52) American policy in Vietnam made it easy for the Hungarian press to portray the United States as an imperial aggressor who was unwilling to negotiate, and at the same time utilize dissent as proof of American discontent with their government. For example, the dramatic escalation of the American presence was discussed in an interview Péter Vajda had with Dong Kuang Minh who was working in Moscow on the Soviet Afro-Asia Committee. The „barbaric” American bombing and military operations contradicted Johnson’s offer of negotiations. According to Minh, the NLF was successfully countering the American effort, claiming that in the first four months of the year they had inflicted 55,000 casualties on government (ARVYN) troops and that in the same period 21,000 had deserted. NLF resistance supported by the

South Vietnamese was only intensifying: „The ground is moving under their [*the U.S.*] feet, even in the cities.” (VAJDA P. 1965: 1)

On 30 July, 1965 *Népszabadság* reported that the NLF encouraged the American people to protest more aggressively against the war. This story was followed by coverage of the Assembly of Un-Represented People in Washington and the message of peace that they sent to the people of Vietnam along with the story of 291 people being arrested at the Capital on the final day of the demonstrations.²⁷⁰ A 12 August story asked: „Who is making money in Vietnam?”, and went on to discuss the war and the role of General Motors and Shell.²⁷¹ Already wary of non-aligned politics, articles such as these and overtures from the NLF only increased the suspicions by the Administration and many Americans that the politics rolled out by groups such as SNCC and SDS were communist inspired. (JEFFREY-JONES 1999: 66)

On 4 August, 1965 members of the House Un-American Affairs Committee (HUAC) vigorously condemned the upcoming Assembly of the Un-Represented People claiming that it encouraged a deliberate refusal to „save Vietnam from communist enslavement.” The members of the committee were deeply concerned about draft resistance and concluded that the Assembly was clearly a „communist front group” intent on promoting „civil unrest and disobedience.” Finally, they worried that the Assembly would promote „racial agitation” and „foster support for the destruction of [HUAC]”.²⁷²

By August 1965 SDS began collecting proposals for an anti-draft program which included a conscientious objector status for those opposing the war. The International Days of Protest 15-16 October in Jakarta, Indonesia featured a speaker from the Union of Students for the Liberation of Vietnam (USLV). This protest only fueled suspicions harbored by HUAC and the FBI regarding communist infiltration or affiliation within the antiwar movement. In her address Nguyen Ngoc Dung, USLV stated:

„I have learned from Nancy Gitlin [SDS] about the April [1965] Washington Protest [...] We are closely following your activities [...] We appreciate your teachings [...] Great happiness flows when learning that the majority of Americans you

²⁷⁰ *Népszabadság* 1965: 2.

²⁷¹ *Népszabadság* 1965: 2.

²⁷² Congressional Record-House 1965: 19429-19433.

and [your] people are different from the cruel U.S. aggressors who are massacring our people.”²⁷³

In response, Tod Gitlin proposed that SDS send a mission to rebuild a hospital or school destroyed by U.S. bombing, claiming, „It shouldn't be hard to convince the Hanoi government that the mission would be valuable to the antiwar movement in America.”²⁷⁴ That October SDS formally declared its opposition to the Vietnam War. They proposed that young people of America be given a free choice to either sign up „to burn and torture in Vietnam or to build a democracy at home and overseas.” They concluded „we will encourage every member of our generation to object [...] through Form 150 provided by the law for conscientious objection.” (McMAHON 2003: 428-429)

October was an auspicious month in the burgeoning confrontation between the antiwar movement and the administration. Congress had amended the universal Military Service and Training Act to prohibit the destruction or mutilation of a draft card. Representative Mendel Rivers of South Carolina had sponsored the amendment claiming that it would suppress dissent, „by those who would make mockery of our efforts in South Vietnam.” The law had been challenged in October, 1965 at an antiwar rally in New York City when David Miller burned his draft card. The law was upheld by the Supreme Court, but only served to widen the gulf between Americans supporting the war and those who opposed. (SOBEL 1967: 485-486)

Johnson initially enjoyed strong support for his foreign policy at home with the Harris Poll reporting that 62% of Americans approved. (HAMMOND 1998: 56) And yet the acceleration of the American effort in Vietnam fortified the arguments made by Robert Moses, SDS, and others within the anti-war/civil rights movement. The brutality and irregular nature of the war appalled many throughout the international community and created the „David and Goliath” image that Ball had warned Johnson about and that the NLF capitalized upon. Reports that South Vietnamese were going into combat with gas, and that they utilized torture against NLF fighters and sympathizers set the American ethos on its head.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ TAM, International Days of Protest, October 1965.

²⁷⁴ TAM, Proposal from Tom Gitlin, October 1965.

²⁷⁵ *Muhammad Speaks* [Black Muslims' party newspaper](1965). And Now to Poison Gas: Africans Uneasy Over U.S. Backed Atrocities in Viet. 2 April; HAMMOND 1998: 46, 57-60.

The problem was examined in depth on 10 August, 1965 by Johnson Press Secretary Bill Moyers and players from the State Department and USIA. According to James L. Greenfield from the State Department, „reports of US soldiers setting fire to Vietnamese villages and related incidents are causing serious problems here and abroad.” John Chancellor of the USIA warned: „We need to find new ways to build [...] *[an]* understanding [...] you can’t just kill Japs in a war like this one.” A discussion ensued as to how to prevent the media from covering these types of incidents, but in the end Greenfield concluded: „We [*can’t*] pull a curtain on the problem [...] You can’t win the people in Vietnam by burning their villages.” It was recommended that troops should conform to the Geneva Conventions and that the military should show a willingness to work with the International Red Cross.²⁷⁶ The problem of legitimacy was now not simply selling the American backed regime in Saigon, but the legitimacy of a war now increasingly being fought by the United States.

Convincing the South Vietnamese of the legitimacy of their government continued to plague the Johnson administration in 1966. In February, instead of transistor radios, it was now proposed that the United States place *cheap television sets* in Vietnam for the purpose of education and indoctrination. Those closest to Johnson remained convinced that the American path to modernity was irresistible.²⁷⁷ On the domestic front, the administration worried that the antiwar movement (the doves) were controlling the debate over the war. In a sign that the American people were becoming impatient with the war a February Harris Poll revealed that support for the way the war was being handled was dwindling, declining from 63% to 49%. 33% of Americans polled thought that the United States should increase its efforts in Vietnam while 34% believed that the United States should find a negotiated settlement.²⁷⁸

Fighting a war that was becoming increasingly costly to the United States for such elusive goals as nation building and containment was not an easy sell. Johnson was increasingly forced to make concessions in order to fund the war that would have a deleterious impact on his war on poverty in the United States. Further, his goals became harder to achieve because the NLF and the DRV had decided on a

²⁷⁶ Memorandum of Conversation: Review on Vietnam Inform. Problems, 1965, FRUS.

²⁷⁷ Memorandum for the Record, 1966, FRUS.

²⁷⁸ Notes of Meeting, 1966, FRUS.

strategy of protracted warfare in which they escalated the intensity of warfare while dangling the possibilities of negotiation. (BRIGHAM 1999: 58-59; ZHAI 1999: 37-38) Importantly, they viewed Vietnam as a single entity, not the one temporarily divided by the Geneva Accords. The complexity of politics in Vietnam could not be subdued by American military might. (DADDIS 2014: 180-181)

This was certainly evidenced in 1966 when a second Buddhist Crisis erupted in South Vietnam over the firing of a Buddhist General Nguyen Thi who commanded the ARVYN forces in I Corps military district that bordered the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam. The government under the leadership of Premier Cao Ky was despised by the Unified Buddhist Church and Thi's firing provided an opportunity to form a struggle movement in a bid to oust him from power. The confrontation turned violent and American forces were caught between rival factions of their ally. Though ultimately unsuccessful, it caused both hawks and doves in Congress to call for a reassessment of the American role in Vietnam. (TOP-MILLER 2002: 33-43, 78-83, 97-109)

Despite the crisis being quelled, American scrutiny of the war increased. In this light, propaganda emanating from the Soviet Satellites, in this case Hungary, only served to anger an American administration trying to forward a tenuous policy that was increasingly coming under the scrutiny and critique of its allies. Taunting the United States Dénes Baracs explained that the solution for Vietnam would not be decided in the United States Senate, but on the battlefield where the Soviets and Socialist countries were providing substantial military and economic aid. Baracs highlighted the fact that the Vietnamese government was led by Cao Ky who revered Adolph Hitler and was in power only because of American support, a fact highlighted by the antiwar movement in the United States and the world.

The American premise that they supported a democratically elected government was a sham and would only lead to a diminution of American prestige in the international community. (BARACS 1966: 70, 73-76, 78) The fact that dissent in the street matched the logic of the opposition served to deepen the chasm between Americans who wanted to support the president and those who increasingly questioned the efficacy of the American escalation. This alarmed many within the administration and the use of COINTELPRO against the antiwar movement intensified. For example, in 1967 the Director of the Selective Service instructed Draft Boards that demonstrations encouraging draft resistance were illegal and that

those students eligible for the draft participating in such activities should be stripped of their student deferments. (PRADOS 2009: 200-201)

According to historian Melvin Small, the Central Intelligence Agency had surveilled over 300,000 Americans for anti-war activities between the years 1967-1974. (SMALL 2002: 101-102) Interestingly, the search for the enemy within continued in spite of the fact that by 1968, presidential contenders Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey had committed themselves to finding peace for a nation frustrated by a seemingly unending war.

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Young listeners' letters sent to RFE „Cseke László's Teenager party”

by *Marína Zavacká and Barnabás Vajda*



The custom of writing letters almost disappeared from our daily experience. We slowly forget about those „proper” letters when one had to think in advance when formulating a sentence and when its outlook could be expected both to meet some aesthetic norms and to reflect the writer's personality. Moreover, what effort it took to address an adult holding a decisive post in a written form, when one was a teenager! The archives of *Radio Free Europe* (RFE) store over twenty boxes of such correspondence written and sent in by young listeners to a teenager-aimed musical program broadcasted by the Hungarian RFE Department (or Desk). This study focuses on their authors' reflections of themselves, of their addressee and subject matters which shall not be limited to the „political” optics of the East/West Iron Curtain division. Conflicting lines emerged also along intra-generational stereotypes and preferences concerning music and leisure. This also led to research questions centred on an ambivalent contemporary notion of the „non-political” sphere.

When the RFE broadcasts started in the 1950s, a concept of special youth musical programs was still not very common even in the West and the notion of *teenagers as a special age group* and even as an audience group was just being born. (PASSERINI 1997: 317) Contrary to dance-halls or cinemas, where young people in the 1950s already used to go unchaperoned, the radio was mostly used at home in the living rooms or in working-halls, pubs and other environments governed by adults of authority. Programmes for school-age youth were supposed to be educative, nota bene if their production was supported from the state budget.

Both by its opponents and founders, RFE was perceived as an actor in an ongoing ideological struggle. The idea to devote time and means to broadcast American popular music specifically for teenagers in the East European bloc could thus be viewed as insufficiently serious, short of clear agenda, lacking an educative or patriotic component. For civic education and transmission of „suppressed values and truths”, other medial formats were perceived more appropriate: commented news, lectures in glorious national history, and contemporary martyrdom of *captive nations*, and in some cases also national folk music.

Representation of cultural superiority was traditionally linked to classical music and to high culture in general. (WAGNLEITNER 1994: 128; PUDDINGTON 2000: 136) Also, bigot labelling of rock music as a „subversive communist tool of anarchy”, maiming the souls of the American youth, was still heard in the US public. This resonated well also with some influential *émigrés* who were socialized during their own youth by music broadcasted under the restrictions of Nazi-controlled Europe, refusing jazz and other kinds of music as „sounds alien to local national spirit”. (PUDDINGTON 2000: 137) Under such conditions, any attempt to produce a school-age targeted music program, limited to entertainment, and resigning at any direct educational or political indoctrination, remained far from being an easy task.

A bit ironically, the whole process was helped by changes in programming, put through by a firm decision made by the American management of the RFE as a lesson learnt from the Hungarian revolution in 1956. Since the failure of the Hungarian revolt, the American management demanded from the national RFE desks less direct involvement in politics in favour of more music. E. g. *Jazzforum* and *Slágerparádé*, RFE programmes with Géza Ekecs's involvement, were launched as a consequence of this new programming policy. (EKECS 1996: 75) Building on the understandable demand of East European teenagers for exciting music tunes, many available only on the black market, plus building on young people's appetite for radio publicity and the formal acknowledgement of the importance of their life experiences, Ekecs's programmes for youth gained incredible popularity. As A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta have put it: „Banned Western and internal music was featured at the RFE. Willis Conover of Voice of America [...] and Géza Ekecs's *Teenager party* program attracted a generation of Hungarian youth to RFE, and Western music attracted listeners in the other RFE target countries as well.” (JOHNSON–PARTA 2010: 348)

Youth-targeted broadcast

RFE's Hungarian Desk produced *Teenager party* since the end of the 1950s, soon to be accompanied with *Délutáni randevú*²⁷⁹, hosted by Géza Ekecs, who used the pseudonym „Cseke László”. Both these broadcasts consisted of a carefully selected doze of up-to-date „beat music” (as it was called at that time), Hungarian and foreign alike, offered primarily to young Hungarians.

At the beginning, when the very first *Teenager party* was aired on May 31, 1959 (EKECS 1996: 76), it was broadcasted as a 35-minute-long programme once a week. Later, it was prolonged to 40 minutes, and was repeated several times throughout the week.²⁸⁰ From the very beginning, it was consciously intended, in Ekecs's words, „for teenagers who come home from school”. (EKECS 1996: 79) Carefully chosen timing not only enabled students to listen to it in their officially scheduled leisure time, but in many cases it secured for them a chance to avoid the presence and negative interference of their own parents, who were still at work.²⁸¹ This concerned more cautious adult approach towards risks related to listening to RFE²⁸² as well as their music preferences, often very different from the ones of their kids, in case there was just one radio set in a household.

²⁷⁹ *Délutáni randevú* literally means *Afternoon date*, though its English title at the RFE was *Good Afternoon*.

²⁸⁰ The programme was originally aired on Sunday evening (at 21:10), and was repeated on Monday (19:10), Tuesday (09:10) and Thursday (12:10, again from 15:10. From the early 1960s, *Teenager party* was followed by *Délutáni randevú*, another very popular music programme aired every weekday afternoon, between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. EKECS 1996: 76, 77, 79.

²⁸¹ The same applied to morning broadcasts, which could be followed by pupils who were participating in alternate shift learning which was widespread in the beginning of the 1960s due to lack of schoolrooms. In Czechoslovakia in 1965 there was 14,8% average of shift teaching, in Slovakia itself 26,6%, and in Bratislava even 29,8%. See Mamojka, Juraj: Čo sme za dvadsaťročie dosiahli a k čomu spejeme. *Večerník*, April 3, 1965, p. 19.

²⁸² Despite proclaimed non-political character of the *Teenager party* programme, “listening to the RFE” was ascribed a clear political meaning. Even those adults who used to listen to forbidden “free news and commentaries” themselves, whether in the 1950s or already during the Second World War, might not have felt fit getting nailed “for music”.

Cseke's both programmes were a jackpot in some ways for they combined particular broadcasting strategies with general social environment and historical circumstances. First, both *Teenager party* and *Délutáni randevú* were basically request programmes where listeners could ask for their favourite piece of beat/pop/rock music. In the period between 1959 and 1992, *editors' conscious resignation on explicitly political content* was perceived as an added value among youth in an over-ideologised system of Communist-party-led Hungary and Czechoslovakia. While the regime propaganda affected the population in general, white collars and especially students were more vulnerable to enforced mandatory participation in rituals, lectures and obedience to restrictions. Nonappearance at meetings or trespassing limits set on freedom of expression was far less risky for industrial and agricultural workers and also for apprentices.

It can also be concluded that especially *Teenager party* successfully filled in the gap created by a chronic lack of access to contemporary beat/pop/rock music. It was the time when The Beatles age had just started (EKECS 1996: 76), and the image of „the West” and of „America” was extremely high. Despite all *technical reception troubles*, both radio programmes *Teenager party* and *Délutáni randevú* were able to make beat music wildly popular among some generations of devoted Hungarian and non-Hungarian listeners, and in addition they could make English-language-music widely accepted, purely by spreading some attractive and dynamic music programmes. Beyond music, Ekecs made his programmes richer in content by including biographical items on western musicians. And he indeed put a big stress on *spreading Western culture* by intentionally preferring foreign music in the one hand, and deliberately avoiding reporting on Hungarian musicians on the other. (EKECS 1996: 90)

Ekecs learned the special style of music broadcasting (which later became known as *his style*) first of all from the Radio in the American Sector (RIAS, operating from the American zone in West Germany), and also from independent Western radios such as Radio Luxembourg or French Europe Un. (EKECS 1996: 76) It was not only the sweet music at the core of the issue, but Ekecs's personal contribution also has to be acknowledged in catching young Hungarian listeners' attention. They were in his sake keen to listening to the RFE's short waves²⁸³, despite the efforts of

²⁸³ “This is RFE on the 19, 25, 31, 41 and 49 metres of short waves” – this was the sentence Ekecs regularly started his programme with.

the Hungarian communist party struggling to maintain its ideological control over the growing-up youth, and despite horrible technical receiving conditions, aggravated by jammers. (SKULTÉTY 2011: 125-127.)

The popularity of Ekecs's programmes was mostly caused by an ideological ban on most „westernized culture” items, including concerts, disks, posters, merchandise items and so forth in most Communists-ruled Eastern Europe in general, and in Hungary in particular. As an officially condemned activity linked to a particular age-group, they became an element of shared secret, item of mutual trust and specific knowledge among generational peers, thus generating further emotional values.

Audience

Ekecs, as a member of the Hungarian Desk of the RFE, ran his programme in Hungarian language, and his main target audience was certainly the youth in Hungary. Nevertheless, it was no secret that RFE's Hungarian programmes had been followed by Hungarian listeners living outside the territory of Hungary, too. Thus Ekecs's programmes were listened to by many ethnically Hungarian youngsters living both in West Europe as well as in East European countries, namely Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Ukraine and knowledge of these programmes spread also among their non-Hungarian classmates and friends.

Since the accessible RFE audience ratings were carried out among listeners older than 16 years (TRAPANS 1988: 96), it is impossible to measure the *direct impact* of teenager-targeted programmes this way. On the other hand, especially this age group was very active in further transmitting the radio content by various means. This was done through amateur tape-recordings, copying of lyrics, trying to include broadcasted songs into one's own musical repertoire, spreading gossips on adored singers, or by other ways of sharing a specific „knowledge”. It enhanced a strong culture of hand-made fan-books and connected a vast network of fans, collectors of posters, stickers, recordings, pins and other memorabilia. These contacts were developing into sophisticated black market structures, but also into personal informal relations based on of mutual trust.

Namely these „side-effects” influenced the developing youth counter-culture in the Eastern bloc at its very basis. They were opposed to the official model of youth

aesthetical preferences and leisure activities, which had been perceived not only as „Communist”, but also as simply too „politicised”, too „collectivist”, too much „organised from above”, „enforced”, „boring”, etc. Pure individual act of listening to the West-produced youth broadcast became a key into a *virtual community*, developing an alternative sense of „us”, having „our own” music, values, lifestyle and self-imagery, non-aligned to the officially imposed pattern. (BAR-HAIM 1989: 29) A specific impact of small-scale peer-run black market of commodities popular among young people was in its being also a „free market”. Thus within a fully nationalised economy, ruled by fundamentally anti-enterprise rhetoric, during school breaks, the classes – expected to serve as forums of uncontested indoctrination – turned into the islands of the most unregulated free market where older pupils and students gained their first important business skills.²⁸⁴ Last but not least, common participation in an unauthorised activity hidden from adults (or at least of those of formal authority), including a sharing of risky, „dangerous”, „alternative” information, involved a high potential of becoming a form of rite de passage from an obedient child to a rebellious adolescent.

Since both *Teenager party* and *Délutáni randevú* were request programmes where listeners could ask for particular music, Ekecs had received a huge amount of letters from all of the above listed countries. At the Hungarian Desk, Ekecs kept a fine evidence of incoming mail. Judging from the correspondence preserved at the Open Society Archives (OSA) Budapest, a significant ratio of letters to Ekecs’s *Teenager party* was sent from Czechoslovak towns and villages where ethnic Hungarians lived. We can identify these Czechoslovak localities by their postal stamps, legible on the envelope of the correspondence (many envelopes have been preserved, too), such as Bratislava, Čičov, Dedina Mládeže, Dunajská Streda, Dvory nad Žitavou, Galanta, Kamenín, Kolárovo, Komárno, Košice, Lehnice, Liberec, Lučenec,

²⁸⁴ Here, besides other sources of Western music broadcast, e.g. Viennese Ö3 radio *Hitparade*, the role of the *Bravo* magazine, a German-language pop journal published since 1956 and frequently smuggled both to Czechoslovakia and Hungary can hardly be overestimated. Posters, stickers and larger pictures from one smuggled issue could be distributed to more than a dozen of “customers”, and the rest of the magazine then could circulate among friends, or could be “inherited” by younger siblings, its content was copied to personal notebooks, etc. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bravo_%28magazine%29 (3.3.2016)

Marcelová, Nové Zámky, Medzev, Mužla, Poltár, Rimavská Sobota, Šahy, Sikabony (quarter of Dunajská Streda), Štúrovo, Trnava, Veľká Mača, Veľká Lúč, Vlčany, Vojnica, Želiezovce, etc. Partially we can rely also on palaeographic analysis, since scripts taught those times in Hungarian and Czechoslovak schools slightly differed. E.g. pupils in Hungary wrote as if on checkered paper, producing thick, almost round „a” and „o”, while in Czechoslovakia their „a”-s and „o”-s had to be narrower and tear-shaped.²⁸⁵

Even if we can not exclude the possibility of posting some letters to Ekecs by *Hungarians from Hungary* from Czechoslovak towns situated in the border region, or even from Czech or East German localities, there is still a significant amount of letters sent by ethnic Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia. It is quite difficult to make a precise judgement on the ratio of letters written to Ekecs by *Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian ethnicity*, but judging from the sources available at the OSA, our estimate ratio is somewhere around 2-3 % of the whole correspondence preserved by Ekecs. Géza Ekecs's quasi memoir book, titled *A mikrofonnál és a lemezjátszónál Cseke László* (1996) contains a substantial selection from the letters sent to him. However, as far as we know the present study is the very first one which focused specifically on Ekecs's correspondence coming from Czechoslovak citizens. Besides stamps and handwriting, a handful of writers identified themselves directly as „a guy from Czechoslovakia”, or „a girl from Czechoslovakia”, or „I am a Hungarian from Czechoslovakia”, etc.²⁸⁶

The geographic origin of the incoming correspondence was largely ignored in Cseke's teenager programmes. Although we do know that quite a high priority was given to the geographical scope of the East European mail sent to the RFE (the Research and Evaluation Department had kept such records and compiled monthly and annual reports, including maps on this issue), we have not found any evidence of Ekecs' possible record of the origin of letters. Surely, he was aware of the potential

²⁸⁵ Some clues of the differences can be checked here (3.3.2016):

<http://www.skola.dortun.sk/760-683-thickbox/male-pisane-pismena.jpg>

http://taneszkozok.hu/uploads/shop/taneszkozok.hu/termek/2230_big.jpg

²⁸⁶ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 11. Correspondence relating to Hungarian Program Teenager Party. Levelezés March 1974 to May 1974. „Egy csehszlovákiai srác” or „egy csehszlovákiai kislány” or „Csehszlovákia-i magyar vagyok”.

risk of sending letters to him to Munich, especially posed by East European secret services monitoring the correspondence addressed to RFE. The same was clear for a number of young correspondents who in their letters explicitly referred to such obstacles: „If this letter reaches you at all”; „This is already my third letter to you”; „I doubt this letter reaches you because I had sent three letters earlier, and none of them reached you. May 16, 1972. Codename: Bill.”

As it can be observed in many archived letters, while pre-reading the correspondence, Ekecs regularly crossed out the names of concrete settlements both within Hungary and beyond its borders (e.g. „~~Badaacsonytör~~”) or beyond the borders of Hungary. („We attended a youth meeting ~~in a village called Kéménd~~”; „Ifjúsági találkozón voltunk egy ~~Kéménd-nevezetű~~ faluban.”). This practice indicates his conscious caution taken for protecting the listeners, some of whom even included their full addresses into their letters.

So far no extra importance was attributed to those letters which were written and *sent by Slovaks from Czechoslovakia in Hungarian language* or in isolated cases also in other languages. Sometimes pervasive elements of Slovak orthography are recognisable in those letters, such as „Čeke László”, and some correspondents even confessed that they were struggling with Hungarian spelling; „Hi Csike László [...] I am sorry that I write with incorrect Hungarian spelling but I cannot speak Hungarian well.” At least in one instance the whole letter is written in Hungarian but through Slovak orthography.²⁸⁷ In other cases used phrasing is typical for persons who learned Hungarian just by picking it.²⁸⁸ In both mentioned cases, a selection of Hungarian words, language style and spelling resembles a kind of pidgin, a language of makeshift communication, definitely not learned at school as a mother tongue.

²⁸⁷ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 20, January 1976.

²⁸⁸ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 11: “Neharagudjon, hogy levelemmel, és egyben kéréssel magához fordulok. Szeretem műsorát hallgatni, és nagyon tetszik műsora. Már tollat többször is fogtam kezembe, hogy írjak magának. De eddig nem jutottam hozzá a címéhez. Most már megtudtam pontos címét, most neki fogtam” (no date; catchphrase: Egy boldogtalan fekete lány); or „Ha négy dalok fog lejátcodni, akkor is a dal Sorits magadhoz es kedves legy – Slade. Előre köszönjük szépen, a Beat gyerekek, Rika + Tita – ČSSR, 18. 2. 1974”.

Ekecs knew „*that forcing the nationality question was a taboo at the RFE*” (EKECS 1996: 115), and by ignoring the geographical origin of the letters sent to him, he was trying to avoid political fuss or signs of intra-block nationalism. Even if many letters were written by ethnic Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia, they did not cause any interference with other departments of the RFE, including the Czechoslovak Desk. Though acknowledging Hungarian post from outside Hungary was a little bit in contrast to the main political guidelines of the RFE's policy (which at the later period of the RFE's existence was keen on avoiding sensitive intra-block questions, like the life of the Hungarian minority in different Communist countries), since Ekecs' programme was not particularly sensitive from a political aspect, this issue, as far as we know, never caused a problem. It stuck indeed within the limits of the routine political guidelines which were expressed by Csaba Skultéty, Ekecs's fellow editor at the Hungarian Desk with the following words: „Ethnic realities [of East European countries] had been hardly presented even in the internal studies [of the RFE].” (SKULTÉTY 2011: 140)

In addition to letters sent to Ekecs from Czechoslovak regions with large ethnic Hungarian population, there was a wide variety of other towns where they were mailed from. Posting music wishes from distant places became a routine part of these teenage conspiracy efforts. In their evolution, instructions from Ekecs himself, such as to choose a personal codename, password or catchphrase for a coded recognition, merged with intense exposition of East European youth to regime-promoted WWII and Cold War films and literature. For all, let us mention the „Seventeen moments of spring” (1973), a television series, chronicling the successful career of a Soviet spy, who besides other heroic deeds managed to keep radio contact with his Moscow headquarters despite all enemy efforts.

The usage of a „P.O. Box” ensured that no verbatim mention of the „RFE” had to be stated on the envelopes. There were also attempts to fool the censors by using a variety of aliases of the addressee, of which we specifically mention the name of „John Brown”, since there was a kind of subaltern joke involved. The name was known since a song about an executed abolitionist soldier was included into officially sanctioned English songs repertoire (included in some school textbooks), together with a song on trade-unionist Joe Hill and other lyrics reflecting racism and „exploitation” as defining features of the USA.²⁸⁹

Being aware of the fact that the address of the RFE Desk could be traced back by postal censorship, and that sending such a mail could involve personal risks for

the senders, some felt much safer sending them during school-trips, from youth summer camps or while on holidays abroad. Since it was supposed that the alert to the particular address of Hungarian Desk mailbox was limited to Hungarian or to border-region censorship officers, postal boxes in more distant towns of Czechoslovakia, such as Brno or Prague, as well as anywhere in Poland, GDR or other countries of the Soviet bloc were considered safely utilizable.²⁹⁰ We even identified Hungarian-written music orders to the Teenager party, *cheekily posted from the USSR*, most probably during an officially organised student trip to the Soviet Union.²⁹¹ A similar daredevil successfully delivered his musical wishes to the RFE written on a series of Soviet produced propaganda postcards, including one depicting a May 1st poster, sent from Hungary.²⁹²

At some instances, letters to RFE were written by teenagers at home and entrusted to visiting relatives with Western citizenship, who were asked to smuggle them out and post them from the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) or from another country. These „courier-delivered” consignments are characteristic by pupil-written content, packed into an envelope with an address written by another, evidently adult hand, oriented in German or British correspondence formalities.

Most letters were expected to be sent either to München 82, Postfach 20 (until the end of the 1960s, later to 80000 München, 86 Postfach 625, Bundesrepublik Deutschland); or to London, P.O. Box 1300 London, West Center 1, England. An average letter from Czechoslovakia to Munich cost 3 Kčs, and to London 3,60 Kčs, in 1972 prices. Supposing the bad-will of the East European state security organs, the London address was opened, according to Ekecs, for *conspiracy reasons*. In his memoirs, Ekecs has an interesting statement that, „most letters from Czechoslovakia,

²⁸⁹ The first Czech translation of the John Brown traditional dates back to the interwar period, by E. Klos-Olšovský, but in 1971 a new version was premiered by popular singer Waldemar Matuška, lyrics by Ivo Fischer.

²⁹⁰ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 1. The author mentions that he posts the letter from Wrocław, since he does not trust the Hungarian postal service to deliver it.

²⁹¹ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 20, Teenager party Sept. 1975 to May 1976, April 7/LO.

²⁹² HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 2, file July 1971-72, May 1st postcard. From some of these postcards the stamp is cut off, but since the address is written “Hungarian” way despite reverse “soviet” blanks (first “where”, then “to whom”), they were most probably stamped and posted in Hungary. At least on one there is visible a bit of “Magyar Posta” rubber stamp.

which really arrived at our desk, were sent to the London address” (EKECS 1996: 167), but unfortunately he does not provide further details on the issue.

Different elements of addresses written on envelopes or postcards suggest the ways of the dissemination of information about the possibility to contact Teenager party for one's musical wishes. Some listeners evidently wrote the address down while it was dictated by the radio speaker. Among these, one can see many cases of misspelt words, originating in lack of knowledge of English or German language, such as „Postfahrt” or „Pospacht” (instead of Postfach); „Veszcentor 1” (instead of West Center); „Unchen” for Munchen, „Gross Britania”, „Tinézseparti” (instead of Teenager party), etc. Within the Soviet bloc, the Federal Republic of Germany was intentionally renamed to German Federal Republic, to have the German Democratic Republic as a counterpart – hence the appearance of „D.B.R.” instead of „BRD” on the envelopes. Occasionally, the Hungarian language used in the whole broadcast led the listeners to attempts of „making sense” of misheard words by inserting partly Hungarian words (P.F. for Postfach as PóstaFiok, Póstfa). At some instances, a listener aware of writing to a „Western” station subconsciously tried to make the heard words more „American” sounding and already known from literature, such as re-branding the first name of „Mr. Cseke László” to „Leszlie” and his surname to „Cheke” „Jackie”, „Jacky” or even „Dzeki”.

Mistakes based on the outlook of characters, i.e. not the sound of words but their visual form, originated from the circulation of the address among friends and schoolmates, who had not heard of Teenager party before and incidentally, learned from mutual conversation that there was a postal box „fulfilling” musical wishes. As an example we can mention addressing Mr. „Oszeke” instead of Cseke.²⁹³ Letters of such senders also tend to include introductory verifying remarks and assuring questions. „*I have heard that it is possible to ask you for a song and pictures...*”²⁹⁴

In more distant stages of such passing of the address through long chains of friends, those ones who finally sat down to write a letter might not have been aware that there „may be something wrong with the addressee” and they did not refrain

²⁹³ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 1, file May 1971-72.

²⁹⁴ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 15, file January 1975, a letter written in English by “Catherine” Juricová from Nedožery.

from putting full data about the sender on the envelope. We must also admit that in the 1970s, the period the preserved letters originate in, the youth in Hungary could probably feel more relaxed concerning possible political implications than young people of Czechoslovakia with their fresh experience of political purges following the 1968 invasion. The same applied to those young people of both states who did not aim to continue their studies at universities, where a positive „political” reference from high school was required in the application process. In any case, an envelope sent from Hungary, containing not only the full address of the sender, but also amending the „discreet” postal box number with eye-catching Hungarian title of the radio station „Szabad Európa” was unique.

An idea of „organising” a song from the Teenager party as a gift, namely for birthday, evolved into a statutory present, for which also unsuspecting older family members were asked. An instance of formal (lacking any sign of prank) salutation in heavy-hand adult handwriting, addressing Ekecs as „Cseke elvtárs” (i.e. „comrade Cseke”²⁹⁵), is probably the best proof of the writer’s unawareness of any „Western” political implications of her writing „somewhere” just to make her offspring happy with some song.

Writing letters

Regarding the analysis of the structure and the content of the letters, it is important to stress that all Hungarian teenagers (as well as those in Czechoslovakia or other neighbouring countries) were subject to drilling the same set of model letters at schools, both regarding their form and content. Together with the „description” of the person or object or of a holiday event, a „short biography” and a „letter to a friend” belonged to the elementary genres taught at writing lessons in primary schools. This concerned not only mother tongue curriculum, but also compulsory

²⁹⁵ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 20, file March 1976. Phrase ‘Comrade’ (Ger. *Genosse*; Slov. *súдруh*; Hung. *Eltárs*) used to be in East Europe a traditional communist title of a fellow party member, which was introduced as an official title for persons addressed in formal contact. Traditional “Mister” (Herr/Pán/Úr) was condemned as an unwished “holdover of bourgeois culture”. In this particular letter, word “elvtárs” was misspelt even in Hungarian when it was put as “elftárs”.

Russian lessons, where writing a letter to an „unknown friend” was heavily promoted, whether ending up in writing to a real pen-pal or just substituting the format of a „school essay”. A pen-pal was supposed to learn something about the daily routine of the class or pioneer troop and about *the letter-writer's* hobbies, i.e. involvement in sports and collecting stamps, postcards or paper napkins. School-initiated letters to personally unknown people were also to be addressed to outstanding workers, soldiers, and to the editorial boards of children's journal.

Model letters in school textbooks included elementary socialisation in the world of ritual phrases, such as putting the „honourable mister/madam” in the head, self-positioning by references to some „appropriate” activities or views in the corpus, and listed some „suitable” formal greetings and slogans to be used in the close. For many teenagers the school was the first and only place where they used such words and gained some experience in letter-writing. Some of the learned elements can be identified also in the correspondence for the RFE.

Some letters sent to Ekecs show, already in the very first line, that their authors had to make an important choice about the level of formality. The result of a decision between being reverent (but distant) or familiar (but too familiar in foreign context) was reflected in salutation: „honourable Mr. Cseke” or „dear uncle Cseke” (tisztelt uram / kedves Cseke-bácsi) or „dear Laci”. The display of reverence was strengthened by adding some other titles, e.g. „Dr.” or „Sir”. Production of typed letters could also rise the impression of writer's personal devotion to the case, since getting an access to a typing machine and producing a typed letter required extra effort for many adolescents. Typing machines not only belonged to scarce goods and thus were kept from children, but at least in Czechoslovakia their ownership was still under control in the 1970s (the police cared of taking typing samples, thus preventing the production of samizdat), and the usage of office ones carried the risk of exposure. The letters were mostly formulated as a plea, expressing the full recognition of the major role of the addressee. (SUROVCEVA 2010: 43) „If it fits into the programme, could you read out the postal address of the following bands, please...”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 11. T. Rex, Cereedence, Cleo Walter, Reviva, Sweet, Nazaret, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, etc. 1974.6.1. by Kasszafúró.

In the same way as students in Eastern Europe were taught to profess in formal letters their strong and durable allegiance to the ruling regime and to its values and institutions, making use of such phrases as a supportive element in their petitions, they used the same strategy while writing to Ekecs, bolstering their pleas with expressions of allegiance to commonly shared „Western” values and references to the long personal history of their adoration. Most young correspondents confirmed their enormous interest in listening to Ekecs’s programmes already in the first lines of their letters. It is not a surprise that many listeners began their letters by stating that they were faithful listeners of Ekecs’s programmes:

„Like very many youngsters in this world, I have been a regular listener of the Teenager party both on Saturdays and Sundays. What is more, I like listening to the Good afternoon! on Fridays, too.”

They were also constantly praising the programme, and from time to time they confessed that they were looking forward to listening not only to the songs of their own wish but to others’ wishes, too. Indeed, strolling over the archival boxes of related correspondence, one can identify many *constant listeners*, hidden underneath recurrent code-names and recurrent handwriting, sending to Ekecs’s Teenager Party their stories and song requests from week to week over the years.

Authority transfer and relating one’s wishes to the „anniversaries” of important events or persons became another element considered appropriate to raise one’s chances for the fulfilment of musical wish: *„I kindly ask this song on behalf of the birthday of my dearest Mick Jagger”*. The value of received letters was boosted by mentions of possible obstacles connected to listening to the broadcast or to the delivery of the letters: *„Unfortunately, I cannot listen to RFE’s music programmes on weekdays, because I am a high school student, I live in a boarding house, and there it is not possible to listen to it.”* Sometimes it got really difficult – a girl from Trnava apologised for writing in Slovak, since her mother (who usually helped with translation) was not at home. As she mentioned further, she actually made her brother to write that particular letter, since she had broken her arm.” Then she supported her request to hear „Deep Purple” by mentioning the feeling of pity that she „cannot see them live”.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ HU-OSA-300-40-12: Box 2, June 1971-72.

Expressions of reverence, which was believed to help in putting one's wishes through, could be strengthened by the inclusion of comparative and competitive elements in the letters. Partly thanks to the political thaw of the 1960s and partly as a reaction to the fall of regime popularity among the young generation, some youth-targeted programmes were included in the schedule of the local radios in the Soviet bloc.²⁹⁸ (FRANC–KNAPÍK 2013: 187) In some cases the letters explicitly refer to the „media rivalry”, fought with the domestic Hungarian state broadcast, in the struggle for the „minds and hearts” of the people: „For I have already sent three letters to the request programme [*which was called*] From 2 to 6 of the Hungarian [*state-run*] Broadcast, but they were not willing to fulfil my request.” We have to add that in this particular case it was a Hungarian listener from Hungary, who was criticising the above mentioned programme run by a famous disc jockey György Komjáthy as a conscious counter-programme to the RFE's Teenager party.

„Send us a story”

As years passed by, Ekecs started to ask listeners to send in their short stories along with their music requests. *Stories* were never a particular condition of fulfilling the music-wish, but it was a kind of an expectation, which, as we will see below, was in accordance with the general attitude of the young listeners. These, like Cinderellas banned from the ball that their luckier Western peers could freely attend anytime, were keen on communicating with „Cseke László”, a good fairy from the same distant West, willing to listen to their life-stories with a sympathetic nod and kindly delivering personal gifts, their favourite pieces of music.

Unfortunately, Ekecs's book does not contain any information about the time he started asking for stories. The first letters containing listeners' stories, preserved at the OSA, are from May 1971, and the last ones from September 1976.²⁹⁹ It is sure, however, that the Hungarian Desk of the RFE had received music-wish-letters much earlier. In fact, both his most popular programmes *Teenager party* and *Délutáni*

²⁹⁸ In Czechoslovak radio particularly the “12 on the swing” (Dvanáct na houpačce), broadcasted in 1964-1969 and The songs from Mikrofórum, since 1965.

²⁹⁹ <http://osaarchivum.org/db/fa/300-40-12-1.htm> (16.6.2014)

randevú were based on previously successful RFE programmes. Ekecs followed in the footsteps of the *Zenés üzenetek* (Messages with music), a successful RFE music request programme in the mid-1950s, which was based on Hungarian escapees' letters, i.e. messages („We have safely arrived at Munich”) sent home by many after the 1956 exodus. (EKECS 1996: 70-71)³⁰⁰ It also has to be noted that originally it was not the Teenager party which initiated the flood of letters. At least, when Ekecs wrote his quasi-memoires in 1996, he stated that though Teenager Party was his „personal programme”, in fact „it was the launch of the *Délutáni randevú* [from the early 1960s] after which the letters started to pour in like an avalanche”. (EKECS 1996: 79-80) Not only the music that Ekecs sent to his teenage audience was very popular, but the story part of the programme was a success, too. For many youngsters, if not for the most, sending in a story was not a dull obligation. On the contrary, for a great deal of teenage listeners it was a privilege if and when their announcement „X is sending this music to Y” was aired and heard by many. („If you could read out my story...”; „Hereby I am writing a little story, reading out of which, I hope, does not meet any difficulties”; etc.) Besides enjoying one's Warholian five minutes of personal fame, the listeners perceived writing their story on request also as a kind of barter, which elevated them from the position of a mere supplicant to a contract partner. „Along with my music wish, I have to send you a story, I mean I have to repay for my music request with an account of a story”; „The story is this...”, etc.

Listeners' letters and life stories were an appealing way of self-expression for adolescents, namely for high school students, eager to formulate and share their world-views, and craving for personal confirmation without much contest. The majority of letters lacked any element of political positioning. Instead, they contained very private stories: „For some moments, I would like to introduce you to my private life”, and indeed everyday stories, such as bagatelle adventures („suddenly I lost the heel of my shoe”); funny stories involving alcohol while spending a night in cob-webbed wine-cellar; tragic car accidents; joy from sporting; big boys bragging about their military

³⁰⁰ These, on other hand, followed the pattern known from the WWII, when the BBC broadcasted messages connecting evacuated children and their parents or messages and musical gifts for the soldiers overseas and their families back home. NICHOLAS 1996: 128-129.

experiences („this all happened during my conscript military training”), and so forth. In great part they surely just followed the pattern of avoiding politics, but the omission of special mentions of one's political position can be also read as perceiving it as so „clear”, „self-evident”. After all, the Communist regime's aspiration of the politicisation of the whole public space, if not of all private acts, made a decision to address the RFE or to listen and praise Western music a clear political act by itself.

As it could be expected from teenagers, moreover motivated by those predecessors whose letters were broadcasted, they mostly wrote about love: „I started dating a handsome boy two months ago”, whether in epic stories or short outlines. Some even attempted to contribute with poems. „Love” was also used as a supportive argument of the plea for „music”, combining the desire of the two consensually positive elements: „This letter is written by three girls. Our catchphrase is: We would like to live in Luxembourg with English husbands!”; „I love rock music and nice fair girls. I am writing this to you, because your programme is good at rock music and because you are keen on publishing messages and stories. Catchphrase: Love narcotizes more than hashish.”

The stories featured innocent life experiences, „adventures” and personal accounts such as summer holiday love affairs, or time spent hanging around with pals, impressions of favourite music and of exciting films shared within their age group across the East-West borders. For instance, the film „Rebel Without a Cause” (1955), starring James Dean as „a cultural icon of teenage disillusionment” pops up in the letters several times. Some listeners turned to Ekecs as if he was an expert in adolescent psychology, poured out their love doubts and hesitations, desperately asking for personal advice: „I continued my studies in the same town where *She* was living [...] After graduation [...] I am right before my military service, and I am pretty much afraid that I lose *Her* [...] I wish you could advise me what to do.”

Impossible task of being non-political

Ekecs was well aware that the RFE in general and his music programmes in particular formed a part of the American containment and roll-back policy toward communism in East Europe. (EKECS 1996: 81) But leaving the „good old days” behind, when RFE's programmes were intended to stir troubles behind the Iron

Curtain, thus causing gaps in it, the mission of the Teenager party was to entertain and to fulfil the music wishes of young people.

He carefully registered every letter which reached his desk, and he was also a careful *editor* of the letters. From the visible signs, corrections and notes he marked the letters with, we can follow the patterns of edition. One of his typical ways of intervening into received texts was censoring erotic phrases or wording: „I am having a sunbath on the beach and staring at a girl. She is very pretty and her body is very well shaped. ~~Maybe her breasts are too small. She might be very young. I am staring at her.~~ I stand up. Our sights meet, ~~but I am staring at her for minutes.~~ She is also looking at me with interest. She stands up. I make a step toward her.”³⁰¹ In other cases, he made the writers’ text more formal by correcting some wording, such as „with my friend” instead of „with my pal” („barátommal”/„haverommal”), or making other minor corrections.³⁰²

Basically, what *Ekecs as an editor* made was making the texts of the letters more concise, and yes, also politically more correct. At the Teenager party, he made an interesting and colourful composition of beat music and private stories – a quite typical technique or course of action for an editor of a dynamic music programme.

Regarding RFE internal policies and especially the relation of its youth-targeted broadcast to contemporary political events, Ekecs accepted the status quo and avoided explicit political references in his programmes, painlessly resigning in any „smuggling” of partisan statements. In his quasi-memoires he notes: „*I could neglect all politics in my programmes*”. (EKECS 1996: 83) Indeed, he always firmly denied any interference of politics with his music programmes, no matter when he was asked, whether in 1969 or in 2006. „*I could work in wind-calm [szélszélben dolgoztam]*”, he stated repeatedly, and „*the change in political mood had never influenced me*”. (EKECS 1996: 121) Of course, he was aware that his music programmes were a living link between the RFE and Hungarian youth. Yet, he stated even after the change of the regime in 1989 that „*the young generation, at least most of it, was not in-*

³⁰¹ „Napozom a parton és mereven nézek egy lányt. Nagyon csinos és teste is formás. Felálllok. Összetalálkozok a poillantásunk. Ő is érdeklődve néz. feláll, lépek egyet felé.”

³⁰² „1973. december 30-án megismerkedtem egy barna hajú, barna szemű, nálam jóval alacsonyabb gyönyörű kislánnyal.” 1974. május 26. A duplacsövű lopótök.

interested in their own social system in which they had been brought up, they ignored everyday politics. Probably this was the most unanimous rejection that a violent society could receive from its growing-up generations [...][In the letters I received] There were a few sentences, or some adjectives, or some short statements that directly concerned political problems. And I deliberately neglected any and all politics in my programmes.” (EKECS 1996: 83) Most letters that are accessible today, confirm Ekecs' point, and we can conclude that openly politically motivated letters to Ekecs are quite rare among our sources. He also admitted that he modified inconvenient codenames and slogans, which did not fit his non-political limits, such as when he shortened the codename to „Ruskies” instead of original „Ruskies go home!” (EKECS 1996: 83)

Another way of avoiding allegations of „provocations from München” he found in strictly limiting himself to biographical information on Western musicians and to their songs, and excluding any mentions of Hungarian musical scene in general. This tactics even caused some tensions, since many listeners from outside Hungary would indeed appreciate such information from Hungary. (EKECS 1996: 87, 90) On the other hand, Cseke made this policy binding for his youth-broadcasts only. In the course of his work he occasionally received music tapes from Hungary containing „anti-state” content. Thus in other of his programmes he did not refrain from airing e.g. some pieces of Hungarian beat music with politically motivated lyrics, or from including pieces played by groups which fell out of the regime's grace and were banned in Hungary. (EKECS 1996: 91)

For evaluating Ekecs's „political” impact, his most popular programmes *Teenager party* and *Délutáni randevú* have to be considered in the context of the complete broadcast schedule in which Ekecs was involved while working at the RFE. Almost all his activities as a speaker of RFE radio programmes, such as *Zenés üzenetek* (in rough English translation: Messages with music); *Jazzfórum*; *Slágerparádé* (Hit parade); *Teenager party*; *Délutáni randevú*; *Filmkrónika*; *Forgószínpad* (Revolving stage); and *Levelesláda* (Mailbox) – embodied implicit protests against Hungarian/East European communism. These programmes were oriented to the same goal, i.e., „lifting spirits” of East European listeners and promoting a steady and smooth change of the communist system, thus keeping in line with the general USA foreign policy after 1956. For example, the intro tunes of the *Forgószínpad* (Revolving stage), during those times a well known American melody of „The happy days are here again!” was certainly a deliberate choice. Similarly well-targeted were Ekecs's personalised re-

ports from the most famous film festivals around the world (Cannes, Venice, Paris, etc.) in his programme *Filmkrónika* (EKECS 1996: 92), where he regularly reported on films „which could not get into Hungary from political reasons, or when they did, they were often modified through intentional cutting or through dubbing which forged actors' words". (EKECS 1996: 97)

Keeping *Teenager party* away from direct political development did not mean total resignation on the exploitation of propaganda potential of both the programme itself and of the received correspondence. Ekecs sometimes received letters with such an explicit political content that was impossible to ignore, such as „It was two years ago when I walked through a mine-field at Hegyeshalom and successfully escaped from Hungary". (EKECS 1996: 190) Some listeners voluntarily offered providing him with any needed information („I would love to give you any information, just ask for it"); while others expressed open dissatisfaction with the social-political reality of their country. Like the one (codename: Delta) who was severely complaining about the situation of the Hungarian minority, including the post-1945 political atrocities committed by „Slovak communists", and their pushing Hungarians out of the Bratislava city „which used to be the capital city of the coronation of the Hungarian kings".

The heads of the Hungarian Desk as well as the higher RFE management were of genuine and very interesting source from the communist-led Hungary. In his memoirs Cseke mentions that Ilona Kührner, his secretary and aid, who pre-arranged the mail to him, „passed on some letters to our bosses if they contained something interesting". (EKECS 1996: 84) Without further specifications, this fact of passing on interesting letters to the bosses might be the reason why there are no letters preserved from the earlier periods (at the OSA, they begin in 1969), and also why we suspect that some letters were passed on, especially in the early phases of the radio, into the hands of the information gathering machinery operating at the RFE.

In the mid-1960s two translated volumes of selected letters received by Ekecs were issued: *Teenager party, the RFE program which has captured the Hungarian youth* (1965); and *Bridge building, listeners' responses to the broadcast of the Hungarian broadcasting department* (1965). Through official publication under the auspices of RFE München their propaganda value was acknowledged and enhanced. As a reward for the preparation of the letter collection, Ekecs was invited to a travel tour across the

USA that lasted for some months. The impact of the selection was strengthened by the inclusion of letters, where writers openly stated their opposition to Ekecs's political views, yet still asked him for songs. (EKECS 1996: 189) Such phrases might have been included by the writer just with the intention to lower the damage in case the letter was intercepted by Communist postal censorship. But even so, the delivery of the listed songs while quoting the author's mention of political differences could be perceived by the general auditory as a persuasive manifestation of practical tolerance to different political worldviews, so dissimilar to their everyday experience with East European regimes.

Conclusions

The decision to include *Teenager party* into the RFE schedule was a result of several concurring factors. There was a war-enhanced rapid development of communication technology, which massively outgrew into the civil environment. The role of public diplomacy grew and traditional statesmen negotiations were strongly complemented with developing „Government-to-people” relations. (SEGEŠ 2014: 196) The tragic experience of the Hungarian uprising and slow post-1956 thaw in the US-Soviet relations favoured the withdrawal from heated mobilising „political” propaganda and its redirection to fields of economics, culture, science and sports. Lengthy socio-cultural change in perception of childhood and adulthood led to the post-war „birth” of teenagers as a specific age-group, consumer-group, which also meant an audience group.

Teenager party reached and influenced not only the youth in Hungary, but also in the neighbouring countries (Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia), where – namely in areas with difficult access to other sources of Western music, which was the case of the territory of southern and central Slovakia – its audience was not limited only to young people of Hungarian descent. The programme successfully addressed different strata of young population, from older classes of primary schools to young men in the military service, young employees and university students. In spite of the lack of standard sociological profile, a notion about the variety of respondents can be derived from the biographical remarks and short stories included in the letters, as well as from the diverse levels of literacy among the correspondents.

This does not apply only to their differing skills in using Hungarian grammar and style, but also to their grasp of English (see „Dik Pölphil” for Deep Purple or request for „Cereedence, Cleo Walter, Reviva” instead of „Creedence Clearwater Revival”, etc.) or other foreign languages.

Both RFE teenager-targeted broadcasts to East Europe and their correspondence back to the RFE contributed to the creation of *local youth counter-culture*. This was defining itself in the context of an imposed conformist regime model of youth cultural activities, interests and views as non-conforming, if not oppositional. The notion of „political” did not prove to be a helpful tool neither for content analysis of broadcast and letters, nor for their further impact. After all, already a „pure” uncommented broadcast of Western music led to rising interest in scarce commodities (records, posters), thus resulting in burgeoning black-but-free market in the school classes, those would-be shrines of regime indoctrination. Sharing knowledge from the „forbidden” source of unsanctioned information developed into non-formal networks, knit by the common „secret”. On the other hand, the preserved correspondence also documents that (and sometimes also how much) the „counter-discourse” was permeated by formal and regimist elements learned in common school curriculum.

Even though Ekecs’ S programme was aimed primarily at the youth, whereas by its musical content, timing, the character of supplementary information and references to peer-community, the adults, namely parents, were not completely out of the game. According to some letters, they regularly participated in correspondence with the Teenager party, acting as translators, re-typists, smugglers, or directly as writers of letters on request for their offspring. His musical programmes also provided a regular dose of common matter of interest for older pupils and young adults, thus blurring the border between the two „formal” and „legally defined” age groups of children and adults to „teenagers”.

Despite the overtly non-political tone of his broadcast, Ekecs was occasionally fiercely targeted by Hungarian Communist propaganda. One of the notorious attacks came in a series of articles by István Pintér, in mass circulated daily *Népszabadság*: “Ekecs Géza is the editor of the Teenager party, a covert music programme, in fact a political programme at the RFE, to whose address in Munich military, and state security, and spy reports are being sent”. (EKECS 1996: 99) Nevertheless, the existence of youth broadcasts, accessible over the Iron Curtain, urged local political represen-

tations to face the growing interest in this kind of music and initiated the production of competing local programmes. An undated quote of János Kádár, when asked about his view on RFE and its popularity among the youth, records his laconic statement about it, „playing good music”. (PUDDINGTON 2000: 140) It was accepted that the competitiveness of such local musical programmes was conditioned by making space for exactly that kind of music, the one that the hardliners despised.

Any attempt to answer a question of the „political impact” of *Teenager party* easily falls into a trap of anachronism. Public space in the Soviet bloc was a „politicised” space, all public acts tended to be interpreted through political lenses and the same intention was applied to private space, even though less successfully. In such context, escaping political activities was read as an expression of political attitude.

But a politicised public space did not necessarily mean „regimist” – on the contrary, any unsanctioned activity could turn the public space (such as class, involved in sticker-market or a school-club where Western music was played) into a politically (!) non-conforming space. Many participating teenagers were uninterested in forming a systematic political view, just in listening to or playing their music, etc. And thus for many, facing repression for their „non-political” ways of leisure was the first time when they started to be aware of „the state” and recognise it as an oppressing entity. (VANĚK 2004: 340) In hindsight, with decades of different life-experience, a number of such activities lacking explicit political content are perceived as non-political and tend to slip off attention.

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* * * **Archival & Newspaper Sources** * * *

Open Society Archives Budapest: HU OSA 300-40-12. Fond Correspondence relating to Hungarian Program Teenager Party. 21 archival boxes dated between 1971–1976.

Part II.

Media propaganda as ideological
war & Sources

A kommunista párt- és állambiztonsági szervek offenzív és defenzív propaganda-intézkedései a nyugati országok »ideológiai diverziója« elleni harcban

Révész Béla



Nem túlzás azt állítani, hogy Vlagyimir Iljics Lenin számára a propaganda maga volt a politika, és ez fordítva is igaz. Szinte bárhol lapozzuk fel írásait, elkerülhetetlen ennek felismerése. Az orosz szociáldemokraták feladatai c. munkájában 1897-ben pl. ezt írta: „Az orosz szociáldemokraták szocialista tevékenységének lényege az, hogy propagálják a tudományos szocializmus tanait...” (LENIN 1981, II: 407) Legközelebbi feladatunk c. írásában arra mutatott rá, hogy be kell vinni a dolgozó tömegek tudatába a tudományos forradalmi elméletet, ki kell alakítani bennük a szocialista meggyőződést, „amelynek a modern tudomány színvonalán kell állnia.” (LENIN 1981, IV: 175) A kommunista párt propagandájának elengedhetetlen feltétele, hirdette Lenin, hogy „az az egyedüli igazság”: „Propagandánk mindig mindenütt az igazat mondta és mondja a munkásoknak és parasztoknak, ezzel szemben minden más propaganda hazudik nekik.” (LENIN 1981 XXXVII: 223)

Az „igaz” propaganda együtt járt az eszme tömeges terjesztésével. A bolsevik párt igaz szavának legyőzhetetlenségéről beszélt Lenin az OK(b)P IX. kongresszusán a Központi Bizottság beszámolójában: „A propaganda és az agitáció legyen világos – ez alapvető feltétel. Ha még az ellenfeink is kijelentették és elismerték, hogy az agitáció és propaganda terén csodákat műveltünk, ezt nem formailag kell érteni, vagyis nem úgy, hogy sok agitátorunk volt és sok papirost használtunk el, hanem tar-

talmilag, hogy tudniillik az agitációnkban rejlő igazság mindenki tudatába utat tört magának”. (LENIN 1981, XV: 223)

A propaganda és az agitáció új, immár állami feladatokat kapott az októberi forradalom után: „Az államhatalommal óriási államapparátus jutott a kezünkbe — hangsúlyozta ekkoriban Lenin —, melynek segítségével új vágányra tereltük az agitációt.” (LENIN 1981, XV: 178) A politikai felvilágosító bizottságok összoroszországi tanácskozásán mondott beszédében pedig arról is szólt, mi a propaganda szerepe a dolgozók kommunista nevelésében: „Át kell nevelni a tömegeket, márpedig a tömegek átnevelésére csak az agitáció és a propaganda képes, egybe kell kapcsolni a tömegeket legelsősorban közös gazdasági életünk építésével. Ez legyen a legfőbb és leglényegesebb minden egyes agitátor-propagandista munkájában, s ha ezt elsjátítja, munkájának sikere biztosítva lesz.” (LENIN 1981, XXXVIII: 178)

Lenin tehát hasznos — és többnyire kötelező — sorvezetőt jelentett a 20. század egészében a kommunista mozgalom vezetői számára. Mondatai bármikor hivatkozási alapot jelenthettek a legkülönbözőbb korszakokban és helyzetekben. A retorikai uniformizáltság gyakran felcserélhetővé teszi az egyes politikusoknak a mondatait. Erre utalt egy csehszlovák pártpropagandista, aki szerint „Lenin és Klement Gottwald propagandaművészete példa mindazok számára, akik az ideológia területén dolgoznak, és akiket az a kérdés foglalkoztat, vajon miként tökéletesíthetik az ideológiai munka hatékonyságát. Lenin és Klement Gottwald azoknak a lektoroknak a példaképei, akik igyekeznek önállóan felhasználni a marxizmus-leninizmus tanait a valóság értékelésére, s harcot vívnak a dolgozó ember szocialista tudatáért, a világ forradalmi átalakulásáért.” (DIANISKA 1983:180-181)

Lenin és Kádár János magyar pártvezető fél évszázaddal későbbi szónoklatai között már nehezebb felismerni az összefüggéseket.

„Mindenekelőtt szükséges az eszmei harc javítása és fokozása. Ennek fő oka az, hogy rendszerünk fő támasza a dolgozó tömegeknek, elsősorban a munkásosztály tömegeinek aktív, tényleges támogatása. A tömegek mozgósítása pedig a marxizmus-leninizmus eszméinek a terjesztése, a társadalmi élet, az osztályharc állandóan felmerülő új kérdéseire adott világos, marxista-leninista válaszoknak a terjesztése nélkül nem lehetséges.”³⁰³

³⁰³ Kádár János beszéde a kínai párt- és kormányküldöttség látogatása alkalmával rendezett nagytárgyalás-értekezleten 1957. január 16-án. Idézi PÁLOS 1987: 137.

„A magyar forradalmi munkásmozgalom egész története arról tanúskodik, hogy a szocializmusért vívott küzdelemnek szerves része az eszmei harc, hogy a proletárforradalom nem győzhet a marxizmus-leninizmusért folytatott szívós és következetes ideológiai küzdelem nélkül.”³⁰⁴

„A nemzetközi ideológiai harcban ellenfeleink minden lehetséges alkalmat és eszközt felhasználnak, hogy megkíséreljék aláásni a szocialista országok tekintélyét. Arra törekszenek, hogy csökkentsék a világ dolgozó tömegeinek szolidaritását a szocialista országok iránt, és megingassák az új társadalom felépítésének lehetőségébe vetett bizalmát. Bomlasztani igyekeznek a baráti szocialista országok egységét, elütözzák és elvi különbségnek tüntetik fel a szocialista építés eltérő nemzeti sajátosságait. Az ideológiák harcát vállaltuk és vállaljuk. A kommunista pártok mindig is tisztában voltak azzal, hogy a társadalmi fejlődésért vívott harcban az ideológiák összeütközése elkerülhetetlen.”³⁰⁵

Karl Mannheim Lenin kortársként szemlélte a tömeges és totális »igazság-propaganda« uralomra jutását, és tudásszociológiai vonatkozásaira tekintettel bírálta azt: „A szocialista tudat nem spirituálisan szublimált alakban éli meg az eszmét, ha annak a folyamatba való jelenlegi behatolásáról, fokozatos keletkezéséről van szó. Az eszme itt egy *újfajta szubsztancia* alakjában lép elénk, szinte élőlény gyanánt, amely meghatározott létfeltételekkel rendelkezik, s ezek megismerése tudományos kutatás témájává válhat. Az eszmék itt nem az abszolútumok szférájából aláereszkedő vágyálmok vagy követelmények, nem imaginárius *legyen*-ek, sokkal inkább konkrét életük van és meghatározott funkciójuk az össz folyamatban: elhalnak, ha idejétmúlttá válnak, megvalósulhatnak, ha a társadalmi folyamat elér egy bizonyos strukturális helyzetig – ilyen, reális fedés nélkül azonban »elleplező« ideológiákká válnak.”

A „konkrét életet” élő eszme másfelől a sokasodó determinánsokra hivatkozik, amellyel egyúttal igazolhatóvá válik a szabad döntés játéktérének a korlátozása is. „Az irányadó szándék immár nem abban rejlik, hogy szabadon lebegő impulzusok alapján megragadják a tetszőleges itt és most kínálta alkalmat, hanem hogy a struk-

³⁰⁴ A lenini eszmék hatása és megvalósulása Magyarországon – Lenin születésének 90. évfordulójára, 1960. április. PÁLOS 1987:143.

³⁰⁵ A Központi Bizottság beszámolója a XIII. Kongresszuson, 1985. március. PÁLOS 1987: 187.

turális textúrában rögzítsék a cselekvés számára kedvező pillanatot. A politikus feladata, hogy tudatosan erősítse mindazon erőket, amelyek dinamikája az övével azonos irányban mozog, az összes ellentétes erőt pedig saját irányába fordítsa át, vagy legalább paralizálja. A történelem-élmény ezáltal valóságos stratégiai tervvé válik: immár *mindent a történelemben szellemileg és akaratilag uralható álláspontként élnek meg.*” (MANNHEIM 1996: 272, 278)

Az eszme társadalmi-politikai szerepére vonatkozó Lenin—Mannheim közötti ideológiai – tudásszociológiai ellentét nem teoretikus síkon, hanem a gyakorlati-hatalmi praxis legmeghatározóbb elemeként – „determinánsaként” – befolyásolja az egész 20. század politikatörténetét. Az elméleti keretek esettanulmányyszerű kitöltése olyan példákat kíván erre felhozni, amely a kommunista tömb legtöbb államában hasonló, ha nem azonos módszerekkel vette fel a harcot a hidegháború idején a „nyugati imperialista erők ellenséges, fellazító tevékenységével”, az „ideológiai diverzióval” szemben. A saját propaganda funkcióinak abszolutizálásán, jelentőségének felülértékelésén túl ugyanis a más, ellenséges propaganda szerepének, hatásmechanizmusának démonizálása jelezte leginkább a hidegháborús időszak kommunikációs szférájának súlyos torzulásait.

Fogalom-magyarázatok

A *propaganda eszközeivel vívott hadviselés* gyakran egymással keveredő, olykor el-
lentmondásos kifejezéseinek és fogalmainak megértése érdekében figyelembe kell
venni a korabeli állambiztonsági szervek által használatos ideologisztikus tartalmu-
kat.³⁰⁶ A *fellazítás* – eszerint – „a nemzetközi erőviszonyok mozgása által kikén-
yszerített, a békés egymás mellett élés lehetőségeit kihasználó taktika, amely főként
az európai szocialista országok ellen irányul. A szocialista és a kapitalista világrend-
szer közötti nemzetközi méretekben folyó osztályharc és érintkezés egyik sajátos,
az élet szinte minden területére kiterjedő, a mai korra jellemző megnyilvánulási for-

³⁰⁶ Az állambiztonsági munkában alkalmazott szakkifejezésekre lásd GERGELY 1980. A továbbiakban azonban hasznosabb egy, a tárgyalt kategóriák összehasonlító elemzésével foglalkozó tanulmány megállapításait is figyelembe venni: VARGA 1973.

mája, amely éppen úgy az antikommunizmus stratégiáját szolgálja, mint korábban a »feltartóztatás«, vagy a »felszabadítás« taktikája. Célja, hogy az ún. »békés« mód-szerekkel megbontsa a szocialista országok egységét, s szembeállítsa azokat egymással, mindenekelőtt a Szovjetunióval, s az egyes szocialista országokon belül erősítse a polgári, kispolgári nézeteket és hangulatokat.

A lélektani (pszichológiai) hadviselés „olyan propagandamódszerek tervszerű felhasználása bizonyos nemzet (nemzetek csoportja) által háború vagy rendkívüli állapot idején, amelynek célja, hogy befolyásolják az ellenséges, semleges vagy baráti külföldi csoportok álláspontját, érzelmeit és magatartását, hogy azáltal elnyerjék támogatásukat a nemzet politikájához. Fogalma felöleli a propaganda és a különböző információs tevékenység tervszerű bevetését abból a célból, hogy ellenséges vagy más külföldi csapatok véleményét, érzéseit, magatartását és viselkedését olyan irányba befolyásolja, hogy ezzel elérje a saját nemzeti, politikai vagy katonai célkitűzéseinek támogatását.” Az „imperialista lélektani hadviselés” lényege, hogy (1) nem a meggyőzés, inkább a „politikai intervenció, a más országok belügyeibe való beavatkozás” eszköze; (2) a lakosság különböző rétegeinek értelmére és érzelmére irányul, hogy azoknak „megrendüljön a marxizmus–leninizmusba vetett hite, a szocialista társadalomba vetett bizalma”; (3) az európai szocialista országok ellen a *Szabad Európa Rádió* a lélektani hadviselés, az ellenséges propaganda eszköze.

*Ideológiai diverzió*nak a marxista ideológia, a dialektikus világszemlélet ellen irányuló tevékenységet tartották, amely célja, hogy „a társadalomban és az egyes emberek tudatában egyaránt a kapitalista társadalmi tudatot, ideológiát fogadjuk be, erkölcsünket a burzsoá erkölcsi normákkal helyettesítsük, aszerint éljünk, ami viszont a magántulajdonon, a kizsákmányoláson alapul, vagyis: állítsuk vissza a kapitalizmust”. Ezért elsősorban azoknak az elméleteknek ad nagy nyilvánosságot, amelyek „a kapitalizmus jelenét s főleg jövőjét próbálják a tőkés társadalom érdekeinek megfelelően magyarázni, mint a »népi kapitalizmus«, amelyekkel a kapitalizmus lényegét szeretnék elrejteni. Mindezzel olyan illúziókat akarnak keltetni, mintha forradalmi átalakulások nélkül is elérhető lenne mindaz, amire a dolgozók a kapitalista világban törekednek.” Az ideológiai diverzió „eltúlozza nehézségeinket, minden hibánkat a »rendszer számlájára ír«, a szocializmus törvényszerű velejárójaként tünteti fel”. Fő törekvése a szovjetellenesség fokozása, a szocialista országok közötti „szövetségi szálak” gyengítése, az „országaink közötti bizalmatlanság keltése”.

Bár nem vált általánossá, de létezett egy további – inkább a német irodalomban elterjedt – kategória is. A *szubverzió* „a társadalom elleni támadás nem katonai formája, amelyen belül törvényes és törvénytelen eszközökkel ? beleértve az erőszakot is ? támadják a társadalmi rendet, és ezzel törvénytelenül illegálisan megváltoztatják a társadalmi vagy hatalompolitikai jellegeket.”³⁰⁷

Magyarországi propagandaháború a második antagonisztikus kooperáció idején

Az Európai Biztonsági és Együttműködési Értekezlet furcsa helyet foglalt el az enyhülési folyamat megtorpanása-visszafordítása – és ideologikussá válása – menetében. Mintha azért várták volna a tárgyalófelek a záróokmány aláírását, hogy utána sor kerülhessen ennek teljesen eltérő értelmezésére. Az 1975. augusztus 1-jén aláírt dokumentum tartalmazza a tagországok kapcsolatainak – részben új, részben megújított – alapelveit (egymás szuverenitásának tiszteletben tartása, lemondás az erőszakkal való fenyegetésről, területi integritás, a vitás kérdések békés rendezése, egymás belügyeibe való be nem avatkozás, az emberi jogok és alapvető szabadságjogok betartása, a népek egyenjogúsága és önrendelkezési joga), és intézkedéseket irányzott elő katonai téren a kölcsönös bizalom erősítésére.

Mivel a megállapodás jellegét tekintve nem nemzetközi jogi érvényű szerződés, hanem politikai deklaráció volt, így megsértése nem vont maga után hátrányos jogkövetkezményeket. Egyes értékelések szerint elsősorban a Szovjetunió húzott belőle hasznot, hiszen a dokumentum megerősítette a háború utáni politikai és területi status quót. Ezt látszik igazolni Brezsnyevnek az 1976-os pártkongresszuson tett kijelentése: „Az enyhülés egyáltalán nem helyezi és nem is helyezheti hatályaon kívül az osztályharc törvényeit [...] Nem titkoljuk, hogy az enyhülést a békés szocialista és kommunista építés kedvezőbb feltételeinek megteremtéséhez vezető útként ke-

³⁰⁷ A *szubverzív tevékenység folyamata és elhárítási stratégiájának rendszabályai*. 1979. november. ÁBTL Könyvtár 33/1701. Az ideológiai hadviselés említett fogalmainak és megállapításainak propagandisztikus magyarázata egyébként a nyilvános könyvkiadásban is megjelent.

zeljük.” Sőt a kongresszusi határozat szerint az sem mondott ellent az enyhülés szellemének, hogy az ún. szocialista orientációjú országokban minden eszközzel segítette a forradalmi erők hatalomra kerülését: „Úgy cselekszünk, ahogyan forradalmi lelkiismeretünk, kommunista meggyőződésünk diktálja.”³⁰⁸

A Nyugat viszont először látott lehetőséget arra, hogy nyitottabbá tegye a kommunista rezsimeket. Az ún. harmadik kosár ugyanis a kulturális együttműködés körén belül az információcsere, az oktatás, az emberi kapcsolattartás szabadságának lehetőségeit tartalmazta. Az optimistábbak szerint – bár az aláírás a szovjet befolyási övezet nyugati határainak elismerését jelentette – a záróokmány az emberi és szabadságjogok tiszteletben tartását számon kérő rendelkezései elősegítik a kommunizmus térségbeli feltartóztatását.

A kelet-európai országok viszont az ún. Fakultatív jegyzőkönyvet („Együttműködés humanitárius és egyéb területen”) nem írták alá,³⁰⁹ és továbbra is korlátozták az emberi jogok érvényesülését, illetve nemzetközi ellenőrzésüket.³¹⁰ Ford amerikai elnök a megállapodás aláírásakor kijelentette: „Fontos, hogy önök [*a szocialista országok*] is felismerjék, milyen mély odaadást érez az amerikai nép és kormánya az emberi jogok és alapvető szabadságjogok iránt, s ennek folytán az emberek, az eszmék és információk szabad áramlása tekintetében a konferencián tett fogadalmak iránt.” (DANKÓ 1981:78) Fél évvel később viszont

³⁰⁸ Brezsnyev beszámolója az SZKP XXV. Kongresszusán. Idézi HELLER-NYEKRICS 1996: 510.

³⁰⁹ Még alig kezdődtek el 1972 végén az Európai Biztonsági és Együttműködési Értekezlet előkészítő tárgyalásai, a magyar propagandaapparatús már „az emberek, eszmék, információk szabad áramlása” témájának az ideológiai diverzió terén tapasztalható fokozódó veszélyeire hívta fel a figyelmet. Szerintük erre utaltak az ellenség olyan kijelentései, miszerint „a szabad áramlás követelése a szovjet totális diktatúra központi idegszálára tapint rá”, vagy hogy ilyen módon „bizonyos rés nyitható a szocializmus zárt társadalmán”. A Magyar Népköztársaság ellen irányuló imperialista propaganda. Melléklet 1. l. MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály 1972. október 12. Magyar Országos Levéltár, a továbbiakban: MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 11/3448. ő. e.

³¹⁰ Ezért jött létre a Helsinki-mozgalom. Elsőként a Szovjetunióban a Moszkvai Helsinki Csoport 1976-ban, majd Nyugat-Európában és Kelet- és Közép-Európa országaiban, hogy nyomon kövessék, illetve számon kérjék az adott kormányon a Záróokmányban foglalt jogok érvényesülését.

Ford már arra hívta fel a figyelmet, hogy törli politikai szótárából a détente szót, mert az nem fejezi ki, hogy a békét az „erő helyzetéből” akarja biztosítani. (PÓK 1998: 148)

1975 decemberében Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Kissinger tanácsadója az amerikai–szovjet enyhülés és az amerikai–kínai nyitás stratégiai céljainak logikáját a közép- és kelet-európai térségre is kiterjesztette, és úgy vélte, az Egyesült Államoknak olyan politikát kell folytatnia, amely „a Kelet-Európa és a Szovjetunió közötti kapcsolatokat organikussá változtatja”, és „válaszolni tud azokra a Kelet-Európában egyértelműen megnyilvánuló törekvésekre, amelyek a meghatározó szovjet geopolitikai hatás keretein belül a nagyobb önállóság kivívására irányulnak”. Bár maga Kissinger is elhatárolódott a „Sonnenfeldt-doktrínától, ez a megfogalmazás mégis a feltartóztatási politika alapvetését kínálta az USA közép- és kelet-európai törekvéseihez – egészen a szovjet blokk összeomlásáig”. (HORVÁTH 1997:47) 1975 után viszont újabb lendületet vett a fegyverkezési verseny: a Szovjetunió az SS-20-as rakétákat állította hadrendbe, a NATO pedig hozzákezdett a Pershing-2 cirkálórakéták európai telepítéséhez. Mindeközben kölcsönösen indulatos propaganda-hadjárat vett kezdetét, és az államközi kapcsolatokban is az ideológiai sablonok váltak általánossá.

A hetvenes évek közepén lehűlt külpolitikai légkör Magyarországon sajátos módon fonódott össze a belpolitikai klíma fagyossá válásával. A hetvenes évek elején ? nem kis mértékben Moszkva elvárásainak eleget téve³¹¹ – visszafogták, majd leállították a Kelet-Európában páratlan megújulási magyar kísérletet, az új gazdasági mechanizmust. A párton belül felülkerekedett a „minden újító lépésnek [...] egy körülhatárolható ellenzéke”,³¹² majd megkezdődött az *ideológiai rendcsinálás* is. Az elsősorban hatalmi-utódlási célokkal fellépett csoport, a „munkásellenzék” a nagyipari

³¹¹ Kádár János a Politikai Bizottság 1972. február 22-i ülésén számolt be a Varsói Szerződés Politikai Tanácskozó Testületének januári, prágai ülésén lezajlott megbeszélésről: „Brezsnyev elvtárs – mindvégig saját, személyes véleményeként – külön és hosszasan beszélt arról, hogy nagyon nyugtalanítja őt Magyarország gazdasági helyzetének néhány negatív mutatója, s egyes jelenségek, amelyek mint tendenciák veszedelmesek.” MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/575. ö. e. Idézi HUSZÁR 2003:238, vö. FÖLDES 1995: 52–77.

³¹² „Ide sorolható Biszku Béla, Gáspár Sándor, Pullai Árpád, s visszafogottabban, tárgyszerűbben Komócsin Zoltán.” HUSZÁR 2003: 234–235.

munkásságra hivatkozva igyekezett megvédeni a „szocialista vívmányokat”.³¹³ Így az 1972-es alkotmánymódosítás nem csupán az állam szocialista jellegét deklarálta, de azt is, hogy „a munkásosztály marxista–leninista pártja a társadalom vezető ereje”. 1972 végén a Központi Bizottság a bírálókat tárggyáá lett gazdasági reform ideológiai fogyatékoságaira is rámutatott: „Időnként felerősödnek a polgári, kispolgári jelenségek, a szocializmus nagy történelmi érdekeit és távlatait szem elől tévesztő individualizmus, önzés legkülönbözőbb formái, egyrészt jobboldali, másrészt ultraradikális nézetek jelentkeznek.”³¹⁴

A munkásosztály társadalmi súlyát erőteljesen növelni kívánó 1974-es KB-döntés is felhívta a figyelmet arra, hogy a „munkásosztály szemléletének erőteljesebb érvényre juttatása” feltétlenül együtt jár a *kispolgári ideológiák elleni küzdelem* fokozásával.³¹⁵ Arra, hogy ez a fokozott jelentőségűvé ideológiai küzdelem az osztályharc területén nem csupán a meggyőzés-nevelés agitációs módszereire korlátozódik, a következő pártkongresszus nyilvánossága előtt világított rá a belügyminiszter: „Az állam elnyomó funkciója fokozatosan módosul, összhangban a belső osztályviszonyok alakulásával és figyelembe véve a külső kapitalista környezetet. Az állami tevékenységben sem hagyhatjuk figyelmen kívül, hogy a kapitalista környezetnek ma is van hatása, mint ahogyan nem feledhetjük fejlődésünkben azokat az itthoni tényezőket sem, amelyek helyenként újratermelik a bűncselekményeket [...] Ellenségeink kívülről hamis illúziókat keltve megpróbálják ideológiai diverziós tevékenységre kihasználni a békés egymás mellett élés politikáját. A lélektani hadviselés régi és új eszközeit vetik be a szocialista országok, köztük hazánk ellen. Hatalmas apparátusok dolgoznak azon, hogy keressék azokat a lehetőségeket, amelyeket kihasználva zavart tudnának kelteni a szocialista országok között és ha-

³¹³ „Világossá kívánták tenni, hogy a kedvezményezettek [*a munkásosztály*] számára semmi-féle új mechanizmus nem veszélyeztetheti érdekeiket, másrészt tudtára adták a reformereknek, hogy új időszak kezdődik, visszatérünk a hagyományos megoldásokhoz.” PETŐ 2001: 120.

³¹⁴ Közlemény az MSZMP Központi Bizottságának üléséről. 1972. november 14–15. In: VASS 1978: 385.

³¹⁵ Az MSZMP Központi Bizottságának irányelvei a munkásosztály társadalmi szerepének fejlesztéséről, helyzetének további javításáról. 1974. március 19–20. VASS 1978: 665.

zánkon belül is. [...] A békés egymás mellett élésért folytatott harc a jövőben valamennyiunktől következetesebb helytállást kíván politikailag is, ideológiailag is.”³¹⁶

Az „állam elnyomó funkciója” fokozatos módosulásának dokumentuma az az itt közölt jelentés, amely ennek az ideológiai harcnak a belügyi vonatkozásait foglalja össze a hetvenes évek közepén. Az anyag a belügyminiszteri értekezlet³¹⁷ számára készült 1976 végén *Az imperialista hírszerző és propagandaszervek törekvései a belső „ellenzék” kialakítására, az elhárító munka tapasztalatai* címmel. A dokumentum természetesen nem előzmény és következmény nélküli a korabeli belügyi iratok körében.³¹⁸ Itt mindenekelőtt olyan iratokra kell gondolni, amelyek a központi pártapparátus álláspontját rögzítik a hetvenes évek ideológiai konfrontációja alapkérdéseiben, és amelyek követendő irányvonalként határozzák meg az állambiztonsági szervek ez irányú további tevékenységét.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Benkei András belügyminiszter felszólalása. *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt XI. kongresszusának jegyzőkönyve*. 1975: 286–287.

³¹⁷ Már 1950-ben, az ÁVH megalakulásakor létrejött egy kollégiumi testületet az Államvédelmi Hatóság vezetőjének munkáját segítő, bár véleményező és tanácsadó testületként 1953 májusában hozta létre egy minisztertanácsi határozat. (KAJÁRI 2001: 29) 1976-tól különbözteti meg egy miniszteri parancs a vezetői értekezleten belül a BM Kollégiumi ülést és a miniszteri vezetői értekezletet. Mindkettő a miniszter tanácsadó véleményező és javaslattevő szerve, de míg a Kollégium elsősorban a külső, felettes politikai és állami szervekkel kapcsolatos feladatokat látta el, addig a miniszteri értekezlet főként a belső operatív irányítással, az állomány egészére vonatkozó kérdésekkel foglalkozott. Mindkettőnek állandó résztvevője volt az MSZMP Belügyminisztériumi Bizottságának első titkára és a BM Titkárság vezetője, de míg a Kollégium többi tagját a miniszter nevezte ki, addig a miniszteri értekezletnek hivatalból tagjai voltak a miniszterhelyettesek, valamint az államtitkár. A Magyar Népköztársaság Belügyminiszterének 16/1976. sz. parancsa (1976. szeptember 10.) BM 10-22/16/1976. Belügyminisztérium Központi Irratár Parancsgyűjtemény (továbbiakban: BM KI Pgy) 1976. 173. doboz (d.)

³¹⁸ A hivatkozott iratok eredeti lelőhelye a kutatás időszakában még a Belügyminisztérium Központi Irratára (BM KI), így forrásként való hivatkozásuk is elsősorban ide mutat. Amennyiben az iratátadások utáni új őrzési helyüket sikerült beazonosítani, ezeket is feltüntettem. Az iratok eredeti iktatási száma viszont ? változatlan lévén ? kellő kiindulópont a dokumentumok mindenkorai azonosításához.

³¹⁹ „A minisztérium munkájának fő irányát és feladatait az MSZMP Központi Bizottsága és vezető szervei rendszeresen meghatározzák.” A Magyar Népköztársaság Belügyminisztériumának ügyrendje. 4. l. BM 10-1950/1971. BM KI Pgy/1971. 129. d.

Az MSZMP Politikai Bizottsága 1966. április 26-i ülésén határozatot fogadott el „Az »imperialisták fellázító politikájának« néhány kérdése”-ről.³²⁰ A határozat néhány alapelve meghatározónak bizonyult a hetvenes évek állambiztonsági munkájában is. Az értékelés szerint a kelet-európai országok ellen irányuló imperialista tevékenység a fellazítást szorosan összekapcsolja a Szovjetunió belső helyzetével. Egyrészt nagyobb erőfeszítéseket kívánnak tenni a Szovjetunió „liberalizálására” – mert szerintük csak ezen keresztül lehet jelentősebb változásokat kierőszakolni a szocialista világban –, másrészt minden területen erősíteni akarják a kapcsolatot Kelet-Európával, ami elképzelésük szerint visszahat a szovjet politikára. Az amerikai stratégek ugyanakkor kimondták, hogy a tőkés világ ne tegyen olyan lépéseket a szocialista világ felé, amelyek kiválthatják a Szovjetunió „bizalmatlanságát”, mert akkor „megmerevednek a frontok”.

Az „imperialista hatalmak” – így a dokumentum – leplezetlenül számítanak arra, hogy az 1970-es években egyes európai szocialista országokban társadalmi válságok robbannak ki a tudományos-műszaki forradalom és a „fogyasztói társadalom” elkerülhetetlen következményeként. Ráadásul a tömegtájékoztatás legkorszerűbb módszereit készülnek bevetni. Amíg az amerikai műhold lehetőséget nem ad a tv-műsor sugárzására, Görögországból akarnak a szocialista országok felé tv-adást sugározni.³²¹ E dokumentum végül arra figyelmeztet, hogy a Magyarországgal szemben alkalmazott fellazítás kiindulópontja az az amerikai értékelés, miszerint „Magyar-

³²⁰ MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/393. ő. e.

³²¹ Az ellenséges műholdas televízióadások megindításának hírei a legkülönbözőbb formában jelent meg a hírszerzés és általuk a politikai vezetés dokumentumaiban. Alig született döntés – alapvetően anyagi megfontolásokból – a rádiózavarások megszüntetéséről (lásd RÉVÉSZ 2000: 382-385), máris egy újabb, műszakilag és pénzügyileg szinte kivédhetetlen veszéllyel kellett szembesülni. Egy verzió szerint az Amerika Hangja és a Szabad Európa Rádió újabb terveket készítettek a szocialista országokba műholdról közvetlenül sugározható, „a rádióadásaihoz hasonlóan direkt diverziós célzatú” televíziósadásokra. „Az Egyesült Államok előreláthatóan 1973-ban India térségében már kipróbálja ezt a műsorsugárzást.” A Magyar Népköztársaság ellen irányuló imperialista propaganda. MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály, 1972. október 12. MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 11/3448. ő. e.; MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának jelentése a műhold közvetítésével sugárzott ellenséges televízió propaganda várható alakulásáról. 1972. szeptember 16. MNL-OL XIX-A-24-b III/004-18 1972/1. Első közlése: CSEH-KRAHULÁCS-MÜLLER-PÓR 2004: 461–464.

ország a külpolitikában teljesen a Szovjetunió oldalán halad, a bel- és gazdaságpolitikában azonban nem”.

1970-ben az MSZMP Agitációs és Propaganda Osztálya jelentést készített az imperialisták fellazító politikája elleni harc helyzetéről, feladatairól³²² az MSZMP KB Titkársága számára.³²³ A szokásoknak megfelelően a jelentésben az Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály (APO) határozati javaslatot is megfogalmazott a Titkárság számára, amit az majd a Politikai Bizottság terjeszthet. Az APO számításai szerint erre az ülésre 1970. június 30-án került volna sor. A helyzet viszont úgy alakult, hogy közel három évet várt ennek a kérdésnek a napirendre tűzése, azaz az ideológiai diverzió kérdéseivel tulajdonképpen 1973-ig nem foglalkozott sem a Politikai Bizottság, sem a Titkárság. A késedelem haszna az lehetett, hogy amíg a jelentés még feladatokról beszélt, addig a határozatban már tapasztalatokról is szó esett.³²⁴

A jelentés utal a Politikai Bizottság korábbi határozatára, amely létrehozta az imperialista propaganda figyelésének és feldolgozásának legfontosabb intézményét, az *Értékelő Bizottságot*,³²⁵ amely szervezetileg az APO Külföldi Propaganda Osztály mellett működött. Tagja a Külügyminisztérium, a Belügyminisztérium, a Honvédelmi Minisztérium, a Kultúrkapcsolatok Intézete, a Magyar Távirati Iroda és a Magyar Rádió, illetve a Központi Bizottság részéről a Külügyi Osztály, a Közigazgatási

³²² Jelentés a Titkárságnak az imperialisták fellazító politikája elleni harc helyzetéről, feladatairól. MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály, 1970. június 3. BM KI Belügyminiszteri iratok 1-a-849/1970.

³²³ A Titkárság 1970. július 6-i ülésén foglalkozott *A fellazítás elleni harc helyzete és a további feladatok* című napirendi ponttal. MNL-OL M-KS288. f. 7/357. ő. e.

³²⁴ A Magyarországgal szembeni „imperialista propaganda” ellen folytatott harc tapasztalatai. Az MSZMP Politikai Bizottsága 1973. május 22-i ülése. MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/611. ő. e. Az ülésen meghozott döntés (*Az MSZMP Politikai Bizottságának határozata az imperialista propaganda ellen folytatott harc tapasztalatairól és erősítéséről*) egy évtizedre meghatározta az ideológiai diverzió elleni harc irányvonalát. A határozat első közlése: CSIZMADIA 1995: 60–66, továbbá CSEH-KRAHULÁCS-MÜLLER-PÓR 2004: 613–619.

³²⁵ A Politikai Bizottság 1969. március 24-i ülése, MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/486. ő. e. Csizmadia Ervin jegyzetében tévesen 1969. március 10-re datálja a KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának felépítéséről, feladatköréről és munkamódszereiről szóló határozatot. Vö. CSIZMADIA 1995: 66. Március 10-én azonban, miként az irat jelzetéből is kiderül: 288. f. 7/323. ő. e., az előterjesztést véglegesítő Titkárság tartott ülést.

és Adminisztratív Osztály, valamint a Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztály képviselője volt. A negyedévenként összegzett tapasztalatok nyomán az Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály feladat volt az imperialista propaganda ellensúlyozására alkalmas propagandaterv elkészítése. Jakab Sándor, az APO vezetője a megindult munkáról tájékoztatva Kádár Jánost megemlítette, hogy mivel több szocialista ország testvérpártja is készít hasonló értékelést, ezért „e pártok részéről nagy az érdeklődés az értékelések rendszeres cseréje iránt”.³²⁶ Annak, hogy az 1973-as PB-határozat még mindig csak feladatként ismétli meg a három évvel korábbi javaslatot, oka lehetett az is, hogy Komócsin Zoltán külügyi titkár kezdettől fogva csak Moszkvának javasolta átadni az anyagot (ráadásul az 1973-as határozat már bizonyos nyugati testvérpártokra is ki kívánta terjeszteni az ilyen jellegű tájékoztatást).

Öt év múlva, amikor Grósz Károly az APO vezetőjeként jelentést készített az Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság számára – a szokásos formulák mellett –, arra hívta fel a figyelmet, hogy a korábbiaknál nagyobb jelentőséget kell tulajdonítani a helytelen politikai nézetek kialakulásában a belső tényezőknek: „Az ellenséges propaganda hatása népünk tudatára abban figyelhető meg, hogy bizonyos fokig hozzájárul a köznapitudatban még jelenlévő nem szocialista nézeteknek, a régi társadalomtól örökölt előítéleteknek, erkölcsi felfogásnak a fennmaradásához, a közösségellenes magatartás megnyilvánulásaihoz. A burzsoá propagandával összefügg a nacionalizmus, a szovjetellenesség jelentkezése, a szocializmus vívmányainak helyenként tapasztalható lebecsülése, a tökéletes rendszer iránti illúziók táplálása, a hamis információk terjedése, belső és külső nehézségeink felnagyítása, a közhangulat esetenkénti megromlása.”³²⁷

Az imperialista propagandafigyelés és -elemzés rendszere ekkorra az Értékelő Bizottság negyedéves összefoglalói mellett további elemekkel bővült. Tematikus ösz-

³²⁶ Jakab Sándor a Politikai Bizottság 1969. december 16-i ülésének Kádár Jánoshoz eljuttatott anyagaihoz csatolta saját, 1969. december 8-i keltezésű feljegyzéseit. MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/507. ő. e.

³²⁷ Jelentés az Agit. Prop. [sic!] Bizottságnak az imperialista propaganda ellen folytatott harc tapasztalatairól és erősítéséről szóló 1973. május 22-i PB-határozat végrehajtásáról és a további feladatokról. MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály, 1978. szeptember 30. BM KI Belügyminiszteri iratok 182.1-a-1362/78. A jelentésnek a Titkársághoz benyújtott változatát (MOL M-KS 288. f. 20/1070/1978. ő. e.). Közli: továbbá CSEH-KRAHULÁCS-MÜLLER-PÓR 2004: 650–657.

sze foglalkók készültek a hazai „politikai megnyilvánulások burzsoá visszhangjáról”, esetenkénti tájékoztatók a fontosabb „burzsoá” propagandakampányokról, és folyamatosan tájékoztatták a KB-osztályokat a területüket érintő „burzsoá” kommentárokról. Ráadásul a KISZ KB is megkezdte az *iffúság irányába* folytatott „burzsoá propaganda” rendszeres figyelését és értékelését. A hátráltató tényezők sorában első helyen említette a jelentés, hogy propagandát követő rádiólehallgató állomás munkája a politikai szelekció hiánya, a technikai problémák és a kádergondok miatt nem felel meg a „megnövekedett követelményeknek”.

Az Agitációs és Propaganda Osztály említett jelentésének elkészítéséhez természetesen a Belügyminisztérium is szolgáltatott információkat.³²⁸ Ez az anyag – és ezt sem az Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság, sem a Titkárság számára készített előterjesztés nem tartalmazta – az állambiztonsági szerveknek azokról a közvetlen eszközeiről is szólt, amelyekkel az „imperialista propaganda” elhárításához hozzájárulnak. Az állambiztonság eszerint az ideológiai diverziós akciókkal szemben „rendeltetésének megfelelően alapvetően az operatív és adminisztratív intézkedéseivel vesz részt”, így például a belügyi szervek „politikai igények alapján” különféle cikkeket helyeznek el egyes nyugati lapokban. Ennek kapcsán viszont azt kifogásolta a feljegyzés, hogy ezeknek az akcióknak a végrehajtásához „a BM számára konkrét igény-meghatározás szükséges [ti. a politikai vezetés irányából], hogy a külföldön lévő speciális lehetőségeit milyen intenzíven és tartalommal aktivizálja”.

A jelentés következő megállapítása szerint „A legaktívabb ellenzéki csoportosulások ellen a III/I., -II., -III. Csoportfőnökségeknek – külső és belső vonatkozásban egyaránt – az eddigieknél hatékonyabb közös egyszerű együttműködést kell megvalósítani. Közös erőfeszítéssel biztosítani kell, hogy az elszigetelt belső ellenséges erők ne válhassanak szervezett ellenzékké.”

A külső és belső elhárítás együttműködésének 1975-ös szabályzata³²⁹ szerint a csoportfőnökségek együttműködésének szélesítését és tartalmi javítását négy tényező magyarázza: „A külső és belső ellenség taktikájának, tevékenységének szoros össze-

³²⁸ Feljegyzés az MSZMP PB 1973. május 22-i határozata végrehajtásáról készülő előterjesztéshez. 1978. augusztus. BM KI Belügyminiszteri iratok 124/1978.

³²⁹ A Belügyminisztérium III/II. és III/III. Csoportfőnökségek együttműködésének szabályzata. BM III/II. és III/III. Csoportfőnökség 45-155-1/75. Történeti Hivatal [ÁBTL-jelzete nem ismert.] 1. 11. 1. ABMHT 151.

fonódása; az ideológiai diverzió, a fellazítás, az ellenséges behatolás lehetőségeinek jelentős bővülése; a két csoportfőnökség feladatkörének szoros kapcsolata, összefüggése, a végrehajtásban a kölcsönös egymásrautaltság; az ellenséges hírszerző szervek és a belső ellenség elleni harcban a rendelkezésünkre álló erők és eszközök koncentráltabb felhasználása, feladataink végrehajtásában a szélesebb bázisra történő támaszkodás”.

Ennek megfelelően az együttműködés iránya, célterületei, keretei, formái, az együttműködésbe bevonható erők, eszközök, az információcsere, -értékelés, -elemzés a konkrét együttműködés során tulajdonképpen egyetlen szubjektummá tömörítették a két elhárító szolgálatot. Az együttműködés közös célterületei a két csoportfőnökség elhárítási (védelmi) vonalai, objektumai, az ellenséges hírszerző szervek, központok, az ellenséges tevékenységet folytató csoportok és személyek voltak. Azok a külföldi és hazai „ellenséges személyek”, akiknek tevékenysége „állampolgáraink között a burzsoá ideológia és életszemlélet terjesztésére, belső életünk »liberalizálására«, »megreformálására« irányul” vagy „a kulturális területen lévő ellenséges csoportok, személyek; a fiatalok körében, az ifjúságvédelem területén ellenséges tevékenységet folytatók; az egyházi reakció; a hagyományos ellenséges kategóriák”. Ezért a konkrét együttműködés keretében a csoportfőnökségek szervei „kezdeményezzenek olyan közös operatív intézkedéseket, akciókat (kombinációk, játszmák, dezinformációs lépések, csapdák), amelyek meggyorsítják az információk ellenőrzését, a feldolgozó munkát és biztosítják a szervek és az összállambiztonsági érdekek érvényesülését”.

Az 1976 decemberi jelentés utóélete a későbbi, hasonló témájú dokumentumokban követhető nyomon. A miniszteri értekezletnek a jelentés alapján meghatározott állásfoglalása, illetve a nyomában kiadott miniszteri utasítás az állambiztonsági szervek egyik fő feladatává tette a „belső ellenzék” kialakítására, aktivizálására irányuló ellenséges törekvések felderítését, leleplezését és akadályozását. (Adatainak és megállapításainak fontosságát alig egy hónappal később hirtelen megnövelte a Charta '77 melletti szolidaritás kifejezésére akkor indult aláírásgyűjtő akció, amely új ? a rendszerváltásig tartó ? szakaszt nyitott a hatalommal való ellenzéki szembenállás történetében.)³³⁰ Az anyag újabb, az időköz-

³³⁰ Az aláírás-gyűjtés „aktív szervezőire”, „aktív résztvevőire”, valamint a „szimpatizálók” névsorára lásd: Jelentés a Charta '77-szolidaritási akcióról. 1977. november 8. BM KI Belügyminiszteri iratok 1-a-68/1977.

ben megszerzett adatokkal bővített változata másfél évvel későbbi keltezésű.³³¹ A negyvenoldalas jelentés „az ellenség taktikájában végbement változásokat, a »belső ellenzék« szervezésére irányuló újabb törekvéseket, illetve az ellenintézkedéseket” foglalta össze. Bár Benkei András belügyminiszter a Kádár Jánosnak írt kísérőlevelében „az elmúlt hónapok” felméréseiről beszélt, a jelentés tartalmában mégis felfedezhetők az 1976-os anyag legfontosabb megállapításai. A leglényegesebb változást azonban a két jelentés között valaminek a hiánya jelenti. Elmaradt ugyanis az 1978-as anyagból a korábbiiban szerepelt magabiztos és az események következtében gyorsan érvényét veszített megállapítás, amely szerint „az imperialisták és az elszigetelt belső ellenséges erők kísérletei, hogy hazánkban egy szervezett, vagy számottevő »ellenzék« hozzanak létre, nem járt sikerrel. Ezen törekvések megbuktak mindenekelőtt a társadalmi rendünk szilárdságán és hatékonyan korlátozták őket állambiztonsági ellenintézkedéseink is.”

Az 1976-os jelentés külső hasznosítására is gyorsan sor került, aminek lehetőségét meg is előlegezte az egyik megállapítása: „Lehetőségeinkkel jobban élve erősíteni kell munkánk támadó jellegét és ennek érdekében a társ-állambiztonsági szervekkel együttműködve az eddigieknél hatékonyabb aktív intézkedésekkel kell végrehajtani [...] Javasoljuk a társ-állambiztonsági szervek 1977 májusában tervezett szimpóziumát ez irányú tapasztalatcserére és a közös munka ösztönzésére, előkészítésére felhasználni.”

A fél évvel későbbre tervezett konferencia része volt az imperialista szervek ideológiai diverziós tevékenysége elleni internacionalista stratégia kialakítását célzó tárgyalás-sorozatnak, amely során eszmét cseréltek az ideológiai diverzió taktikájával, eszközeivel és módszereivel kapcsolatos közös feladatokról. A háromévenként megrendezett összejöveteleken a „testvéri” szocialista országok állambiztonsági szerveinek vezetői (általában a belügyminiszterek első helyettesei) vezették a delegációkat. Románia csak egy tanácskozáson vett részt, viszont időnként megjelentek a tanácskozásokon a kubai, a mongol, illetve a vietnami állambiztonsági szervek képviselői. Az első tanácskozást Havannában tartották

³³¹ Jelentés az imperialista hatalmak és speciális szerveinek a „belső ellenzék” kialakítására irányuló törekvéseiről, az állambiztonsági szervek ellenintézkedéseiről, a további feladatokról. 1978. június. BM 45-179/1978. BM KI Belügyminiszteri iratok 1-a-952/1978. (A továbbiakban: Jelentés, 1978.)

1974-ben, ezt követte 1977-ben a budapesti,³³² majd 1980-ban a moszkvai eszmecsere. Szófia volt a következő színhely 1983-ban,³³³ az utolsó értekezletre pedig 1986-ban került sor Prágában.³³⁴

A budapesti tanácskozás alaphangját érzékelteti Karasz Lajos III. főcsoportfőnök, miniszterhelyettes összegzése: „az antikommunista, szocializmus- és enyhülésellenes imperialista propaganda felerősödésének egyik fő oka a tőkés világ belső helyzete; a kapitalizmus általános válságának talaján elhúzódó és elmélyülő politikai-gazdasági-ideológiai válság, valamint a nemzetközi munkás- és haladó mozgalmak fellendülése”. A továbbiakban a jelentés eredeti gondolatmenetének megfelelően ismertette a külső fellazítás főszereplőit (alapítványok, propagandaszervek, emigráció, diplomáciai képviselők), illetve az ezekkel kapcsolatban álló belső ellenzéki csoportokat (nacionalista platform, zsidó nacionalizmus, jobboldali revizionizmus, anarchista újbaloldal, egyházak).

Frissebb információt inkább a mondanivalót illusztráló példák jelentettek. Így szóba került a *Szabad Európa Rádió*hoz 1968-ban beépült és 1976 januárjában hazatért csehszlovák hírszerző százados, akinek ?„operatív anyagaink alapján” – a Magyar Televízióval készített interjúja „igen kedvező hatást váltott ki a magyar közvéleményben és hozzájárult a SZER további lejáratásához”.³³⁵ A nemzetközi együttműködés terén annak a folyamatnak a meggyorsítását javasolta – operatív eszközökkel –, amely során „az emberi jogokkal űzött provokatív kampány hosszabb távon elkerülhetetlenül az imperialisták ellen fordul. Kiélezi a belső társadalmi ellentéteiket és rontja szövetségeseikkel a viszonyukat.” Új javaslata az is, hogy a szocialista társ-szerveknek közösen kell nagyobb figyelmet fordítaniuk azokra az

³³² Az ideológiai diverziót folytató imperialista szervek és az általuk irányított diverziós és antiszocialista személyek elleni intézkedések, az elhárítás tapasztalatainak elemzése címmel 1977. május 23–29. között Magyarországon rendezett nemzetközi tanácskozás anyaga. ÁBTL 4. 1. ÁB-könyvanyag 498.

³³³ A szocialista országok belügyi (állambiztonsági) szervei delegációinak IV. sokoldalú tanácskozása az ideológiai diverzió tárgyában. Szófia, 1983. ÁBTL 4. 1. A-2012.

³³⁴ A testvéri szocialista országok állambiztonsági szervei képviselőinek felszólalásai az ellenséges ideológiai diverzióval szemben folytatott harcról. Prága, 1986. október. ÁBTL 4. 1. A-509.

³³⁵ Lásd: A prágai magyar nagykövet levele Minarik tevékenységéről. 1976. III. 11. BM KI Belügyminiszteri iratok 30.1-a-230./ 1976.; MINARIK 1977.

ellenséges elemekre, akik „kapcsolatok kiépítésére törekszenek a szomszédos szocialista országokban lévő ellenséges körökkel [...] a közös lehetőségeinket jobban ki kell használni az ellenséges személyek lejáratására, a csoportok bomlasztására”.

Annak, hogy az ellenséges propaganda elhárítására vonatkozó hazai és a Varsói Szerződés keretében létrehozott „internacionalista” együttműködésnek a három év-tized alatt nem sok eredménye látható, nemcsak az ideológia fogságában a változásokhoz alkalmazkodni nem tudó struktúrák a magyarázata. Utólag már az is igazolható, hogy a nyugati propagandatörekvések valóban hatással voltak a kommunista tömb politikai átalakulására, még ha ez a befolyás elsősorban nem is a nagy struktúrák változásait motiválta, sokkal inkább az emberek hétköznapi gondolkodásának nyitottabbá, dinamikusabbá tételében fejtette ki tényleges hatását. (SCOTT-SMITH 2012)

* * * **Archív források & folyóiratok** * * *

Magyar Országos Levéltár (MNL-OL)

MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 11/3448. ő. e.

MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/575.

MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 5/611. ő. e.

MNL-OL M-KS 288. f. 7/357. ő. e.

MNL-OL XIX-A-24-b III/004-18 1972/1.

Belügyminisztérium Központi Irrattár Parancsgyűjtemény (BM KI Pgy) 1976. 173. doboz (d.)

Az alább található négy dokumentum része annak a 15 jelentésnek, amelyekben 1973 során az MSZMP Politikai Bizottsága, pontosabban az ún. Értékelő Bizottság konkrét változtatásokat javasolt a politikai-mediális propagandamunka terén: „A negyedévenkénti értékelések feldolgozása mellett szükséges a befutó jelentések folyamatos, szükség szerint naponkénti feldolgozása és jelzése is. Ehhez fejleszteni kell az ellenséges rádióadások lehallgatását. A gödöllői lehallgatóállomás technikai felkészültségének kihasználását akadályozó káderproblémákat mielőbb meg kell oldani. A teljesebb lehallgatás anyagát a Magyar Külügyi Intézet kapja meg, amely

válják az ellenséges propaganda hosszú távú elemzésének tudományos bázisává. Össze kell hangolni az ellenséges propagandáról különböző forrásokból származó információs anyagokat, így például a Külügyminisztérium sajtószemléinek, az MTI bizalmas kiadványainak munkáját, valamint az emigráció sajtójáról készített különböző tájékoztatók feldolgozását”.

Ez az 1973-ban kialakított rendszer további tíz éven át működött, amikor is végül az MSZMP Politikai Bizottsága az 1983. október 11-i ülésén új határozatot hozott: „Az imperialista propagandával szembeni fellépésünk külső és belső feltételeiben az elmúlt évtized során bekövetkezett változások, a feszültebb nemzetközi helyzet, az ideológiai harc kiéleződése és a szocializmus fejlődése során jelentkező új nehézségek” ugyanis ismét „az agitációs és propagandamunka e területének újbóli áttekintését, a tennivalók meghatározását” tették szükségessé. Az ekkor elfogadott határozat újabb módosítására azonban már nem került sor...

*** SOURCE NO. 1 ***

MSZMP KÖZPONTI BIZOTTSÁGA
AGITÁCIÓS ÉS PROPAGANDA
OSZTÁLY

Bizalmas!
Készült: 11 pl-ban
Ag.519/6.

A Magyar Népköztársaság ellen irányuló imperialista propaganda / 1972. II. negyedévi

1./ Az ellenséges propaganda fő vonalát az az éles és összehangolt akció jellemezte, amely „a Szovjetunió és Magyarország közötti bizalmi válságról” terjesztett tendenciózus híreket. Azt állította, hogy „e jelenségek jelei szaporodnak és felszínre jutnak annak ellenére, hogy az érdekeltek azokat leplezni szeretnék”.

A „válság” „bizonyítására” az alábbiakat hozta fel:

- „A Szovjetunió a magyar gazdaságpolitikával szembeni elégedetlensége miatt nem teljesíti Budapest nyersanyagszállítási kéréseit.”

- „A Szovjetunió elégedetlen azzal, ahogy a magyarok ideológiai téren tevékenykednek, liberálisnak tartja a magyar párt politikáját.”

- „A Szovjetunió nem nézi jó szemmel, hogy a magyarok nem akarnak utolsók lenni a Nyugat (áthúzva, kézzel föléírva: NSZK) felé nyitásban.”

A fentiek alapján az ellenséges propaganda arra ösztönzött, hogy Magyarország szálljon szembe „a moszkvai gazdasági kényszerrel” és védje meg „nemzeti politikáját a sztálinizmus nyomásával szemben”. A magyar közvéleményt arra bujtogatta, hogy egyrészt ilyen irányban gyakoroljon nyomást a párt és a kormány politikájára, másrészt pedig adja jelét annak, hogy támogatja az esetleges magyar „függetlenségi törekvéseket”, „Tanácsolta”, hogy a „szovjet gazdasági orientáció” helyett „érvényesüljön az őszinte együttműködésre való ösztönzés politikája a nyugati tőkével szemben”.

A szovjetellenesség szításának szerves része volt a Szovjetunió belső helyzetének hamis ábrázolása. Nagy nyilvánosságot adott a Szovjetunióban tevékenykedő állítólagos „demokratikus ellenzék” megnyilvánulásainak, az „ellenzékkel szembeni hajszának”. Ismét felerősödtek a tendenciózus híresztelések „a szovjet vezetésben meglévő ellentétekről”.

2./ A szovjetellenes vonalhoz kapcsolódott az is, ahogy az ellenséges propaganda az időszerű külpolitikai kérdéseket magyarázta.

A kelet-nyugati kapcsolatok új eseményeiben - főként a Szovjetunió és az Egyesült Államok kapcsolatába - a Szovjetunió szerepét úgy állította be, mintha „a nagyhatalmak érintkezéseit saját céljai szolgálatában szorgalmazná”, vagyis azért, hogy „elismertesse hatalmi pozícióját Európában”. Ismét sok szó esett az un. „Brezsnyev doktrínáról”, amelyet „a Szovjetunió nemcsak csatlósaival, hanem nyugati partnereivel is el akar fogadtatni”.

A szovjet-amerikai tárgyalásokat egyértelműen a „nyugati világ együttműködésre kész politikája” eredményének tüntette fel. Úgy vélte, hogy „a Nyugat ereje kényszerítette ki a tárgyalásokat, ennél fogva „egyedül a NATO létezésének köszönhető, hogy Nixon elnök moszkvai látogatására sor került.”

A magyar közvéleményt arra buzdította, hogy „ha a vietnami háborúval egyidőben a két szuperhatalom vezetői barátságosan tárgyalnak, akkor Magyarország is aknázza ki a kelet-nyugati kapcsolatokból származó előnyöket”.

Ebből a szempontból tárgyalta a leggyakrabban az európai biztonsági értekezlet tervét is, minthogy ott „nagyobb manőverezési lehetőséghez juthatnak a kis országok a Szovjetunióval szemben” és „enyhíteni lehetne a szovjet szorításon”. megfigyelhető ugyanakkor, hogy az ellenséges propaganda az utóbbi időben már nem a biztonsági konferencia ellen foglal állást, hanem a Nyugat követeléseit - mindenekelőtt „az emberek, eszmék és az információk szabad cseréjét” - elfogadtatni. Az emigráns sajtó

arra ösztönzi a nyugati politikusokat, hogy a konferencián javasolják „egy Ausztriához hasonló, nemzetközileg garantált, semleges övezet létesítését Közép-Európában”.

3./ Belpolitikai kérdésekről szólva a „magyar modell” állandó hangsúlyozása mellett megkezdődött a „magyar dilemma” tárgyalása. Ennek lényege, hogy az új gazdaságpolitika „ellenzékot szült a pártban”, „feszültséget és konfliktusokat teremtett az egyes társadalmi rétegek között”, „hűvös fogadtatásra talált Moszkvában és szövetségeseinél”, ennél fogva a vezetés dilemma elé került: folytassa-e ezt a politikát vagy „álljon be a sorba”.

Az ellenséges propaganda azt hangoztatta, hogy „Magyarország jelenlegi problémái a rendszer lényegéből adódó válságjelek”, tehát nem „az önállósodó nemzeti politika következményei”. megoldásuk tehát a „rendszer fokozatos megjavításában” rejlik, amely csakis akkor képzelhető el, „ha lazulnak a Moszkvához fűződő szálak”.

Az imperialista propaganda tehát igyekezett elégedetlenséget szítani, mindenekelőtt problémáink felnagyításával, de vigyázott arra, hogy ne támadja a szerinte „változatlanul követendő, liberális politikát”, hanem elégedetlenséget a szocialista rendszerrel, a Szovjetunióval szemben táplálja.

Az ellenséges propaganda a társadalom erkölcsi állapotát a korábbinál erősebben támadta. Úgy állította be, mintha „az erkölcstelenség melegágya a párt- és állami funkcionáriusok új osztálya lenne” és kijelentette, hogy „a harácsolásra maga az állam mutat példát”. Az anyagiasságot annak számlájára írja, hogy „a szocializmus megfosztja az állampolgárokat korszerű igényeik kielégítésének lehetőségeitől”. Az anyagiasságot annak számlájára írja, hogy „a szocializmus megfosztja az állampolgárokat korszerű igényeik kielégítésének lehetőségeitől”. „Ki kellene mondani végre - tanácsolta -, hogy a forradalmi szakasz befejeződött, eljött a normális élet ideje, hiszen örökké lihegni nem lehet.”

Az alkotmány módosításával és a legutóbbi törvényalkotó tevékenységgel kapcsolatban azt hangoztatta, hogy „mindez még a szabadság és a törvényesség illúzióját sem kelti”, mert „egyedül a párt hatalmi akarata érvényesül”. Ezzel szemben próbálják ellenzéki szerepre buzdítani a társadalmi és tömegszervezeteket.

4./ Az utóbbi időben erősödött a Nyugatról sugárzott egyházi propaganda, különböző egyházi szervezetek nagyobb mennyiségű vallásos propagandaanyag beküldésével és terjesztésével próbálkoznak. Fejlesztették a különböző, hitéleti propagandával foglalkozó rádióadók számát és növelték műsorközvetítési idejüket

is. Az adások szerkesztésében magyar emigránsok is közreműködnek. tapasztalható, hogy szélesedett a magyarországi hallgatók és a rádiókkal levelezők köre. E propaganda azt dokumentálja, hogy „a szabad világ hívői együtt éreznek a vallási elnyomás alatt élő magyar néppel”.

5./ Az ellenséges propaganda is készül az olimpiára. A jelek szerint figyelembe veszi az ezzel kapcsolatos korlátokat s ez idő alatt a közvetlen uszítás némi visszafogásával főként három területen akar tevékenykedni: nagy nyilvánosságot fog adni a jobboldali, különböző anarchista csoportok akcióinak az olimpiai játékok és a szocialista országok ellen, részletesen tudósít azokról az „ellenversenyzőkről”, amelyeken az olimpián részt nem vevő országok versenyzői és a disszidens sportolók indulnak, megkísérel propagandaakciókat folytatni a magyar olimpiai csapat tagjai között.

6./ Az ellenséges propaganda élénken reagált azokra a hazai kiadványokra, előadásokra, újságcikkekre, amelyek az antikommunizmussal és az ellene való harccal foglalkoztak. Egy-egy nyugati rádióadó még a direkt polémiaig is elment. Aláhúzta, hogy az antikommunizmus emlegetése „hiszterikus éberség”, „világnézeti madárjijesztő”, amelynek egyetlen célja „az ideológiai gyeplők megszorítása”.

7./ Az imperialista propaganda az ösztöndíjas kapcsolatokat is igyekezett kihasználni. Francia részről azokból, akik tőlük ösztöndíjat kaptak, állandó jellegű csoportosulásokat próbálnak létrehozni s ezen keresztül politikai és szakmai befolyást kifejteni. A Magyarországra küldött ösztöndíjasok között pedig egyre több az 56-os disszidens, akiket nyelvtudásuk, helyismeretük, baráti, rokoni kapcsolataik révén különösen jól tudnak hasznosítani.

A nyugati intézmények széles körben és szervezeten kutatják azokat a szakembereket, akiket névreszóló meghívásokkal állandó kapcsolataik közé sorolhatnak és folyamatosan felhasználhatnak.

Nyugatnémet szervek arra törekednek, hogy kiutazó ösztöndíjasaink programjában a nyugat-berlini tanulmányutakat is beilleszték.

Budapest, 1972. július 14.

*** SOURCE NO. 2 ***

MSZMP KÖZPONTI BIZOTTSÁGA

Agitációs és Propaganda

Osztály

MSZMP KÖZPONTI BIZOTTSÁGA

AGITÁCIÓS ÉS PROPAGANDA

OSZTÁLY

Bizalmas!

Készült: 10 pl-ban

Ag.707/6.

A Magyar Népköztársaság ellen irányuló imperialista propaganda /1972. III. negyedévi

1./ Az ellenséges propaganda a szocialista rendszer (kézzel írt javítás: szocialista rendszerünk) erkölcsi lejáratására összpontosította erőfeszítéseit.

A szélsőséges orgánumok „a szocialista rendszer eredendő embertelenségéről, erkölcstelenségéről” szóltak. Azt állították, hogy „már a hatalom is erkölcstelen”, s annak „törvényszerű reakciója a morális bomlás”. Úgy tüntették fel, mintha a szocializmus elnyomná „a természetes emberi igényeket”, ennél fogva a társadalom „kénytelen kerülő úton keresni azok kielégítésének lehetőségeit, s ezt bélyegzik erkölcstelennek a kommunisták”. Hivatkozva az országban nyilvánosan is bírált jelenségekre, azt próbálta elhitetni, hogy „az egoizmus, a cinizmus lázadás a fennálló rendszerrel szemben”.

Az imperialista propaganda más eszközei azt hirdették, hogy „le kell vonni egyet s mászt a kommunizmus világmegváltó tanaiból, ha azokat össze akarják egyeztetni a társadalom anyagi helyzetének javulásával”. Az effajta propaganda szerint „a nyugati jólét vonzereje által kiváltott, negatívnak bélyegzett ideológiai hatások” elkerülhetetlenek. Az e hatások elleni fellépésünket indokolatlannak, „az emberi életet elszűrítő szocialista törekvésnek”, „az egyenlőség nevében lealacsonyításnak” tüntette fel, amely - szerinte - „nem veszi figyelembe, hogy az elhajlások ideje a múlté: a magyarok többsége végre-valahára élni akar”. Arra bujtogatott, hogy a közvélemény ne engedje „ezt a modern ipari államot - a fogyasztás felé orientálódó lakosságával, kezdődő szabadabb életfeltételeivel, gyakrabban teljesített nyugati utazási vágyával - az ideológia béklyói között tartani”.

Az ellenséges propaganda - harmadik - leggyakrabban ismétlődő megnyilvánulása az volt, hogy igyekezett kétségbevonni a szocializmus építését Magyarországon. Szerinte az országban olyan mélyrehatóak „a marxista ideológiával és a Szovjetunióval kötött kompromisszumok”, hogy „vita már csak arról folyik, milyen jellegű fogyasztói társadalom jöjjön létre”. Vissza-visszatérő kérdése volt, „hol a szocializmus Magyarországon”, amikor „a fejlődés típusa, problematikája ugyanolyan, mint Nyugaton”? Válasza, hogy az országban „a szovjet blokk normáival mérve radikális kísérlet” folyik, amely „nem jelenti a rendszer változását”, de „ellentétes a szocializmus lényegével”, s „Magyarország ma ugyanolyan nyugati, mint valamikor volt”.

Belső helyzetünk befeketítésére az ellenséges propaganda felkapta a Nagy Imre-könyv antikváriumi kiajánlását, amelyet „az első óvatos, de tudatos lépésnek” tekintett a szerző rehabilitálása felé.

2./ belpolitikai helyzetünk tárgyalásánál - miközben igyekezett a hazai közvéleményben aláásni a szocializmus eszméjébe, erkölcsi felfogásába, a párt politikájába vetett bizalmat - legfőbb törekvése az volt, hogy ellenünk hangolja szövetségeseinket.

Mindenekelőtt a magyar-szovjet viszonyt igyekezett megrontani azzal a hamis jelszóval, hogy „a magyar külpolitikai szovjetbarátsága csupán fizetség a belpolitikai mozgásszabadságért”, „Leleplezte”, miszerint „minden nyugati kooperációs szerződést hasonló követ egy szovjet vállalattal”, s ezzel „port hintenek Moszkva szemébe, hogy ne vegye észre a gazdasági lanyhulási tendenciákat”. Tendenciózus összehasonlításokkal próbálta kimutatni, „hol tért le a magyar párt Moszkva útjáról”, hogy szándékainak megfelelően Magyarország és a Szovjetunió közötti „bizalmi válságról” beszélhessen.

A Szovjetunió után az NDK, Bulgária és Csehszlovákia viszonyait hasonlította a leggyakrabban össze hazai állapotainkkal, hogy megállapíthassa: „e három ország vezetői nem titkolt elégedetlenséggel figyelik Magyarország sajátos útját”. Romániát és Jugoszláviát viszont példaképpül állította elénk, mert azok „mozgatni óhajtják a Moszkvától való függetlenség izmait”.

A szocialista országok szembenállítását célozták azok a híresztelések, miszerint „a magyarok inkább ma, mint holnap, a diplomáciai kapcsolatok felvételére törekednek az NSZK-val, de nem akarnak „kitáncolni a sorból”. A magyar gazdasági mechanizmust a többi szocialista ország már ügyis bírálta. A gazdasági kérdésekben a partnerek részéről megmutatkozó türelmet meg kell vásárolni.”

A szövetségi szálak lazítására használta fel a Pajzs-72 gyakorlatot, mondván: „a szovjet vezetők a katonai hatalom tüntető fitogtatásával megfélemlítő hatást kívántak kifejteni a csatlósokra”. Románia ezzel szemben, mint „belső ellenzék távolmaradtak a Moszkva által elrendelt gyakorlaton”. ugyanakkor azt is híresztelte, hogy ez a hadgyakorlat „az Ausztria elleni agresszió lehetőségére utalt”.

Az ellenséges propaganda hosszabb ideig tartó kampányban hamisította meg Komócsin Zoltán elvtársnak a Társadalmi Szemlében megjelent cikkét, amelyet „szovjet biztatásra a románokhoz intézett fenyegetésnek” nevezett.

3./ Állandó tendenciaként táplálta a nacionalista érzelmeket, főleg a szovjetellenességet a magyar társadalomban. Így próbált közvéleményt teremteni az általa remélt nyugati külpolitikai orientáció mellett. A szovjetellenesség szitása változatlanul az állítólagos „szovjet nyomással” történő rémisztgetésből áll. Az utóbbi időkben azonban már konkrétan azt híresztelte, hogy „a Szovjetunió gazdasági szankciókkal akar végetvetni a magyar liberalizálódásnak”. Sorozatos próbálkozása, hogy ébren tartsa az un. „Brezsnyev doktrínát”, mint „a magyar nemzeti érdek érvényesülésének legfőbb politikai és katonai akadályát”.

A szocialista közösség iránt akart ellenszenvet ébresztetni azzal is, hogy a KGST-t „a nemzeti szuverenitás csorbítójának” tüntette fel, mondván: „Magyarország nem fektetheti be pénzét ott, ahol érdekében állna, hanem a szovjet beruházásokban kell résztvennie”. Ezzel kapcsolatban a KGST közösség felbomlásáról is beszélt, mert „az iparilag fejlettebb kelet-európai országok - az érdekek kikristályosodásának újabb jeleként - szeretnék szeparálni magukat a főleg mezőgazdasági termékeket gyártó délelektől”.

Arra bujtogatta a közvéleményt, hogy fejezze ki elégedetlenségét amiatt, hogy „részt kell venni Kuba anyagi támogatásában, a Bangla Desh felépítésében és pénz kell adni még legalább tíz olyan célra, amelyhez semmi érdeke sem fűződik”.

A szocialista szövetségi rendszerhez való tartozásunk helyett azt ajánlotta, hogy a kormány „fűzze szorosabbra kapcsolatait a nyugati nemzetekkel, amelyek nagyobb erővel működhetnek közre az ország gazdasági és ipari helyzetének megjavításában”. nyíltan zöld utat sürgetett a kapitalista beruházóknak és kölcsönöknek, mert „a nyugati partnerekkel megbízhatóbb kritériumok alapján alakulhat ki az együttműködés”.

Nagy nyilvánosságot adott Rogers budapesti látogatásának, amellyel Magyarország „meg kívánta akadályozni, hogy a szuperhatalmak a kelet-európaiak háta mö-

gött kössenek őket mélyen érintő egyezségedet”. Azt állította, hogy a kormány „élni próbál a szovjet-amerikai közeledés adta lehetőségekkel egy függetlenebb külpolitika javára”. Ennek kapcsán „az új amerikai taktikát” dicsérte, mert az „országunként igyekszik behatolni a vasfüggöny mögé”.

4./ A szocialista külpolitika „kudarcát” hirdette. Elsősorban a közel-keleti, főleg egyiptomi eseményekkel példálózott. A Szovjetunió „nagyhatalmi politikája vereségének” tüntette fel a tanácsadók hazahívását. Arra buzdított, hogy Magyarország „minél előbb határolja el magát az arabbarát szovjet politikától”, mert „Izrael után az arab világ is elveszik számára”. Kifejezetten arabellenes uszítást folytatott egyrészt a terrorcselekmények által kiváltott érzelmek alapján, másrészt azt hangoztatva, hogy „az arab államok felemésztik azt a kis többletet, amelyet a magyar dolgozók a maguk életének javítására megteremthetnek”.

Az európa bizottsági konferencia kapcsán a szocialista diplomácia „kudarcát” azzal bizonygatta, hogy „a konferencia tartalmát végül is a Nyugat határozza meg”. E tekintetben főleg arra hivatkozott, hogy a tőkés világ „tűzette napirendre az emberek, eszmék és információk szabad áramlásának” témáját. Ez a téma ma is az ellenséges propaganda középpontjába áll. /Melléklet!/ Azt állította, hogy a Szovjetunió „nagyhatalmi hegemon politikája miatt az értekezlet eleve sikertelenségre van ítélve”. Felmelegítette a kominform újjászervezéséről szóló híresztelést, hogy a biztonsági konferencián „az egységes Kelet és a széthúzó Nyugat álljon szembe egymással”.

A vietnami kérdésben az ellenséges propaganda lehalkult, defenzívába szorult, informatív ereje, érzelmi hatása csökkent.

5./ Az Amerika Hangja és a Szabad Európa Rádió szakértői újabb tervekét készítették a szocialista országokban műholdról közvetlenül sugározható - a rádióadásokhoz hasonlóan diverziós célzatú - televíziósadásokra. Az Egyesült Államok előreláthatólag 1973-ban India térségében már kipróbálja ezt a műsorsugárzást.

A hazánk ellen irányuló nyugatnémet rádiópropaganda újabb nagyteljesítményű adókkal bővült. Ez főleg a magyarnyelven sugárzó Deutsche Welle hatóerejét növeli, hiszen az eddigi 9, egyenként 100 kw-os adó helyett egyenként 500 kw teljesítményűek lépnek - 1974-ig - fokozatosan üzembe.

*** SOURCE NO. 3 ***

Melléklet!

Budapest, 1972. október 12.

MSZMP KB AGIT. PROP. O

MELLÉKLET!

„Az emberek, eszmék, információk szabad áramlása” téma jelentkezése a hazánk ellen irányuló imperialista propagandában

Az ellenséges propaganda nagy intenzitással magyarázza a témát azzal a nyilvánvaló szándékkal, hogy egyrészt az európai biztonság kapcsán a szocialista országok által felvetett kérdések helyett a tőkésállamok által hangoztatott problémák kerüljenek az érdeklődés előterébe, másrészt pedig közvéleményt teremtsen a kérdést az európai konferencia napirendjére javasló nyugati erőfeszítések mellett.

A propaganda különböző elemei összességükben azt mutatják, hogy a tőkésvilág az említett témában nem új nézeteket hangoztat, nem új mozzanatokat érlel, hanem az ideológiai diverzióval kapcsolatos törekvéseit új formában és az európai problematikához igazítva fejt ki. Ezt bizonyítják azok a kijelentések, miszerint „a szabad áramlás követelése a szovjet totális diktatúra központi idegszálára tapint rá”, valamint, hogy ily módon „bizonyos rés nyitható a szocializmus zárt társadalmán”.

Az imperialista propaganda „az emberek, eszmék, információk szabad áramlása” jegyében a következőket szeretné kierőszakolni:

- az utazások teljes liberalizálása, mondván, hogy „az emberek csak kényszerűségből élnek a szocialista társadalomban, s szeretnének szabadulni onnan”. A propaganda azt állítja, hogy „addig nem lehet tényleges haladást elérni a kapcsolatok szélesítésében, ameddig nem lépünk előre a kelet-európai és szovjet állampolgárok utazási korlátozásainak feloldásában”;

- az akadálytalan kapcsolattartás a szocialista országok állampolgáraival, kikerülve minden hivatalos és ellenőrzött csatornát. Szeretné elérni a nyugati képviselletek, intézmények korlátlan megnyitását minden érdeklődő előtt és széleskörű propagandatevékenységet az ország minden részén;

- a lapok, kiadványok fokozottabb terjesztésére akár a nyugati követségek útján, akár a lap és folyóirat-import-hálózaton keresztül, cenzúra nélkül;

- rádió- és televízióműsorok szabadabb cseréje. Ennek kapcsán azt hangoztatta, hogy a „nyugat nem fogadhatja el a tájékoztató és felforgató adás közötti különbségtételt, mert Moszkva a legtárgyilagosabb adást is felforgatásnak tekinti;

- kulturális termékek /könyvek, filmek stb./ fokozottabb terjesztése, „amely nem bukhat meg az ideológiák szembenállásán”.

Az ellenséges propaganda úgy állítja be, hogy már a téma felvetése önmagában is „a tökésvilág nagyobb demokratizmusát, szabadabb légkörét őszinte szándékait” bizonyítaná. Elutasítását pedig annak tekintené, hogy „szakadék tátong a Szovjetunió és a többi szocialista ország szavai és tette között”. Ebből a szempontból tendenciózusan kiforgatta Puja Frigyes elvtársnak a Társadalmi Szemlében megjelent cikkét.

A jobboldali magyar emigráció is beállt a téma propagálói sorába. Elvárja a nyugati kormányoktól, hogy „kívánni fogják a szabad országokban megjelenő sajtóorgánumok, szépirodalmi, tudományos és politikai tárgyú könyvek zavartalan terjesztését, az eddigi utazási korlátozások és valutáris rendelkezések hatályon kívül helyezését Magyarországon”.

Mindebből kiderül, hogy

- a „szabad áramlás” követelése az ideológiai aknamunka szerves része;
- az „emberek, eszmék, információk cseréjén” nem tényleges és kölcsönösen előnyös cserét értenek, hanem a burzsoá nézetek behatolásának előkészítését.

- abszolutizálni próbálják a „szabad áramlást”, hogy az szinte fontosabbnak tűnjék (kézzel irt beszúrás: az európai államok) politikai, gazdasági, kulturális kapcsolatainál (kihúзва: , s ezzel is az ő medrükbe igyekeznek terelni a kapcsolatok formálását);

- „az emberek, eszmék, információk szabad áramlása” - ahogy azt ma a burzsoá propaganda értelmezi és szorgalmazza - teljes összhangban van a jelenlegi imperialista stratégiával és taktikával.

*** SOURCE NO. 4 ***

MSZMP KÖZPONTI BIZOTTSÁGA
AGITÁCIÓS ÉS PROPAGANDA
OSZTÁLY

A Magyar Népköztársaság ellen irányuló
imperialista propaganda
/1972. IV. negyedévi

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1./ Az ellenséges propaganda az elmúlt negyedévben belpolitikai kérdésekben folytatott éles kampányt. Fő törekvése az volt, hogy a novemberi KB-ülés előtt valamiféle „válsághangulatot”, bizonytalanságot keltsen, olyan légkört teremtsen, amelyen egyrészt erősödik a politikai iránti bizalmatlanság, felnagyítódnak a problémák, másrészt - ezzel szoros összefüggésben - nyomás nehezedik a pártra, akadályozva a higgadt, reális döntéseket. Ebben az időszakban a nyugati propaganda „a gazdaság fő folyamataiban bekövetkezett kudarcokról”, „a reform okozta gazdasági-társadalmi-politikai megingásról” beszélt. Hangoztatta, „a gazdasági reform gátja”, hogy „átfogó politikai reformra - vérszegény kísérletektől eltekintve - mindmáig nem került sor, vagyis a politikai és a gazdasági szempontok helyett a hatalmi szempont az elsődleges”.

Az ellenséges propaganda „a magyar vezetésben jelentkezett mély ellentétekről” terjesztett híreket, amelyek állítólagos, „kemény összecsapásokról”, „számoltak be” és „a legfelső poszttól kezdve” jelentős személyi változásokat jósoltak. Ezek okait úgy magyarázta, hogy „a vezetésből el akarják távolítani a reformereket”. A várható, „súlyos belpolitikai intézkedéseket” - ahol csak lehetett - a Szovjetunió „beavatkozásával” „indokolta”, minthogy „a szovjet vezetés azt akarja elérni, hogy az általános törvényszerűségeken mindenütt a szovjet modellt értsék”.

A Központi Bizottság ülése az imperialista propaganda egyrésze - hogy elkerülje a kapituláció látszatát - „a problémák elnapolásáról” beszélt. Hangoztatta, hogy „a bizonytalanság korszaka hosszabb ideig fog tartani”. Azt állította, hogy „Magyarországon a pártplénium után semmivel sem jobb a helyzet”, csupán „tüneti kezeléssel, porhintéssel a helyzet javulásának látszatát keltik”. Egyes nyugati orgánumok szerint Magyarországon „a drámai fejlemények” ezért maradtak el, mert „a keleti tömb külpolitikai offenzíváját a hátszín egyik térségének megingása sem veszélyeztetheti”.

A magyarnyelvű ellenséges propaganda jórészt elhallgatta azokat a nyugati sajtójelentéseket, amelyek a magyar gazdaság stabilizálódásáról, a párt „hibákat helyrehozó” politikájáról szóltak.

A hazánk ellen irányuló imperialista propagandaszervek többsége „belpolitikai szigorításról”, „a váltók átállításáról”, „a kemény vonal offenzívájáról” beszélt. Ezt azzal magyarázta, hogy a „pártban engedni kellett hajtani a szovjet vezetés előtt”. Hangoztatta ugyanakkor „a gyeplő meghúzásának objektív okait” is, mert „a mérsékelt konzervatív vonalon haladó vezetés elbátortalanította a gazdasági vezetőket, elégedetlenséget keltett a lakosság széles rétegeiben és kedvét szegte a társadalomnak”. A magyar helyzetet tehát úgy igyekezett lefesteni, mintha a vezetést „belülről, lentől és a szövetséges oldalról egyaránt” támadások érték volna.

A „belpolitikai visszakozást” mindenekelőtt a gazdaságirányítási reform „megfékezésével” igyekezett bizonyítani. Ennek jeleként tüntette fel „a szigorúbb tervfegyelemre”, „a központi tervezés rangjának emelésére”, „a fékező szabályozók erősítésére” vonatkozó „elhatározásokat”. Egészében véve „a reform szellemétől idegen centralisztikus törekvések győzelmét” hirdette. Ennek folytatásaként - hangoztatta - „más területeken is keményebb irányvonalat” lehet várni, „az utóbbi 3-4 év langyos politikai-ideológiai-kulturális levegője után most hűvös szakasz fog következni”. E propaganda felforgató célját sem leplezte, mondván „Előfordulhat, hogy a magyar munkások levonják a lengyel példa tanulságait, miszerint nem kell minden szó nélkül elfogadni a kommunista rendszer parancsait”.

2./ Az imperialista propaganda a belpolitikai kérdésekben indított éles támadást a legszorosabban összekapcsolta a Brezsnyev vezette szovjet küldöttség látogatása körüli kampánnyal. Mindenekelőtt azt húzta alá, hogy „a Szovjetunió várt a KB-ülésig”, mert „a küldöttség csak a magyar politikai vonal bizonyos fokú megmerevítése után akart Magyarországra utazni”. „A magyar pártnak - mutatott rá az ellenséges propaganda - jól jött ez az időzítés, minthogy „a KB-döntést szovjet tekintéllyel is alá akarta támasztani”.

Az imperialista propaganda úgy tüntette fel, hogy a küldöttség látogatására „a magyar-szovjet kapcsolatok kritikus időszakában” került sor, amikor „bizalmi válság tört ki a szovjet és a magyar vezetés között”.

A látogatás után azzal próbálta „igazolni” „a szovjet-magyar viszonyban a fegyvernyugvást”, hogy a „kölcsonös engedmények politikája” nyert teret. Ennek okait abban látta, hogy szovjet részről „nem akarnak súlyos nehézséget okozni maguknak

a keleti tömb megtartásában”, ill. „a Nyugattal való enyhülési politikában”, magyar részről pedig „a gazdasági segítség és a kapitalista világgal kapcsolatos manőverezési lehetőség érte meg a kompromisszumokat”. Az ellenséges propaganda összehangolt, szinte központilag sugallt mondanivalója, hogy „Magyarország engedett a szovjet nyomásnak”, amely azonban „nem tartalmazott szélsőséges kritériumokat”.

Az imperialista propaganda a látogatás témáját felhasználta arra is, hogy ellentéteket szítson Magyarország és szocialista szövetségesei között. Úgy vélte, hogy „nem egy kelet-európai országban rokonszenven nézték a szovjet nyomást”, mint-hogy „a magyarországi reformirányzat szálla a kelet-európai dogmatikusok szemében, még akkor is, ha ez az irányzat a rendszert illetően semmiféle alapvető újítást sem tartalmaz”. Egyes burzsoá propagandaszervek ezt úgy fogalmazták meg, hogy „a kelet-európai dogmatikus nézetek szellemi rokonságot mutatnak a szovjet koncepciókkal”.

Az ellenséges propaganda arra buzdította a magyar közvéleményt, hogy látva „a kísérletezés eltűrését”, még nagyobb függetlenséget „erőszakoljon ki Moszkvától”. Ezt a témát kiszélesítve általában arról beszélt, hogy most „szorongatni lehet a Szovjetuniót”, mert „világpolitikai céljainak eléréséhez szüksége van a kelet-európai támogatásra”.

A kelet-nyugati kapcsolatok kérdésében ismét erősödött az a propaganda, amely „Magyarország különleges szerepét” húzta alá és kiemelte „alkalmasságát arra, hogy a híd szerepét játssza”. Ösztönözte a magyar vezetést, hogy „használja ki saját lehetőségeit a Nyugathoz való közeledésben”. Ezzel egyidőben szaporodtak azok a cikkek és műsorok, amelyek ecsetelték az erőteljesebb nyugati orientációból származható gazdasági, tudományos és műszaki előnyöket.

3./ Az imperialista propaganda az európai biztonság témakörben változatlanul „a Szovjetunió nagyhatalmi érdekeit” hangoztatta, mert - szerinte - „a Szovjetunió kizárólag európai pozíciójának erősítése érdekében ment bele a Varsói Szerződés által kezdeményezett játékba”. Ugyanakkor azt bizonygatta, hogy „Kelet-Európának ki kell használnia ezt a szovjet érdekeltséget” és arra törekednie, hogy „nagyobb szabadságot kapjon a kapitalista világgal való érintkezésben”. Ennek kapcsán is visszatért az általa sokszor ösztönzött „magyar függetlenségi törekvésekre”, kijelentve: „a Szovjetunióban valószínűleg tisztában vannak azzal, hogy Magyarország történelmi és földrajzi helyzeténél fogva titokban olyan eredményeket remél az európai biztonsági konferenciától, amelyek nem egészen esnek egybe az orosz elképzelésekkel”.

A burzsoá propaganda azt terjesztette, hogy „az európai biztonsági konferencia - különböző szempontokból ugyan - de az egész szocialista tömbnek nagyon fontos”, ennél fogva „most engedményekre lehet kényszeríteni azokat, akik az ortodox politika hívei”.

Nagy nyilvánosságot adott mindazoknak az elképzeléseknek, javaslatoknak, amelyekkel a kapitalista országok a helsinki előkészítő értekezleten előálltak. Különösen azt fejtette, hogy „a személyes kapcsolatok kibővítésére és a teljesebb információ megvalósítására” vonatkozó javaslatok „az emberi szabadságtörekvésekből” és abból fakadtak, hogy manapság „összezsugorodott a világ. Azokat az ellenérveket, amelyeket a szocialista országokban - az ideológiai fellazítást elutasítva - fejtettek ki, a burzsoá propaganda „a szocializmus félelmének”, „a konzervatív gondolkodásmód jelének”, „az emberi szabadságjogok megsértésének” nevezte.

Dicsérte a helsinki konferencián tanúsított román magatartást: „Bukarest varsói paktum-beli partnerei is kénytelenek voltak elismerni, hogy Románia független nemzetként vesz részt az európai biztonsági konferencia előkészítésében”.

4./ Az imperialista propaganda változatlan törekvése volt, hogy az általa vélt „hazai ellenzék” szószólójaként lépjen fel. A vizsgált időszakban többször is foglalkozott a „magyarországi szociáldemokráciával”; hírül adta, hogy 1973 júniusában Bécsben megrendezik a „külföldön élő magyar szociáldemokraták kongresszusát”, amelynek dokumentumait szeretnék „Magyarországon élő szociáldemokrata politikusok közreműködésével” elkészíteni.

A jobboldali magyar emigráció propagandája is „nemzetépítő mivoltú mai hazai ellenzékéről” beszél, amely „megérdemli az emigráció támogatását”, minthogy az -s szerinte - „belső emigráció”.

Az ellenséges emigrációs propaganda nagy nyilvánosságot adott „a magyarság követelésének”, miszerint az európai biztonsági konferencia érje el „az idegen csapatok kivonását Magyarországról”, illetve „annak osztrák mintára történő semlegesítését”.

5./ Az imperialista propaganda fokozottabban aktivizálta a fejlett tőkés államok budapesti külképviseletit, amelyek elsősorban társadalmi kapcsolataikat igyekeztek bővíteni. Erőfeszítéseik főként kulturális tevékenységük kiterjesztésére irányultak, egyebek között a könyvtári szolgáltatások és filmvetítések kiszélesítésére.

Az elmúlt negyedévben a kapitalista követségek csaknem 2 propagandaanyag belföldi terjesztését kísérelték meg. Külföldről több mint 600 politikai és csaknem 6000 egyházi jellegű propagandaanyagot próbáltak az országba bejuttatni.

6./ A fellazítás taktikáját a kulturális kapcsolatokon keresztül is igyekeztek érvényesíteni. Az elmúlt negyedévben ez mindenekelőtt a hivatalos csatornákat kikerülő, személyekre szóló meghívások megsokszorozódásában mutatkozott meg, főként amerikai és nyugatnémet részről, ill. ezek fedéseként osztrák cég alatt. Ausztriából kezdeményezések indultak ki közös társaságok megalakítására, „Pannonia Kutató Társaság”, ill. „Monarchia Történetkutató Társaság” elnevezéssel.

Kulturális vonalon a burzsoá propaganda várható erősödését jelzik azok az információk, miszerint az NSZK-ban reformtervezetet dolgoztak ki a külföldi kulturális tevékenység hatékonyságának növelésére, fokozottabb összehangolására. A British Council idei magyarországi tervében az angol nyelvtanfolyamok, az iskolák közötti kapcsolatok, a cserélátogatások és könyvkölcsönzések kiterjesztése szerepel. Francia részről szorgalmazni fogják a nyugati sajtótermékek terjesztését.

7./ Az ellenforradalom évfordulóját az imperialista propaganda az utóbbi évekhez hasonlóan, ezúttal is csekély intenzitással használta ki a maga céljára. Számottevő orgánumok nem foglalkoztak vele, főként a jobboldali emigráció sajtója elevenítette fel az eseményeket. Jellemző volt azonban az egyik kommentátor „kesergése”: „...ha cselekedeteink, vagy nekifeszüléseink nem fekszenek a világpolitikai összefüggések vonalában, sikertelenségre vagyunk kárhoztatva”.

8./ Az ellenséges propagandaszervek újabb „közvéleménykutató akciókba” kezdenek. Erre mutat, hogy a CIA felkérte a USIS ausztriai képviselőt: megadott kérdőív alapján folytasson a közvéleménykutatást a kiutazó magyar állampolgárok között a magyar lakosság érdeklődéséről, az Osztrák Rádió és a Televízió, a Szabad Európa Rádió, a kölni adó, az Amerika hangja és a Szovjet Rádió magyar adásai iránt.

Nyugati cégek felkérték a Szabad Európa Rádió értékelő és elemző osztályát speciális tanulmányok összeállítására Magyarországról.

Budapest, 1973. január 15.

MSZMP KÖZPONTI BIZOTTTÁGA

Agitációs és Propaganda

Osztály

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George Minden and his role in the CIA funded Mailing Project

by Barnabás Vajda



There are two major reasons why George Minden's role³³⁶ in the early phase of the so called *new* or *second Mailing Project* should be dealt with in the international historical discourse. The first reason is that despite being a very important figure in this story (people involved have acknowledged his strong personal impact), Minden *never wrote about it* publicly. Indeed, the very first article on the Mailing Project was published by J.P.C. Matthews in 2003, than a decade later Alfred Reisch wrote a substantial book about it. (REISCH 2013) Secondly, by gaining access to more and more primary sources, and unearthing the most basic facts on the project, the time has come when we can start evaluating the issue from the viewpoint of the international relations of the Cold War. Thus George C. Minden's role, as presented in his letters published and analysed below, capture the first moments when, after a short decade of a containment policy, the U.S. foreign affairs administration started to consider a significant change in its general political course toward East Europe and the Soviet Union.

³³⁶ George Caputineanu Minden, born on February 19, 1920 in Bucharest; died on April 9, 2006 in Manhattan.

The new (or second) Mailing Project

The subject of this chapter, the new Mailing Project was a direct successor of the earliest CIA media-propaganda operations, namely of the Radio Free Europe (RFE) and the balloon-and-leaflet operations, both typical American efforts in the early 1950s to counter the Soviet influence in East Europe. (VAJDA 2011b: 38-48)

George Minden's letters, memorandums and reports from the mid-1950s (the primary sources this study is based on³³⁷) brief us on the birth of the *détente* on the American side, namely on the gradual transformation of 'liberation by military means' into 'liberation by peaceful means'. Since the 1956 Hungarian blood-bath was a sign of a severe discrepancy between the openly said words and the actual deeds of the American foreign policy makers, Minden's letters tell us a lot about the post-1956 years, mostly as far as the intense *seeking for a more appropriate East European foreign policy* took place. Nowhere in his letters George Minden explicitly writes what kind of a new foreign policy should be followed after 1956 (he was smart enough not to interfere with his bosses), but in fact, his core issue which he was working on was to actively influence the U.S. foreign affairs administration to transform its policy into a more flexible and more tolerant line toward East Europe and the Soviet Union.

Mindens activities reflect a smooth but determined change in accordance with the *détente*, which, after its declaration on the Soviet side around 1953/1954 (BÉKÉES 2012: 5-6, 12), was about to establish permanently on the American side too. Minden was a perfect 'figure' for such a policy shift. He was clever and authentic since he knew well the East European region. In addition, he was extremely cautious, and yet he was well aware of the two biggest challenges ahead of the Mailing Project. On the one side, he agreed with the 'need of critical forces' in the potential disintegration of the Communist rule in Europe; on the other side, however, he advocated

³³⁷ Present study is based on the primary sources at the Open Society Archives Budapest: HU OSA 312-0-5. *Fond 312, Series 5: Alfred Reisch Collection, Box No. 1: Materials related to George C. Minden*. Some parts of this collection originate from the Hoover Institution Stanford, California, and some from Alfred A. Reisch's collection made accessible at the OSA Budapest soon after his death in early 2013. All footnotes marked as OSA, originate from these sources.

a less aggressive policy toward East Europe and the Soviet Union, preferring some 'attractive alternatives of Western solutions' to social, and economical, and cultural problems and issues.³³⁸

The idea of the new Mailing Project coincided with the failure of the American foreign policy in 1956, and with the change of its foreign policy course. In short, the new Mailing Project was a book-sending project mailing books, magazines, etc., directly to specific East European addresses. If properly done, George Minden argued, the mailing might be potentially strong enough to break the intellectual Iron Curtain.

Today we already know that in the mid-1950s there was an ultimate demand for such 'peaceful' activities on the international field. In Minden's eyes, it was from the beginning a long term project, thus there was no danger for blaming it as a sudden U-turn in U.S. foreign policy. The project promoted the potential of establishing some contacts between the educated heads of West and East, so it was potentially suitable to fit into the main pattern of the *détente*. This was the general context of George Minden, who became involved in an American foreign affairs secret enterprise which is here called and referred to as the „new Mailing Project”.

As it is quite clear from his written records bellow, Minden had an important role in diverting the original strategic aim, or more precisely, he gave it a new sense which was more appropriate to the conditions of the *détente*. His biggest influence was that he made the project less politically-focused, among others by filling the letters or parcels with non-political literature, including architectural magazines, professional journals on fine arts, architecture, engineering, comparative law, physical sciences, but also auto catalogues, ladies's magazines, etc.³³⁹

Originally the Mailing Project included almost entirely political literature, and of course it continued to do so after Minden's entry into the project too. But it was him who made it 'softer' by re-calibrating the project, and whose secret network was sending all kinds of Western literature not accessible on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain. No doubt, however, that this was still a form of a direct cultural penetration into the forcibly isolated East Europe.

³³⁸ OSA: Letter from Kliot B. Judane to David Date: March 14, 1958.

³³⁹ OSA: Strictly confidential letter from John P.C. Matthews to Dr. Dirk Oncken. Date: November 26, 1957; OSA: Confidential letter from the Executive Committee to the President. Date: August 12, 1959.

The start of the new Mailing Project is routinely dated to June/July of 1956.³⁴⁰ John P.C. Matthews, who was the director of the Munich Free Europe Press Office until December 1959, writes in his memoirs that the start can be dated to April 1956, when „a group of young Americans and East European exiles”, invited by Samuel S. Walker to his office in Manhattan, after “chewing over a project *they had been discussing for month*”, decided to start the Mailing Project. (MATTHEWS 2003: 410)³⁴¹ From Minden’s records, however, we can *suspect* that the idea came up some years earlier. At least in such a form that the new Mailing Project was a direct successor of the balloon-and-leaflet project, which also included spreading different kinds of leaflets, small books, posters, etc. to the East European region, mainly to Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, by hot-air balloons. It is indeed the balloon-and-leaflet operation which within the circles of the Free European Press (FEP) had been explicitly called as „Mailing Project”, as it is legible in some written evidence.³⁴² This fact is the utmost reason why it has to be distinguished as a ‘new Mailing Project’ from an earlier stage of American mail-sending attempts in the early 1950s.

The National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), the CIA umbrella organization over the RFE and balloon-and-leaflet projects (among others) changed its name in 1951 to Free Europe Committee (FEC). Samuel Sloan Walker became the Vice-President of the FEC right around the name change. At the same time he became the director of FEC Research and Publication Service, practically overseeing not only the edition of the publication *News behind the Iron Curtain*, but supervising

³⁴⁰ OSA: Strictly confidential letter from John P.C. Matthews to Dr. Dirk Oncken. Date: November 26, 1957. In some source we can read that the ‘first year’ of the Mailing Project lasted from Sept 1, 1956 to Aug 31, 1957; the ‘second year’ from Sept 1, 1957 to Aug 31, 1958; and the third year from Sept 1, 1958 to Aug 31, 1959. See OSA: Memorandum from G. Minden to the director of FEOP on Nov 24, 1959; see REISCH 2013: 3, 15.

³⁴¹ It needs to be noted that the involvement of these ‘East European exiles’ could and should be further researched.

³⁴² For instance: OSA: Strictly confidential letter from the Executive Committee to the President. Date: February 7, 1952. In it the Executive Committee [in fact, the CIA] shares some confidential details on a particular ‘investigation’ by H.B. Montagne, the Chief Postal Inspector in Washington ‘investigating the Mailing Project’.

the balloon-and-leaflet project too. Briefly, he was *the* man in charge of the CIA's secret European public relation operations.

Both the old and the new Mailing Projects were carried out as important chapters in the American media-propaganda handbook. Therefore it might not surprise anybody keen on the history of the post-1950 international propaganda affairs, that „only a handful of people on the Free Europe Committee and the leadership of the RFE and the Free Europe Press knew that the general directions and real funding [*for all these activities*] came from the CIA". (MATTHEWS 2003: 411) People involved in the project may have been very clever, however, it was surely the covert coordination work of the CIA over the whole international network, which achieved the key element of the success, i.e. that the book sending project 'did not appear to be a single, coordinated operation but a series of unrelated activities.' (REISCH 2013: 21) The CIA not only created for George Minden a presidential position at the International Literary Center, a made-up organization financed by the CIA (MATTHEWS 2003: 423), but the firm was directly involved in both Mailing Project operations through its people, such as Cord Meyer and Evans Brown. (MATTHEWS 2003: 411, 419) Commencing from 1959, Minden knew well the situation; in his writings he refers to the firm either as an 'Executive Committee' or as 'our knowledgeable friends.' (REISCH 2013: 40, 45)

Both Mailing Projects were parts of the 'special projects' of the CIA who/which created numerous covert organizations and positions to hide its real aim, i.e. orchestrating tools for media propaganda psychological warfare on international scale. One of its outlets was the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), which changed its name in 1951 to Free Europe Committee (FEC). One out of four FEC Divisions was explicitly the *Division of European Propaganda*, which operated in Europe the Free Europe Publication Division.

Without the core involvement of the CIA (and behind it, the U.S. government) the budgeting of the whole project would not have been possible throughout the long years until the 1990s. The new Mailing Project was very lucky as far as its financing was concerned. Actually in 1956 the FEP run out of ideas when both his main activities were stopped: the journal *The News from behind the Iron Curtain* was stopped, and the balloon-and-leaflet operation was stopped, too. Matthews judges that year 1956 was „a major setback for the U.S. foreign policy", from his perspective because the international situation around and after 1956 „completely dis-

rupted the FEP operations”, to the extent that some time later the FEP was reorganized. (MATTHEWS 2003: 412-413) But since the fiscal year was on, and the allocated money was supposed to be spent on other operations (namely on balloons), it was a huge opportunity for any new project, which was convincing enough for the people at the CIA. „The cost was not a factor when Minden first took change [...] The balloon-leaflet program was shut down in early November [1956, and] much of the money went into beefing up the Mailing Project”, Matthews writes. (MATTHEWS 2003: 420) Thus the FEP was given a new opportunity, and the Mailing Project set on on a full scale in mid-1956. In order to fulfill its role properly, the „FEP’s Munich office gradually became the headquarters for printing operations all over Western Europe”. (MATTHEWS 2003: 414)

George Minden

What do we know about George Minden’s role, precision and general influence in the new Mailing Project? No doubt that the U.S. foreign affairs administration had long been maintaining some peaceful long-term projects toward East Europe already before 1956. After all, the project of the Radio Free Europe (RFE) had been running since 1949/1951, and the project of the Free Europe Press (FEP) was an other media-propaganda project. In mid-1956, a new Mailing Project was added to this list – an endeavour which was a renewed version of some earlier FEP activities, with a more efficient content.

After 1956, some need for a policy shift was signalled from different places, and George Minden correctly sensed this need. He was originally not in the inner circle which decided on the creation of the new Mailing Project, but as a member of the wider FEP realization team he had been at hand. After having spent some time at Cambridge, Spain and Mexico after the second world war, Minden moved to the USA and married there. As a highly educated and bright East European exile, in summer of 1955 he started working in New York at the Romanian Desk of the FEP (REISCH 2013: 40), an affiliate of the RFE. A year later, and *roughly at the same time when the decision on the start of the new Mailing Project was made*, in August 1956, he was „appointed head of the FEP’s Romanian section”. (MATTHEWS 2003: 413; REISCH 2013: 40)

It took him some time, in fact some years, to become one of the most influential figures of the new Mailing Project. From our documents it is clear that Minden's career was influenced not only by the onsetting détente but by some personal changes, too. A few years after the time of his appointment as the Romanian FEP Desk Chief, and the gradual launch of the new Mailing Project (mid-1956), some important personal changes took place within the structures of the Free Europe Press in late 1958 and 1959. Specifically it was Samuel S. Walker's resignation from the presidency of the FEP.³⁴³ After seven years of experience with the FEC, Walker signalled his wish of resignation already in Autumn 1958, and after a few month of looking for a heir his decision was effective on March 31, 1959. From April 1, 1959 Robert W. Minton became an acting director of the Free Erope Press.³⁴⁴ Along with this, very soon (from April 8, 1959) a renewed Executive Committee of the FEP was set up, including C.D. Jackson; Bernard Yarrow; Robert W. Minton; Thomas Brown; Mr. Augustine; and T. E. Myers.³⁴⁵ When Walker resigned in March 1959, FEC president Archibald S. Alexander appointed Robert W. Minton as acting director of FEP. (REISCH 2013: 12, 13) After S.S. Walker's resignation in 1959, from July 1, 1959 a new covert organization, the Free Europe Organization and Publication (FEOP) Division was established, under the direction of Minton (who earlier was a spokesman for the Marshall Plan), and with Minden as a supervisor of the divison's book mailing project.

Around the same time, two more very important events took place in Minden's life. First, that in May 1958, George C. Minden became a U.S. citizen³⁴⁶, a fact that surely contributed to his career, and which gave him even more opportunities. Secondly, in 1959 he was cleared and briefed by the CIA. According to a letter, in which the Director of Personnel of the Executive Committee (in fact, the CIA) informs the members of the Executive Committee, that George Minden started „handling support material forthwith” for the FEP in mid-1959.³⁴⁷ It was at this point when the door

³⁴³ OSA: Letter from Archibald S. Alexander, President of the FEC, Inc. March 24, 1959.

³⁴⁴ OSA: Letter from Archibald S. Alexander, President of the FEC, Inc. Date: March 24, 1959; also REISCH 2013: 12, 13.

³⁴⁵ OSA: Letter from the President to the members of the Executive Committee of the FEP. Date: April 8, 1959.

³⁴⁶ OSA: Strictly confidential letter from John Kirk to Mr. Myers. Date: May 26, 1958.

³⁴⁷ See OSA: Letter from the Director of personnel to the Executive Committee. Date: July 17, 1959; also REISCH 2013: 40.

opened wide in front of George Minden. Yet, I have no doubt that Minden had some view over the earlier phases of the project, or in worse case he was later given an access to the details of the Mailing Project from the earlier years.³⁴⁸

George Minden's entry into the new Mailing Project around 1957/1958 meant a significantly more focused project. No doubt that after his entry the project gained both in energy and efficiency. In a confidential report to the President of the FEC, Minden writes: „We suggest an expansion of the [mailing] list – at least the part of it which is circulated to university figures and literati – to include a wider selection of publications dealing with research in Western history and culture. [...] The list of offerings might be further expanded and improved by modelling it more closely on the monthly acquisitions list of some well known institutions” such as the Yale university, The Library of Congress, the New York Public Library.³⁴⁹

Minden also gave the project more correctness and precision. In a report to his boss Robert Minton, for instance, Minden writes: „I share our adviser's belief in the importance of history and cultural material, and our index of books sent shows this. But, placing the stress on the late medieval and Reformation periods and on studies of Luther, Calvin or Zwingli would hardly be the thing to do when addressing and audience that is 90% Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox.”³⁵⁰ In the same report he shares some technical details of his efforts: „As to Life, Time, Fortune, Newsweek and U.S. News and World Report, we have not only scheduled them repeatedly, but we have translated whole articles from these publications and sent them in pamphlet form. We have also entered into special agreement with David Ballard of Time, Inc. and Harry Thompson of Newsweek to get return copies free for East Europe.”³⁵¹

It might be an exaggeration to say that after 1959 Minden was the heart and brain of the new Mailing Project – though after 1974, indeed, he was nearly a solo

³⁴⁸ He knew, for instance how many titles had been mailed from North America and Western Europe in 1956. See: OSA: Strictly confidential letter from John P.C. Matthews to Dr. Dirk Oncken. Date: November 26, 1957.

³⁴⁹ OSA: Strictly confidential letter from the Executive Committee to the President. Date: August 12, 1959.

³⁵⁰ OSA: Letter from G.C. Minden to Mr. R.W. Minton. Date: August 18, 1959.

³⁵¹ Ibidem.

man in the middle of an international network responsible for a book distribution both into East Europe and the Soviet Union. But it is a fact that it was him who not only increased the sheer volume of the project, but who achieved a significant improvement of its quality.

There are some explanations how Minden could achieve this kind of precision. First of all, he had a strong *strategic vision* over the Mailing Project, commencing from genuine meritual and strategic ideas, through immersed analyses of particular feedback datas, up to continuously urging the technical improvement of the project.³⁵² In his view, the *new Mailing Project was aiming at the thinking elites of East Europe*, and his core concept was, as Alfred Reisch states it, the concept of the cultural and ideological competition. (REISCH 2013: 39)

Secondly, it was Minden's *analytical ability* as a key skill behind the project. From mid-1955, Minden was employed as a specialist at the Romanian Desk of the FEP³⁵³ where he was involved in information gathering and evaluation activities. Even if this kind of an analytical work was quite similar to the personal interviews through which RFE was keen on gathering some feedback on its programmes from East Europeans travelling to the West, Minden's personality seems to be more suitable for this type of a behind-the-scene work, than for being a day-to-day broadcaster. Minden was a genuine analyst. What more, he was so clever, and he had such an overview over the Communist East Europe that it would have been simply a mistake to keep him in an ordinary RFE or FEP analyst position. His obsession to pay attention to small details, plus his ability to make deep analyses was praised many times: „Mr. Minden's latest report is a very interesting one, and his evaluative comments are particularly helpful.”³⁵⁴

Thirdly, and probably the most importantly, Minden was the person who took care of the feedbacks. In fact, he gave the first comprehensive analysis of the mailing operation, and of all sides of it. The new Mailing Project was always happy to receive some feedback from the recipients of the books, at least in a form of a short

³⁵² See OSA: Memorandum from D.M. Cox to J.G. Kirk on mailing operations from October 7, 1958 on the technical details of the mailing project.

³⁵³ OSA: Memorandum from R.M. Hunt to T.E. Myers on July 7, 1955.

³⁵⁴ OSA: Strictly confidential letter from the Executive Committee to the President. Date: October 7, 1959.

letter.³⁵⁵ In the first two years of the project (1956/1957) such responses from East Europe amounted to some 7,009 letters and acknowledgments, and to 3,452 requests for books.³⁵⁶ What Minden soon invented, however, was a one-stage-higher level of evaluating. He not only kept written files on recipients' reading tastes, but he also invented the idea of the publishers' catalogue. At the beginning, Minden asked recipients only for a book in return (though he later admitted, it was only a curtesy request). Later, his team was ordered to send out publishers' catalogues, and along with it, East European book recipients were offered to choose one or two books of their own choice, to be sent them free of charge. (MATTHEWS 2003: 422-423. Matthews remarks poignantly: 'During the 37 years of the project [...] intellectuals throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are convinced that Western publishers are the most magnanimous and enlightened of institutions [...] The truth, of course, was quite different.')

Thanks to Minden, the Mailing Project included a thorough analysis of incoming data. As he kept asking for any feedback from East Europe, it was a very convenient way to find out the *patterns of the requests*³⁵⁷, which was surely one of his most valuable contribution to the project, through which he indeed was able to raise the efficiency of the whole project. He made sure that his reports sent to his bosses at the FEP and the FEC included not only a complete description and classification of the books sent, but the responses and the requests the managers of the project received was found in his detailed reports, too.³⁵⁸ Of course, Minden was well aware of the obstacles, too: „This is the thing [*to receive feedback*] which is most difficult to get”³⁵⁹, and as an analyst he did count with the possibility of 'censorship'. He also knew that many recipients do not tell their whole stories because „with the exception of the Poles and Hungarians, only an insignificant minority of our targets dare write [*freely*] abroad”.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁵ E.g. OSA: Letter from Jan Nowak to Dear Sam. Date: December 7, 1957.

³⁵⁶ OSA: Letter from G.C. Minden to the Director FEOP. Date: November 24, 1959.

³⁵⁷ OSA: Letter from G.C. Minden to the Director FEOP. Date: November 24, 1959.

³⁵⁸ “A complete description and classification of both the books sent and the responses and requests received is to be found in our monthly and response reports.” OSA: Letter from G.C. Minden to the Director FEOP. Date: November 24, 1959.

³⁵⁹ OSA: Letter from Jan Nowak to Dear Sam. Date: December 7, 1957.

³⁶⁰ OSA: Letter from G.C. Minden to the Director FEOP. Date: November 24, 1959.

Taking East European readers' responses into consideration was not only a huge contribution to the efficiency of the project, but it was a basement for its legitimacy, too. Having received tens of thousands of letters from all over East Europe annually, including thanking the books received, and asking for more books, was a very solid basis of legitimacy for the future funding of the Mailing Project. Within half a decade, the number of responses rose to tens of thousands: to 20,218 in 1961; and to 40,063 in 1962. When in the early 1970s the East European and the Soviet Mailing Projects were merged under Minden's supervision, the figures rose to some 100,000 letters per year. (MATTHEWS 2003: 421-422)

* * *

Below here, we publish some primary sources from the Open Society Archives Budapest: *HU OSA 312-0-5. Fond 312, Series 5: Alfred Reich Collection, Box No. 1: Materials related to George C. Minden*. Some parts of this collection originate from the Hoover Institution Stanford, California, and some from Alfred A. Reich's collection made accessible at the OSA Budapest soon after his death in early 2013. All footnotes marked as OSA, originate from these sources.

All documents were originally written in English. Most of them are entire documents, some, however, have been shortened, and this is the only edition we made on them. All places where text is shortened is marked by [...]. To our best knowledge, this is the first publication of these sources.

Probably not accidentally, almost all our sources published here, and foremost „Report No. 14”, are resounding expressions of George Minden's influence over the initial phase of the book project, including his strategic vision, analytical skills, and carefullness, confirming our strong notion that he was a key and an indispensable figure of the secret new Mailing Project.

Source No. 1: George Minden on propaganda

In the report published below, George Minden does not hide that the new Mailing Project is a propaganda activity. „Our thought must go back to the great American propaganda achievement of the hungry Twenties in Russia and to the

tremendous fund of goodwill the Hoover mission created for this country”, he states.

He also responds to Professor Seton-Watson’s analysis (in fact, criticism) on the efficiency of the FEP operations, and particularly on the Mailing Project. What makes this source a very interesting document, is that Samuel Walker, the man in charge of the policy over all FEP operations, decides in favour of George Minden, against a quite influential adviser, professor Hugh Seton-Watson. („Walkers’s decision ran counter to advice from one of the Free Europe Committee’s chief consultant, Professor Hugh Seton-Watson.” MATTHEWS 2003: 411, 413)

Thirdly, it is quite clear from the source that there was indeed a direct link between the pre-1956 and post-1956 American propaganda efforts in a form that the new Mailing Project was an alternative to the balloon-and-leaflet operations. (VAJDA 2011b: 48-72) As Minden signals in this late-1956 letter: „Some new project [...] must be conceived as soon as possible. Some long-range policy should be conceived based on education rather than politics, on serious cultural matter rather than on tourist information [...] on help rather than on preaching”

Source No. 1

To: S.S. Walker, Jr.

From: George C. Minden

Subject: Seton-Watson report

Date: Fall of 1956

I must start by saying that I am prejudiced against Professor Seton-Watson. My prejudice is based on my dislike of his superficial and erratic coverage of the Rumanian crisis in two of his earlier books: *Eastern Europe Between the Wars* and *The East European revolution*.

Now, after reading his analysis of FEP operations, I feel tempted to level the same accusations of superficiality against our specialist in Eastern European affairs (by the way, the specialist was his father; Hugh is a specialist in Russian affairs). [...]

What I am trying to say is that since this spectacular means of conveying less spectacular prose – the balloon operation – might sometime die a natural death (from

a variety of causes, including a possible raising of the Iron Curtain), some new project, spectacular this time in substance, must be conceived as soon as possible. Some long-range policy should be conceived based on education rather than politics, on serious cultural matter rather than on tourist information, on objects produced by American skill rather than on diagrams about production in the Free World, on help rather than on preaching. Now that behind the Iron Curtain people are raising their voices against their governments' refusal to join the Marshall Plan, our thought must go back to the great American propaganda achievement of the hungry Twenties in Russia and to the tremendous fund of goodwill the Hoover mission created for this country in that part of the world. [...]

I know how difficult it is to engineer an efficient system of propaganda from abroad, I saw the Germans fail in Rumania. I saw the Americans fail in Central America and in France. I watched Franco give American publications the right to enter Spain after a long fight with the American government, only to have American means of information stumble on such trifles as exceedingly high prices of books and magazines and the Spaniards' lack of knowledge of the English language. This sort of thing might very well happen again in Eastern Europe.

I am currently following the adventure of that interesting experiment of Time, Inc., *Life en Espanol*, which might well prove to be one of the greatest propaganda successes of our time and might help forge an American world of understanding from Pole to Pole. [...]

I realize, of course, that we cannot hope to produce something similar to *Life* in Spanish for each of the Central European countries. I realize, moreover, that we want to penetrate deeper into the social structure than commercial publications do. I understand that by our very aims we are bound to aspire to much, and that we will have to fight against serious limitations. Alone we shall not be able to do it. Nothing of real value can be produced by one or two emigres in the stifling atmosphere of an office full of noise and bitterness and cut off from the life of both this country and their countries of origin.

Yet the Free World has so much to offer to Eastern Europe. [...]

Let us give them genuine things, not émigré versions of them. Let us contact large American firms and ask them to send their products to Eastern Europe. They'll be glad to do it, I'm sure, and they may some day be rewarded with new and promising markets. Let us approach the big magazines. They might be will-

ing to give a foreign-language edition a try; French and German would serve our purposes. Let us approach the world's great universities and ask them to send their unbiased, scientific work east of the Iron Curtain. A university like Cornell might very well be interested in experimenting with their new language teaching technique (with modern apparatus: records, etc.) in a linguistic-minded and talented community. Eastern Europe would be the ideal testing ground. The big American foundations might also be interested in helping in non-controversial matters by sending advice and medicine or statistical publications on the results of their work in the Free World. [...]

Let us send them the jazz records they are so crazy about and maybe – if not too expensive – those record players [*of which*] David Sarnoff was talking about at the beginning of the year. Let us keep in touch with all the new inventions that appear on the market with such frequency (new types of plastic, transistor radios, wonder drugs) and send them to producers of similar goods in the captive countries. This might start a genuine exchange of ideas between the addressees and the American manufacturers of the things sent by us.

Let us contact motion picture companies. They might be willing to send short, cheap films or cartoons of the UPA type which could be the delight of so many in that dreary atmosphere of Communist boredom, and reconquer little by little what was once an excellent market for the U.S. film industry.

Last but not at all least let us not forget women and children, these most receptive propaganda targets. Fashion magazines and toys could do more than the most inspired dialogues on liberty and the best pamphlets of the British Labour Party.

Above all, let us not be dull and stale, let us not preach, let us not try to be pretty Machiavellis, let us be stimulating and fresh; the ebullient life of the Free World permits it.

With this in mind, and actively planning and preparing the ground for future operations, we at the Rumanian desk [*of the FEP*] shall go on with the mailing project as it is now, carefully selecting articles, books, catalogues and perhaps also objects, thus anticipating future operations. Our main work for the moment will be the selection of a minimum of 25,000 addresses which will form the basis of – and our main personal contribution toward – any wider future project.

Two other ideas: 1) A special propaganda approach should be developed for Iron Curtain personnel on missions (which will become more numerous every

day) outside the captive countries where they can be easily reached. 2) We should consider the use of labor union channels of communication with the captive countries.”³⁶¹

Source No. 2:

George Minden on the Mailing Project activities – ‘Report No. 14’

This confidential report, written but not signed by George Minden, is one of the clearest summary of the *policy change* which took place within the FEP after 1956. Responsible people at the FEP who read the report, first of all Sam Walker in New York and John Matthews in Munich, immediately realized Minden’s original thinking. Matthews, who did not know who had written this report (it was not signed for conspirative reasons), even many years afterwards attributed to it an extreme importance. (MATTHEWS 2003: 417)

Source No. 2

To: S.S. Walker

From: George C. Minden

Subject: Mailing Operations Monthly Report No. 14, Summary of Activities for September 1957

Date: October 25, 1957

1.Summary of Activities.

A.Policy – With each month and the response it brings, we acquire information which enables us to address our messages with increased relevance to the problems that beset the minds of our captive targets.

Little by little we are finding out what our addressees are interested in [...] The main thing we’re up against is not Marxist obstacles, but a vacuum.

³⁶¹ OSA: Letter from George C. Minden to S.S. Walker Jr. Date: Fall of 1956.

Our public doesn't need to be taught how to find back the shaky arguments of their mentors. This could safely be left to their common sense, to the vivid *leçons de choses* provided by the daily contact with Communist practice, and to the hatred accumulated throughout years of oppression. What is needed is something which could compensate for the sterility of satellite cultural life, for the artificial type of existence which in that part of the world has displaced real life, for the ban on encyclopaedic education imposed by the Communists, for the nauseating clichés of thought forced on the people, for the lack of humanistic thinking. In short, what is needed is something against frustration and stultification, against a life full of omissions.

The Free World has, as a whole – no matter how unsuccessful our doctrinaires and statesmen have been so far in coining a word for it – a style of life which does not stifle our spiritual or intellectual being. Due to our freedom to move from country to country, and from means of information to means of information, we are in a position to live our independent, self-made destinies. The ideas, forms of entertainment, works of art, fashions, sources of varied information, and our general welfare – all these things that help us feel independent and fill our lives – have a real fascination for our targets. It is common knowledge that the Russians have completely failed in substituting anything for the banned Western sources of intellectual, spiritual or aesthetic life, not to mention sources of information.

This constitutes our great change, and we must use it to beat back the Russian stultification offensive in East Europe. We can make a modest beginning – with tact and perseverance we might do even more than that – and others could continue our work on a larger scale and push this offensive of free, honest thinking and information further. After all, truth is contagious, and the Russian masters themselves could be made to feel its impact from our starting point in the satellites.

Keeping all this in mind, we shall concentrate on:

1) Correcting thinking, from intelligent speculation about the meaning of ultimate things to simple logic – so much sinned against nowadays in East Europe – and down to factual information.

2) Providing a minimum basis for spiritual and emotional understanding of Western values, which we hope to supply through psychology, literature, the theater, and the visual arts. This will take the place of political and other directly antagonising material.

3) Sheer linguistic understanding, which we shall try to achieve by increasing the proportion of French and German material and translations or anthologies in national languages, as well as by sending the means of learning English.

4) Putting at their disposal certain publications of current and paramount interest, unavailable in their countries.

This we shall try to do in the few months to come. Our aim: to give proofs of continued Western interest in the mental and emotional welfare of East Europeans, thus striving to avoid a general moral collapse which would result in utter cynicism and frustration. What our audience need is not arguments for fighting Communism – of which they have more and better than we shall ever be able to supply – but the feeling of communion in this world, intergration into the intellectual and spritual life of our age, and the knowledge that they have not been abandoned. [...] ³⁶²

Source No. 3:

George Minden on a „new phase of a Free Europe Committee policy”

The following series of four documents were written by S.S. Walker (FEP New York), John P.C. Matthews (FEP Munich), and George Minden (respectively); in other words, the first three were written by Minden's two main FEP bosses, and the fourth by Minden himself. They are dated between February and November of 1957, and they stand in one logical row because they clearly signal a *significant change in the policy* of the FEC/NCFE, i.e. at the umbrella organization over the U.S. foreign policy outlets.

In Source No. 3, S.S. Walker shares important information with General Critenberger, at the time of the source the Chairman of the FEC, and an adviser to President Eisenhower, about a *possibility* of a policy change. After 1956, the FEP apparatus was desperate to prove that they are indispensable. It was a moment, when American inner circles behind the FEC propaganda machinery were considering the possibility of abolishment of some of their European programs. Therefore, under the influence of the 1956 political debacle („the stations's dubious role”; BISCHOF–

³⁶² OSA: Confidential Monthly Report No 14. Date: October 25, 1957.

JÜRGENS, 2015: 5), in his first point Walker recommends to Crittenberger that „all balloon sites should be deactivated in the near future”, what more, some lines below he declares that „I and my staff are prepared to recommend and undertake the *dismantling of the Division* if you and the Board decide that FEP can no longer perform a useful function”.

Walker needed some justification for their existence, acknowledging that both the FEC and its programs had to change following the internal event in East Europe, in a way that ‘FEC should take no action that was considered likely to provoke further bloodshed’. (REISCH 2013: 16, 18) Walker fought hard for saving *his* project, however. He prepared a proposal which dealt with some „new methods of implementing FEC policy”. He stresses that there are serious problems but the problem are „not with the formulation of the policy itself”. Walker expresses his personal conviction that „*the printed word can be used as a vital and effective instrument of the FEC policy*”. Sensing correctly in the post-1956 period that political propaganda think-tanks are forced to alter their ways of operation, both back in the U.S. and in Europe, Walker is looking for some new propaganda tools and techniques in order to influencing East Europe and the Soviet Union in the post-1956 international circumstances. (GRANVILLE 2005: 836-837)

Though Minden’s name is not mentioned in this source, there are at least two key terms worth noting in the text. Term „Satellites”, appearing twice between quotation marks in both cases, and the usage of the unusual term „*uncommitted areas*” (referring to politically less sensible areas of life in East Europe) – both are terms which would be soon often used by George Minden. I think it proves that Minden, who to the date of this source was still a newcomer to the FEP projects, was minimally carefully listening to his bosses, or – what I regard as possible – he had already a significant influence over the events in this early stage.

Source No. 3

From: S.S. Walker, Jr.

To: General Willis Dale Crittenberger

Date: February 26, 1957

1. After careful considerations I have reached the conclusion that I should recommend to you that all balloon sites should be deactivated in the near future, and

that the costs of maintaining launching capabilities should be cut to an absolute minimum.

2. In the belief that FEP has acquired certain assets (techniques of publishing and knowledge of Eastern Europe) during the past five years, and that it is my responsibility to propose how these assets can best be utilized in the interests of Free Europe Committee during the coming period, I have prepared the attached paper for your consideration. These proposals deal with new methods of implementing FEC policy, not with formulation of policy itself.

3. While it is my conviction that the printed word can be used as a vital and effective instrument of the FEC policy during the new phase, I and my staff are prepared to recommend and undertake the dismantling of the Division if you and the Board decide that FEP can no longer perform a useful function.

4. The essence of this proposal is that new, more than ever before, the key to EE is the Soviet Union, and that whatever can be done to make it more painful for the Soviet Union to be where it doesn't belong contributes to FEC's primary mission. We conclude that it is now less important to reach the people of Eastern Europe en masse, but more important to reach the leadership groups on whom the Soviets rely. If leadership groups become infected with the contagion of change in the 'satellites', similar groups of intellectuals and industrial leaders will be affected in the USSR itself. We further conclude that the Soviet Union's greatest liability in the uncommitted areas is its record of colonial oppression in East Europe. [...]

Therefore, the attached paper recommends: a) That all balloon launching sites [*should*] be deactivated indefinitely; b) That efforts to influence the 'controlling apparatus' in Eastern Europe by mail and other means of contact [*should*] be accelerated; c) That a program of publication for "uncommitted areas" [*should*] be initiated, designed to identify local self-interest in national independence with the absence of independence in the Soviet "Satellites". [...] ³⁶³

³⁶³ OSA: Letter from S.S. Walker, Jr. to General W. Crittenberger. Date: Feb. 26, 1957.

Source No. 4: Political consultations on the 'political warfare arm of the FEC'

At the end of his previous letter to W.D. Crittenberger (see Source No. 3) S.S. Walker informed the General that he would consult some people who could be helpful in „further refining these ideas”. Source No. 4 is the result of Walker’s consultation with Gregory Thomas, a former Office of Strategic Services (OSS) member and one of the FEC directors. (Walker met with Imre Kovács and Robert Gabor too to discuss the matter of a new Mailing Project. REISCH 2013: 13, 19-21) In the source, Walker briefs Gen. Crittenberger on his discussion with Thomas, and he basically argues for his position outlined in his previous letter. Not surprisingly, this source is heavily dotted with references to the psychological warfare, and at the end of the letter the FEP is called by Thomas as the *'political warfare arm of the FEC'*. It is also worth noting that in this letter Walker refers to a 'Mailing Center,' a division which already existed for the purposes of the ballon-and-leaflet operations (REISCH 2013: 20), and he also refers twice to 'our new program'.

Source No. 4

From: S.S. Walker, Jr.

To: General W. Crittenberger

Date: April 2, 1957

I spent an hour discussing our new program with Mr. Gregory Thomas this morning. [...]

1. Mr. Thomas reviewed the history and characteristics of the balloon operation, noting that while they were originally an ingenious and dramatic method of communicating, perhaps the novelty had worn off some time ago. He compared the balloon program to the use of highway billboards. At first this appeared to be an effective and striking method of communicating impressions to passing motorists, later some groups of people came to feel that the highway billboards detracted from the beauty of the countryside and had disadvantages which outweighed the advantages. He said he felt that the balloon program had been useful but 'this chapter is

now over and should be considered a thing of the past. He said he felt that the entire operation should be fully liquidated rather than mothballed [...]

2.Mr. Thomas stated that he did not think that Free Europe Press should simply go out of business since balloons were only an incidental means of conveyence for FEP's primary product was the printed word. He said that it was up to us to use our ingenuity in developing other methods of pursuing our objectives and utilizing our assets.

3.[...] He said that he had always felt that the Soviet Union itself was the basic of the problem, and that it would be logical to devote far more national energy and resources to political warfare operations directed to the USSR. At the same time he agreed that this was beyond our immediate sphere of competence and that, regardless of how logical direct Soviet operations might appear to be, FEP's future task lies in the field of indirect pressure on the Soviet Union.

4.I outlined our two-pronged approach: on the one hand operations intended to influence the members of the „controlling apparatus” in the Satellites, on the other hand operations intended to be damaging to the Soviet position in the uncommitted areas. [...]

5.We discussed some of the methods which might be used in our new program, including the Mailing Center [...] He expressed amazement at some of the figures indicating the scope of the Soviet-directed penetration program in the Middle East and Latin America (example: Czechoslovakia now sells more machine tools to Argentina than even West Germany). He felt that the Guide-book project would be useful both from the viewpoint of forwarding Westerners as to what questions they may expect to be asked and for the purpose of seeding thoughts in the minds of Eastern Europeans with whom these travellers come into contact. [...]

8.He concluded with the remarks that he felt that „there is a definite role for Free Europe Press as a political warfare arm of Free Europe Committee”.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ OSA: Letter from S.S. Walker, Jr. to General W. Crittenberger. Date: April 2, 1957.

Source No. 5: 'Information concerning current Free Europe Press activities'

In Source No. 5, which is a strictly confidential letter, John P.C. Matthews, the European Editorial Manager of the FEP, replies a request from a high ranking German diplomat, Dirk Oncken in Bonn (later an ambassador in Washington) for 'information concerning current Free Europe Press activities'. Matthews is keen to give some details on the 'Mailing Project', and reassures Oncken that the activities of the FEP are in accord with the political position of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Source No. 5:

From: John P.C. Matthews

To: Dr. Dirk Oncken

Date: November 26, 1957

[...] The balloon-leaflet operation of the FEP has been gradually replaced by two operations conducted from its Munich office: one directed toward EE and the other toward Western Europe.

Our operation to the East is what we call our Mailing Project. It consists of mailing Western articles, books and other printed matter to the intelligentsia of Eastern Europe to reinforce their natural Westward orientation and weaken Soviet control over them. Only a small portion of this project is conducted within the bounds of the Federal Republic. Basically, it consists of two parts: 1) a network of 'mailers' stationed in most of the principle cities of Western Europe (none in Western Germany) who mail reprints of interesting articles as 'letters' to specific addresses in Eastern Europe; and 2) independent negotiations with publishers all over Europe who send books and magazines at our expense to East European addresses provided by us. [...]

Since the start of our operation in June, 1956 through September of this year, 894 separate titles have been mailed from North America and Western Europe to addresses in Eastern Europe with a total of 360,108 pieces mailed. Only a small fraction of this, of course, was mailed from the Federal Republic [*of Germany*].

Our operations to Western Europe consists of publishing and disseminating material about what is taking place in Eastern Europe and is designed both to hurt communist interests in sensitive West European areas and to inform those profes-

sionally interested in East European affairs. As the communist influence is negligible in the Federal Republic, only the latter goal is pursued in Germany. [...] I would welcome your comment on our current activities and look forward greatly to an opportunity to meet with you and discuss our work in greater detail. [...]³⁶⁵

Source No. 6: 'An editorial product'

In Source No. 6, which was written just one day after Matthews's briefing for Oncken (see Source No. 5), strongly confirms Minden's involvement in the process of policy change at the FEP. Oddly, he calls the project as 'editorial project' or even an 'editorial product' (one day earlier, Matthews already used the the expression 'Mailling Project'; see Source No. 5), however, he explicitly outlines the skeleton of „some long-range editorial programmes” which „should be kept in mind for some future major mailing operations”.

It is especially Minden's closing remark in Source No. 5: „*I have always been in favour of a long-range informative and educational plan with very few political undertones*”³⁶⁶, which is not only a key sentence for understanding George Minden's thinking on the new Mailing Project, but it also gives us a very important link to the foreign policy of the U.S., since it suggests exactly the same type of long-range cultural penetration projects which had been advocated by George F. Kennan, one of the founders of the American containment policy.

Source No. 6

A month has elapsed since your note in response to my memorandum. The essence of that memorandum was that nothing in the way of an editorial project can have spectacular effect behind the Iron Curtain.

The last hectic month has proved, however, that spectacular effects are not the thing to achieve. The United States intimation to Russia that any interference with

³⁶⁵ OSA: Strictly confidential letter from John P.C. Matthews to Dr. Dirk Oncken. Date: November 26, 1957.

³⁶⁶ OSA: Letter from George C. Minden to Mr. S.S. Walker, Jr. Date: November 27, 1956.

Austria's independence and integrity would meet with opposition has also proved that nothing lies in store for the unfortunate captive countries. If to that we add the fact that the very *raison d'être* of Free Europe Press is an editorial product, and that after Poland's decision to stop jamming RFE and other broadcasts some other liberal measures could come, the logical conclusion is that some long-range editorial program should be kept in mind for some future major mailing operations.

I suggest that some thought be given to: a) a limited number of translations of the best recent books published in the free world; and b) the issue of a sort of magazine digest, the aim of which should be full and objective information for the people behind the Iron Curtain.

As recent events have shown, the countries behind the Iron Curtain differ greatly in behaviour; my suggestion is thus limited to Rumania. I realize that after what happened in Hungary it would be the height of insensitivity to bless them with such a minimal program. For Rumania, however, I have always been in favour of a long-range informative and educational plan with very few political undertones. Recent events have not changed my view.³⁶⁷

Source No 7: George Minden on East European propaganda

Though he often reduced his written comments on Romania („my suggestions is thus limited to Rumania”; see Source No. 6), in fact, Minden was very well aware that the countries behind the Iron Curtain differed greatly in behaviour.³⁶⁸ In this letter sent to A.S. Alexander Minden gives answers to a *special questionnaire* which had been put before him by the FEP management in order to soft-tune the new Mailing Project. The document proves that Minden was able to catch the general line of intent of the American FEP, and also that he was able catching up with the regional peculiarities of the Mailing Project. He was a genuine East European who sensed both the differences as well as similarities of the states involved in the project.

³⁶⁷ Ibidem.

³⁶⁸ OSA: Letter from George C. Minden to Mr. S.S. Walker, Jr. Date: November 27, 1956. All further quotations in this section come from the same source.

He was surprisingly clear in his answers. He agreed with the general line of the questions (which suggested a *united media propaganda policy toward East Europe*) but at the same time he made national distinctions, and suggested several references to the national/state particularities. Minden insisted that „important differences exist between these countries [...] they should be kept in mind”.

In his view, captive countries do have „national differences”. On the Poles, he stated that „I see Poland as a major European power on a level with Spain”, and he called this country „a matured Don Quijote” of Europe. On the other hand, he wrote, „Czechoslovakia is still –after Munich – mistrustful of the West, prosperous, and in no adventurous mood.” Of Hungary he thought that the country was „nearer to the thinking and cultural life of the Western world than any other East European or central European country (with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia), and lacking Poland’s deep hatred for Russia, and Germany, Hungary tends toward an ideal of neutrality which might bring her close to her past partner in the Habsburg empire: Austria.”

All in all, Minden’s letter from 1959 is a very important source for us to grip the idea of the peaceful *détente* (expressed by G.F. Kennan, among others): „It could well function in the thaw-years to come – or not to come – as a source of straight information, as a mouthpiece for the administration, which might find an unofficial voice especially handy during an unsure *détente*, and above all as a token of continued American interest in East Europe. FEC could revert at any time, if need be, to a more aggressive line.”

Though Minden does not even hide the possibility of a tactical U-turn to „a more aggressive line [...] if need be”, in the year of Minden’s letter (1959) it seems that a peaceful Mailing Project was the State Department’s Plan No 1. Since the project was, at least allegedly, non-political and free of propaganda, it found a positive reply from the doves of the U.S. Senate who did not want to see aggressive steps toward the Soviet Union, but who were willing to accept some soft forms of intellectual challenge toward East Europe.

Source No 7

To: Mr A. S. Alexander
From: George C. Minden

Subject: Your questionnaire

Date: December 17, 1959

Since the questionnaire covers East Europe generally, with no reference to the particular countries forming our target, and since I have answered the questions the way they were formulated, making no national distinctions, I should like to say here that in my opinion important differences exist between these countries, and that they should be kept in mind when interpreting the answers to the present inquiry.

Here are five short characterizations of the Captive Countries which will provide a background of national differences against which to interpret the general answers elicited by the questionnaire.

I see Poland as a major European power on a level with Spain and not altogether different in character from the latter, a country deeply mortified and frustrated by its present situation, but at the same time united, profoundly religious, grown wise, thanks to Hungary's tragedy, and last but not least satisfied with its new boundaries. A matured Quixote, Poland is trying to break loose from her past, her neighbors and her hatreds – Russia and Germany – into the large world of international politics where she hopes to find both understanding and protection. The position of a middle country between socialism and democracy would be particularly appealing to Poland because it would provide her with both an exalted role and an excuse for conforming to neither pattern.

Still under the trauma of the 1956 blood-bath, and still under preferential treatment from the Russians, Hungary has not revised the conclusions reached during her revolution. Nearer to the thinking and cultural life of the Western world than any other East European or Central European country (with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia), and lacking Poland's deep hatreds for Russia and Germany, Hungary tends toward an ideal of neutrality which might bring her close to her past partner in the Habsburg empire: Austria. Socialism is genuinely acceptable to her in a number of fields.

Czechoslovakia is still – after Munich – mistrustful of the West, prosperous, and in no adventurous mood. She has nothing but passive dislike for the Russians, and her advanced technology causes her to be less fascinated by Western skill and technical know-how than the other East European countries. Socialism is a matter of indifference to the Czechs so long as it doesn't interfere with the country's welfare and efficient administration.

Rumania, with no ruling class, no 'new class', no middle class, no Communist party, no militant church, no new intellectuals, and no hope, has fallen into a fatalistic attitude of blended despair and apathy from which only a shattering experience could awaken her. It is only here – and perhaps in some Ukrainian circles – that the idea of an atomic conflagration between the West and Russia is cherished. The large masses of peasants have no liking for socialism or for politics, and they vegetate in a world of their own, wasting a tremendous amount of latent talent and intelligence best represented to the West by that typical Rumanian peasant become one of the century's greatest sculptors, Constantin Brancusi.

Bulgaria's shock at all that has happened in the last twenty years has perhaps been the least. With their own interest in mind, and not too much hatred for the Russians, but with little respect for them, the Bulgarians are taking reasonably good care of their country and are trying to weather out the present difficulties as well as possible. The part of the Free World they are in contact with – Turkey and Greece – is not in a position to exercise on Bulgaria anything like the magnetic influence of Austria on Hungary. Bulgaria's main political interest has always lain in peasant co-operatives, which might make the task of socialism easier up to a certain point.

And now, against this background of national differences, the answers.

I. Current Attitudes of the People of the Satellite Countries Towards their Regimes.

A. To what degree, if any, is there resistance to their regimes? What kind?

After the repression of the Hungarian Revolution, any resistance in East Europe had to take either a passive or an indirect form. The great revival of religious life behind the Iron Curtain and the open interest in all manifestations of Western spiritual life should be considered an indirect form of resistance. The neglectful attitude of workers towards their work and utensils, and absenteeism, so much criticized in the satellite press, are means of passive resistance. An active resistance can be detected in Poland only, in the writers' revisionism. This is dying out as overt resistance, however, in face of Gomulka's recent offensive.

B. To what extent, if any, has political interest and consciousness increased or diminished?

Political interest and consciousness has increased insofar as fundamental constitutional rights connected with the dignity and safety of the human being are concerned. An active participation in political life is not sought at present by anyone

but opportunists aspiring to new-class membership, because everybody realizes there is no hope for it.

C.What have been the effects of recent and current international negotiations, visits by chiefs of state and summit meetings on the attitudes of the man in the street and the governments?

The man in the street doesn't quite know what to believe about these negotiations, and swings according to his individual psychological make-up from indifference to depression. Optimism is absent, and the impression is widespread that in all negotiations between Americans and Russians, the former are bound to be duped. The governments must feel pretty comfortable. Judging by the Polish reaction, they even consider it the right moment to crack down.

D.What, in your opinion, do the satellite peoples feel are the possibilities of liberalization within the satellite regimes?

Those inherent in the raising of standards of living, which would probably cause the satellite governments to be less fearful of popular upheavals and thus less bent on repression.

E.Faced with a choice between liberation by force (involving possible nuclear war), gradual liberation without war, or status quo, what would the people choose?

The answer is obvious: gradual liberation. But all 'new class' members are of course for the status quo.

F.In the event of general East-West détente, do the people want continued RFE [*Radio Free Europe*] commentary on their internal problems? Do they still want to have broadcasts on a round-the-clock basis?

Yes, since East Europeans would interpret the discontinuance of RFE political broadcasts on their internal situations as a sign of complete abandonment, and they would rather have the U.S. keep a watchful eye on the communists even during a détente. Shorter broadcasts instead of the round-the-clock ones might increase the quality of the programs and might well provide the formula for détente-type RFE activity.

II.Current Attitudes of Satellite Peoples Towards Russia.

A.Do the satellite peoples expect their communist regimes to be permanent?

No, like everybody else in the world they don't expect anything to be permanent. But they don't see any end in sight, either.

1.Do they expect to be permanently tied to Russia?

As above.

B. Do the peoples of the satellite states believe that [*Nikita*] Khrushchev will 'put one cover' on the U.S.?

The majority are afraid so.

1. If so, do they consider this favorable or unfavorable to their future?

Unfavorable, of course.

III. Current Attitudes of Satellite Peoples Towards the West.

A. To what extent, if any, are satellite peoples anticipating, or hoping for, liberation by the West?

To no extent. After Munich, Yalta, Potsdam and the Hungarian Revolution, they seem to have taken the hint.

1. If not, what do they expect from the West?

Pressure on the Russians to behave more humanely. Mobilization of the world's public opinion in favor of the Captive Countries. Occasional gestures of friendship and help: official trips, medical and technical assistance, books, scholarships, films, exchanges of teachers, etc.

B. To what extent, if any, have their beliefs in the cultural and social values of Western civilizations altered?

In the measure these beliefs were shared before – and they were only partially shared – they are still there. Western culture looks as marvellous, as glamorous and as enviable as ever. The social values and organization of England and the Scandinavian countries especially are highly respected. Catholics still look towards Rome. Paris is still the Mecca of the fun-loving Central Europeans. America continues to be gadget, comfort and miracle drug paradise of the hard-up average Captive European.

C. To what extent do they still identify personally with their exile or émigré countrymen?

Somewhere between very little and not at all, Polish and post-1956 Hungarian non-political émigrés excepted.

D. To what extent do the satellite peoples feel that East-West contacts are valuable? If valuable, what kinds of contacts [*do they feel*] and with what part of the Free World?

To the extent they can read what is published in the West, travel freely, learn Western languages and send some of their more gifted children to Western univer-

sities. The U.S., France, England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy are the main targets of interest for East-West contacts. East Europe will also welcome the presence of tourists from the Free World, both as witnesses to their present plight and as a check on the Russians and their own communists.

E.To what extent, if any, do satellite peoples feel they have been abandoned by the West?

See A.

IV.Attitude Toward FEC, RFE and FEOP

A.In your opinion, how do the attitudes you have described above affect the future activities and policy of FEC and its divisions?

In as far as my department is concerned, I kept all these attitudes in mind when modelling the Mailing Project along lines which have made it possible for us to answer some of the Eastern European requirements for general knowledge and objective information while at the same time receiving in the shape of responses to the books sent the wishes and the reactions of East European intellectuals.

The other FEOP operations should increase and extend their activity to mobilize public opinion in the Free World by bringing pressure to bear on behalf of East Europe.

RFE might be well advised to prepare itself for a long and more sophisticated struggle waged with the help of as many talented outsiders – from all the countries of the Free World – as possible. Émigré talents are scarce and becoming scarcer every day, and East European audiences seem to want the real thing along with, when informed, unbiased and intelligent, the émigré interpretation of it.

FEC has created for itself in its 10 years of existence a unique position in the struggle against communism as a center of both information about and propaganda to East Europe. It could well function in the thaw-years to come – or not to come – as a source of straight information, as a mouthpiece for the administration, which might find an unofficial voice especially handy during an unsure détente, and above all as a token of continued American interest in East Europe. FEC could revert at any time, if need be, to a more aggressive line.

The rich record of broken Russian promises points toward very slow and cautious changed during the contemplated détente with due allowance made for a possible reversal of policy. Caveant consules.³⁶⁹

* * * **Archival & Newspaper Sources** * * *

Open Society Archives Budapest: HU OSA 312-0-5. Fond 312, Series 5: Alfred Reisch Collection, Box No. 1: Materials related to George C. Minden.

³⁶⁹ OSA: Letter from George C. Minden to Mr. A.S. Alexander. Date: December 17, 1959; edited by Cyntia Kálmán.

Summary

At the end of our research efforts, we believe that what we have achieved in this volume is first of all the strong historical contextualization of the theme *propaganda*. We have collected some very fine examples on when, where, and by whom it was used and/or misused in order to influence.

We have tried to give the „media-warfare” some rationale, i.e. to answer how and why political media propaganda works so efficiently. As we see it on these pages, in some cases it is triggered by ideological war; in other cases it is a matter of a selfish interest of the political actors. This kind of a ‘war’ is sometimes fought by soft power, when the goal is just to smoothly influence, but quite often it is an aggressive and shameless brain washing and/or pure lies.

In general, it seems like in Eastern Europe it is not a political life which is escorted by media and media propaganda, but rather a never-ending propaganda warfare which is sometimes fought around political issues, *too* – at least in many of our specific cases. And this raises some annoying questions whether we can speak of unfiltered news at all in modern times?

Last but not least, as the editor of this book, I am extremely grateful for all colleagues for their devotion during this long scientific cooperation!

チエコに最後の通牒

獨・前内閣の復活要求

[illegible]

- 一、何等の制限を附せずしてテソー・前内閣を復讐する事
- 一、スロヴァキヤ自治政府の増徴政策に對し責任のある

【ニューヨーク十三日電】十三日のAPペルシン電報はヒトラー閣議がテュエスデグ（一）（即ち土曜）の朝大演説を爲すべしと決定した旨の新聞記事が載つてゐる。

につき最後的調整を決定するやう要求した。スロヴァキア議會がドイツ側の調子にも決定に同意しない場合はドイツはプエコ政府の率を自國軍隊を維持せしめる目的を達したと認観である。

獨逸の決意

【テニコ】テニコ軍内の閣議につき
ハベルリン特電十三日
イフ育は十三日ドイツはテニコ
政府の閣議に出席であり本閣議を

國に於ける勢力は、たゞ在の重要に於けるものなり。トイフ政府のテエコ政見を著し、トイフ政府のテエコ政府に於ては、彼等が、人々をわきたるべきの條件は、スロヴァキヤ

國内、即ちドイツ人ののである。即ちドイツ人の



二 傾斜大コエチ・ハーバ

子工コ政府員

現に對する勇氣、ドイツ人達は、ドイツの敵軍に對する勇健な行動、
 等はドイツを救はせるものだ、
 ドイツ政府は、エウロ政府の決定案に
 を拒絶する、ドイツの少數民族は、
 許す事が出来ない、これはミ
 (ヘン)會議による平和を喪失す
 もので、又ミ(ヘン)會議
 ウィーン會議とによつて、エウ
 人に與へられた特權を廢止し、

ものである。ドイツの政策としては本防衛を速かに開始するにある。

ゲ空相急遽帰國

【サンシモ（北イタリ）十三日路透電】去る四日以來サンシモに滞在中のゲーリング空軍相夫妻は、十三日突然ヒトラー總帥の招請に

[illegible]

[illegible]

2. Japanese newspapers on Slovakia. Tuka on Tokyo Asahi Shinbun (*Tokyo Asahi Newspaper*), November 25, 1940.

日八十二月一十年五十四和

新盟邦の横顔

アニマル

動物あつては世界は回らない。ハンガリーに引續いてアニマル、スロヴァキアの一面が、動物の横顔に現れてゐる。動物の横顔にも文化の光が透けてゐる。動物の横顔にも文化の光が透けてゐる。動物の横顔にも文化の光が透けてゐる。

嫁入り道具に壺

昂まる日本研究熱

スロヴァキアの嫁入り道具は、日本の研究熱を昂ましている。スロヴァキアの嫁入り道具は、日本の研究熱を昂ましている。スロヴァキアの嫁入り道具は、日本の研究熱を昂ましている。

アキ・ヴロス

婦人の手藝は天才的

東北三縣とよく似た人間風俗

スロヴァキアの婦人の手藝は、東北三縣とよく似た人間風俗を呈している。スロヴァキアの婦人の手藝は、東北三縣とよく似た人間風俗を呈している。スロヴァキアの婦人の手藝は、東北三縣とよく似た人間風俗を呈している。

お国の話題

物質生活のおまじな

お国の話題、物質生活のおまじな。お国の話題、物質生活のおまじな。お国の話題、物質生活のおまじな。

湖

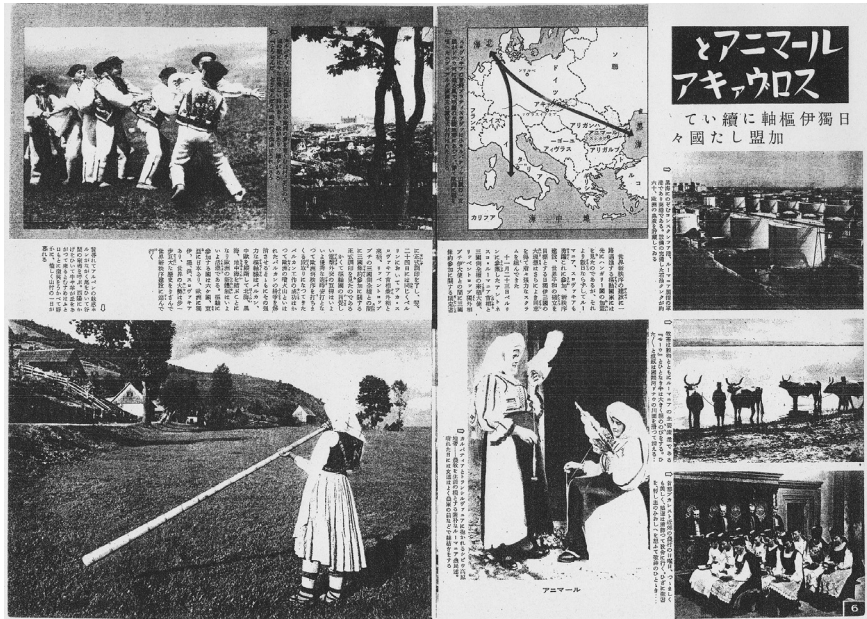
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手藝

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3. Japanese newspapers on Slovakia. 'Marvellous handicrafts of Slovak housewives' on Tokyo Asahi Shinbun (Tokyo Asahi Newspaper), November 28, 1940.



4. Japanese newspapers on Slovakia. 'Polite and humble Slovak national character' on Shashin-shuho (*Photo Weekly Magazine*), December 18, 1939.



5. Anti-revolutionary propaganda in the Új Szó, 1956.

Forms of Political and Media Propaganda
in Central Europe, Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary (1938-1968)

Mr. R. Cook
14 Nov 1966

TO : _____ DATE : _____

FROM : Hanus HAJEK, *HH*
SUBJ. ~~Chief, RFE~~ Telephone Directories
D - 5; ext.: 430/259

Czechoslovak newspapers have just reported that Part I of the Prague Telephone Directory will be distributed by January 15. Part II is to appear during the first quarter of 1967. Both parts will be on sale freely.

We would appreciate if VIENNA Office would procure for us both volumes as soon after publication as possible.

By the way, all regional Telephone Directories in our possession date from 1959-1960. New editions have undoubtedly appeared since. As they are important reference material, we would be indebted if the Vienna Office could help us also in this respect.

Thanks.

6. Special enquiry for the editors of the RFE, asking for a Czechoslovakian telephone directory, 1966.

Date: 5 December '66

To: Mr. Hanus Hajek

Through: Mr. Dick Cook *DC*
From: Nat Kingsley *NK*
Director of News

Re your request of 14 November,
the Vienna Bureau advises they
are unable to obtain the books.

NK:mh

7. Special enquiry for the editors of the RFE, asking for a Czechoslovakian telephone directory, 1966.

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