

# The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Voice of America: A Contribution to the History of the Battle for Hearts and Minds at the Beginning of the Cold War<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The so-called Battle for Hearts and Minds became an important part of the Cold War. Both superpowers, as well as its allies, initiated various programs during the entire conflict in order to persuade people that its ideology, values or actions represented a force for peace, progress and goodness. Many similar features can be found in these enterprises such as simplification, self-idealisation and demonization of enemy although a deeper analysis of American and communist propaganda reveals crucial differences. The United States traditionally understood propaganda more or less as an auxiliary instrument of the foreign policy during a time of need.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a significant segment of U.S. politicians considered it as something “Un-American” and therefore tended to put it only within confines of information activities.<sup>3</sup> In other words, they focused mainly on bringing “truthful” information behind the Iron Curtain. Bolshevik ideology, on the other hand, placed crucial importance on propaganda. Lenin defined it as a tool which should explain actual party line to people and help indoctrinate them with communist views. Its ultimate goal was nothing less than to attain control over society.<sup>4</sup> Only a few years after the end of World War Two, these two very different conceptions were about to clash.

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1 This study is a result of the Specific Research Project of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, Nr. 265101/2012.

2 Truman Library (further only TL), Psychological Strategy Board Files (further only PSB Files), Box 22, History of PSB, LILLY, E. P., *The Development of American Psychological Operations 1945–1951*, December 19, 1951, PSB, Washington, pp. 1–10.

3 BREWER, S. A., *Why America Fights, Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq*, Oxford 2009, pp. 87–93; TL, PSB files, Box 22, History of PSB, LILLY, E. P., op. cit., pp. 12, 22; SCHWARTZ, L. H., *Political Warfare Against the Kremlin, US and British Propaganda Policy at the Beginning of the Cold War*, New York 2009, pp. 10–13.

4 KUROČKIN, P. K. (et al.), *Komunistická propaganda, otázky teorie a metodiky*, Praha 1977, p. 11; AZIZJAN, A. K., *Propagandistický článek a oddělení propagandy v novinách — Těšnopisecký záznam přednášky na Vysoké stranické škole při ÚV VKS(b)*, Praha 1952, pp. 3–5. CHLUPÁČ, M., *Propaganda jako společenský jev*, Praha 1978, pp. 59–74.

The late 1930s and the early 1950s were period of many changes all around the globe but probably the most dramatic ones took place in Europe. The lowering of the Iron Curtain divided the Old World into two different camps. Stalin carefully orchestrated development in countries which he considered important as a defensive perimeter around the Soviet Union. The more American foreign policy shifted towards the principles of Keenan's containment, the more the Eastern Bloc became apparent. Success in a coup during February 1948 allowed the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Komunistická strana Československa; KSČ) to put one of the last "bricks" into the defensive wall around the USSR. Almost immediately after the so-called "Victorious February", the KSČ started with the process towards establishment of a "people's democracy". Consummation of state power, suppression of potential opposition and the promotion of terror as ordinary political practice followed this transformation.<sup>5</sup> In order to reach this goal, it was significantly important, naturally apart from other things, to obtain as much control over information as possible. Despite the fact that the Communists took control over all official media, they never achieved absolute domination because western radio stations managed to infiltrate into their monopoly. The battle with "enemy" broadcasting started soon after February 1948 and with small intermezzo during Prague Spring did not stop until the "Velvet Revolution".

This study will analyse the response of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia to western broadcasting during late 1940s and early 1950s. Special attention will be paid to the Voice of America (VOA) for two reasons. First, VOA had the status of an official instrument of American foreign policy. Second, it broadcasted to Czechoslovakia (ČSR) from the very beginning of the KSČ's regime; in fact, it started even much earlier — in February 1942.<sup>6</sup> The first part will debate the basic principles of communist propaganda as well as the so-called "counterpropaganda". Due to the particular complexity of these phenomena, it is not possible to understand them without at least a basic definition. The second part will focus on the monitoring of foreign broadcasting by a special department of the Czechoslovak Radio called the Monitoring Service. Finally, the last part will discuss the question of how the KSČ perceived western radio stations and their main "Cold War" campaigns.<sup>7</sup> Archival materials that concern all main topics came from National Archive (Prague, Chodovec). I particularly analysed various collections of the Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia as well as papers of the Ministry of Information (Collection 861) or the so-called Monitors (collection 311).

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5 KAPLAN, K., *Aparát ÚV KSČ v letech 1948–1968: studie a dokumenty*, Praha 1993, pp. 9–123; KAPLAN, K. — PALEČEK, P., *Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu*, Praha 2001, pp. 53–72, 167–182.

6 HIXSON, W. L., *Parting the Curtain, Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War 1945–1961*, New York 1998, pp. 2, 11; KRUGLER, D. F., *The Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles, 1945–1953*, Columbia — London 2009, pp. 29–43.

7 The jamming of western radio broadcasting will not be subject of this study because it was previously and sufficiently covered in following study: TOMEK, P., *Rušení zahraničního rozhlasového vysílání pro Československo*, in: *Securitas Imperii*, č. 9, Praha 2002, pp. 334–367.

## PROPAGANDA AND THE KSČ AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR

A response of the KSČ's propaganda to western radio broadcasting emanated primarily from communist ideology and accordingly it is first necessary to discuss some of its fundamentals in depth. Lenin's interpretation of Marxism, in combination with his theory of the so-called "democratic centralism", created a system which gave a key position to the party. Its authority became so absolute that it even defined the truth regardless of the objective reality. Moreover, the Communists believed that they decrypted course of history and that they must lead mankind to the final stage of its development — affluent classless society.<sup>8</sup> These very premises laid basic principles for "Red" propaganda as well. According to this theory, its main purpose was "...to clarify Marxist-Leninist theory as well as policy of the party, to broadest masses of workers, to teach them rules of social development, to deepen their awareness and organisation, to induce social activity of masses in their struggle for socialism and communism".<sup>9</sup> As mentioned above, these ambitions lie not only in persuading but also in educating the people into changing their entire perception of the world in accordance with the communist worldview. Generally, it played essential role for reaching the party's ultimate goals such as to attain control over the state, media or people but above all to secure own monopoly on power.<sup>10</sup>

The international character of communist movement is another key feature worth remarking on. Simply stated, Lenin emphasised it on an ideological level while Stalin on bureaucratic level. Despite the slightly different motivation, understanding, or theoretical nuances, the result was very much alike — an all-compassing, worldwide movement. However, there simultaneously occurred a trend which put the Russian Communists into the centre.<sup>11</sup> The position of the first generation of Russian revolutionaries who successfully overthrew "old regime" and replace it with a new one gave them almost a divine status. Moreover, Stalin added strong directive supervision from Moscow due to the bolshevisation process. As a result, he was able to enforce

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8 ARON, R., *Historie XX. století*, Praha 1996, pp. 170–199; FIGES, O., *Lidská tragédie, Ruská revoluce 1891–1924*, Praha — Plzeň 2000, pp. 33–517; FURET, F., *Minulost jedné ilúzie, Esej o ideji komunizmu ve 20. storočí*, Bratislava 2000, pp. 13–196; KOLMAN, A., *Zaslepená generace — paměti starého bolševika*, Brno 2005, pp. 270–282; MALIA, M., *Sovětská tragédie — Dějiny socialismu v Rusku v letech 1917–1991*, Praha 2004, pp. 85–121; SERVICE, R., *Lenin — Životopis*, Praha 2002, pp. 13–437; SURONCEVOVÁ, N. N. — CHOMENKO, A. G. (eds.), *V.I. Lenin — O propagandě a agitaci*, Praha 1980, pp. 17–21, 24–25.

9 KUROČKIN, P. K. (et al.), op. cit., p. 11.

10 According to communist ideology, propaganda also finds support in agitation. Lenin's spouse, Nadezhda Krupskaya, wrote about this very issue: "If the instrument for upbringing of masses towards revolutionary worldview is overwhelmingly propaganda, the instrument for upbringing of masses towards revolutionary activities is overwhelmingly agitation." KUROČKIN, P. K. (et al.), op. cit., p. 33. In spite of the theoretical nuances, everything led to the same result — a person whose mind is controlled by the party.

11 Until late 1925, the official name was "Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)", then it changed to "All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)" and finally in 1952 to the "Communist Party of Soviet Union".

various shifts and turns of the party line across the globe that were primarily in favour of the Soviet Union. In other words, local communist parties did not function independently but they obeyed the Kremlin's decisive authority.<sup>12</sup> Propaganda, in accordance with the definition in the paragraph above, became perfect instrument for these purposes. George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers perhaps one of the best summarisations of this mentality. His novelistic invention of newspeak claimed in three short slogans: "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength."<sup>13</sup> If Kremlin said, "War is peace" it had to be so because party defines truth and through propaganda explicates it to the people.

The ideological premises, bureaucratic nature as well as the international character (subordination to Moscow) of the communist universe largely determined the KSČ to the role of an obedient disciple. During the entire existence of the so-called Third Czechoslovak Republic, a regime that can be labelled as "democratic" only to a limited extent, the Communists were always trying to maximise their power.<sup>14</sup> The only thing that differed was a level of aggressiveness. In accordance with instruction from the Soviet Union, at first they followed the policy of the National Front. However, even then their ambition was far greater. For example, on March 1946, during the 8th Congress of the KSČ, Lumír Čivrný, a person responsible for agitprop<sup>15</sup> in the first years after the World War Two, stressed the need for a significant increase of all activities executed by his section. Then he declared: "It is necessary to gradually and systematically move towards increasing ideological and political education of the party members as well as all working people. The main subject of this matter is Marxism-Leninism that is applied in all fields..."<sup>16</sup> As the Cold War intensified Stalin increasingly pushed the KSČ to quit "parliamentary pirouettes" and took over absolute rule in the state. The Victorious February not only started a period of dramatic socio-economic, political or cultural changes but it also brought tighter connection to Moscow. The same trends influenced the field of propaganda as well.

The basic principles of KSČ's propaganda naturally did not change after February 1948; however, level of its intensity and range of activities differed radically. Moreover, communist movement went during the late 1940s and the early 1950s through one of the most rigid period of its development. The so-called Zhdanovism adopted

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12 CONQUEST, R., *Stalin — Breaker of Nations*, London 2003, pp. 129–170; MALIA, M., op. cit., pp. 176–274; SERVICE, R., op. cit., pp. 331–372; TUCKER, R. C., *Stalin*, Praha 1995, pp. 30–44, 421–437.

13 ORWELL, G., 1984, Praha 2000, p. 24.

14 *Košický vládní program — program nové Československé vlády Národní fronty Čechů a Slováků*, April 5, 1945, Praha 1974, pp. 3–36; KAPLAN, K., *Pravda o Československu 1945–1948*, Praha 1990, pp. 85–158; VEBER, V., *Osudové únorové dny*, Praha 2008, pp. 6–191.

15 This term is generally used for indication of propaganda and agitation and was also as an unofficial name for the section of the Central Committee of KSČ that had responsibilities over these activities.

16 National Archive (further only NA), Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (further only A ÚV KSČ), collection 19/7, number of archival folder (further only č. a. j.) 23, *Projev s. Čivrného na VIII. sjezdu*, March 31, 1946, p. 1.

orthodoxy which fanatically fought against everything that even slightly referred to “western imperialism”. The crusade against “formalism” on the one hand and blind adoration of the Soviet Union on the other created almost “Kafkaesque” atmosphere full of absurdities. Which major trends existed in communist propaganda activities in Czechoslovakia?

The dominant topics of propaganda and its direction were largely influenced by the general development in the KSČ respective of Czechoslovakia after February 1948. The following tendencies played important role above all. Firstly, the Bolshevik’s coup spurred fusion of the party and state. This process led to further bureaucratisation as well as centralisation; however, it also intensified the fight between the Communists working in the party apparatus and governmental institutions. The main cause of the tensions became disputes between multiple institutions with more or less the same responsibilities.<sup>17</sup> The rivalry between the Ministry of Information and the “Department of Culture and Propaganda” of the Central Committee of the KSČ can be cited as an example of this struggle in the field of propaganda.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, the party wanted to get control over all aspects of everyday life in order to create a “new society”. Also, an equally important motivation for the KSČ was to secure its monopoly on power. Even though propagandist institutions went during the late 1940s and the early 1950s through many bureaucratic reorganisations, their fields of interests always remained the same. They usually covered party training,<sup>19</sup> agitation, film, radio, newspapers, publishing, education, Marxism-Leninism, etc.<sup>20</sup> Finally, propaganda’s task to explain party policy and ideology to the people became another crucial factor that largely influenced its content. A “communist liturgical calendar”, which highlighted milestones of the movement and commemorated a famous persons, as well as periodical “festivities” such as harvests or the Five-Year Plan, occupied position of the “permanent” element.<sup>21</sup>

17 KAPLAN, K., *Aparát ÚV KSČ...*, pp. 9–123; KAPLAN, K. — PALEČEK, P., op. cit., pp. 53–72, 167–182.

18 KNAPÍK, J., *V zajištění moci — Kulturní politika, její systém a aktéři*, Praha 2006, pp. 23–39, 60–66, 110–149; PÁVOVÁ, J., *Demagog ve službách strany — Portrét komunistického politika a ideologa Václava Kopeckého*, Praha 2008, pp. 94–99.

19 Official name was “The Year of Party Training” (*Rok stranického školení*, RSŠ). Key members of the Department of Culture and Propaganda considered this activity as one of the most important and they focused on detailed organisation of these courses. NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 26–7, folder Zprávy kult. prop. odborů září 1950, *Zkušenosti z průzkumu letního školení v Pražském kraji*, pp. 1–16.

20 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 23, *Sekretariátům ÚV KSČ, Návrh*, October 22, 1945; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 23, *Organizační výstavba kult.-prop. odd.*; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 23, *Návrh kulturně-propagačního oddělení k popularisaci usnesení ÚV ze dne 22. a 23.1. 1947*; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 23, *Systemizace kulturně-propagačního oddělení sekretariátu ÚV KSČ*, December 15, 1950; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 23, *Záznam o poradě vedoucích oddělení u s. Bareše, konané dne 2.11. 1951*; NA, *Ministerstvo Informací 1945–1953 — Inventář*, pp. 1–17; KNAPÍK, J., op. cit., pp. 23–55, 110–159, 288–311; KAPLAN, K., *Aparát ÚV KSČ...*, pp. 39, 57–58, 64–65, 77–78, 99–101, 117–118.

21 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25–2, *Letter from Rudolf Slánský to secretaries of district and regional committees of KSČ*, May 18, 1951, attachment *Zásady příprav žňových prací*

Campaigns concerning both home and international events had a different character — they largely focused on actual enemies. “Bloody dog” Josip Broz Tito, Czechoslovak reactionary forces or even the Colorado potato beetle, “a weapon of American imperialism”, were only a few of the main objects of “demonization”. Purges within communist movement turned Rudolf Slánský and members of his “parallel centre of power in state” into major villains.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, the deaths of leaders such as Stalin and Gottwald caused an intensive grieving for the whole nation and were followed by pledges of loyalty to their legacy.<sup>23</sup> All these phenomena show the complex character communist propaganda had.

All main principles mentioned above, as well as the example of communist propaganda rhetoric at its “best” can be, among other things, shown on the Resolution of Organisational Secretariat of Central Committee of the KSČ about Mass Political Agitation Work at Factories and in Villages. The document, not minor at its significance, declared in the opening paragraph: “The great tasks of socialists build up in our country that came from the 9th Congress of the KSČ<sup>24</sup> and the recent meeting of Central Committee<sup>25</sup> is not possible to complete without the active involvement of the millions of working masses. For their accomplishment, the party is necessarily required to strengthen its connection with the people and to increase its mass political agitation.”<sup>26</sup> Generally, the entire text reflected a strong “constructive” spirit and enthusiasm. Crucial emphasis was put on the constant need of explaining the party’s policy to the people as well as other matters such as home and world affairs or economic issues.<sup>27</sup> Everything should be done in accordance with Klement

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- v souvislosti s upevněním JZD a dalších společných osevů s rozorávanými mezemi, pp. 1–14; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25–2, *Letter from Political Secretary of ÚV KSČ to secretaries of district and regional committees of KSČ, undated*, pp. 1–10, attachment n. 1, *Ústřední úkoly k zajištění kampaně k 35. výročí Velké říjnové socialistické revoluce*, pp. 1–4; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 28–1, *Zpráva agitačního odboru za týden 21. srpna — 3. září 1950*, pp. 1–5.
- 22 FORMÁNKOVÁ, P., *Kampaň proti „americkému brouku“ a její politické souvislosti, Paměť a dějiny 2008/01*, pp. 22–38; FORMÁNKOVÁ, P. — KOURA, P., *Žádáme trest smrti! Propagandistická kampaň provázející proces s Miladou Horákovou a spol.*, Praha 2008, pp. 25–121; KAPLAN, K., *Největší politický proces — M. Horáková a spol.*, Praha — Brno 1995, pp. 87–167; KAPLAN, K. — PALEČEK, P., c. d., pp. 73–164; MACURA, V., *Šťastný věk (a jiné studie o socialistické kultuře)*, Praha 2008, pp. 61–73; Ministerstvo spravedlnosti, *Proces s vedením protistátního centra v čele s Rudolfem Slánským*, Praha 1953, pp. 7–548.
- 23 MACURA, V., op. cit., pp. 121–130; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 15–2, *Záznam z porady konané dne 30.3. 1953 u s. Nečáaska*, pp. 1–3.
- 24 It was the first Congress of the KSČ after the “Victorious February”.
- 25 The meeting happened during 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 1950.
- 26 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25–1, *Usnesení Organizačního sekretariátu Ústředního výboru KSČ o masové politické agitační práci na závodech a na vesnicích*, p. 1; The document was sent from the Central Committee to lower institutions of KSČ in April 4, 1950 in significant number of copies. Generally, its importance was strongly emphasized. NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 26–3, *Zpráva o činnosti odboru agitace za týden 27. březen — 2. duben*, pp. 1–2.
- 27 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25–1, *Usnesení Organizačního...*, p. 1.

Gottwald's statement: "...a method of persuading is main method of all our work."<sup>28</sup> The resolution also included certain criticism. According to the document, many party institutions did not pay sufficient attention to the persuasion of the working people after February 1948. Due to this, agitation activities weakened. Furthermore, members of the KSČ did not fight enough against enemy propaganda.<sup>29</sup> This unsatisfactory situation as such had to change radically. Party institutions on every level should concentrate on these issues and adopt constant agitation work so that the KSČ could "increase the socialist consciousness of all working people, strengthen national pride and patriotism, proletarian internationalism and love towards the Soviet Union". Then it was added: "We have to mobilise all working people to fulfil their production goals, to overcome difficulties and to fight against the class enemy."<sup>30</sup>

The content of whole resolution tended to be strongly repetitive. If a considerable amount of formal phrases of communist theory are put aside, the key message remains always the same — a demand to increase the intensity of the propagandistic activities in Czechoslovakia. The document, as its title indicated, gave major focus to two fields of special interests for the KSČ. First, heavy industry always played very important role for the communist movement because it was primarily linked to armament production. This concern influenced the entire economic structure of Czechoslovakia so that it would meet as much demands of the Soviet Union as much as possible. The Victorious February spurred a transformation within intentions of the "Steel Conception" which enforced this exact goal.<sup>31</sup> In order to achieve the best results, manual labour should be indoctrinated to adopt a "Stakhanovite morality" and then, according to these rules, perform intensive workload.<sup>32</sup> Second, villages, or in other words agriculture, went through a collectivisation process that the KSČ fully adopted on its 9th Congress. Collective Farms (JZD) did not meet with wide sympathy, so the Communists had to use various repressions to transform the plan into reality. Propaganda (agitation) should become one of auxiliary instruments for this purpose.<sup>33</sup> The resolution

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 2. The following paragraph focused largely on the last issue that was mentioned, "It is needed in agitation work to explain the questions of fight for world peace to working people, to reveal imperialistic warmongers, to obtain working people for graduation of our participation in fight for peace, for greater working effort, for bigger vigilance and alertness against imperialistic agents and the rest of the home reaction." Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> LHOTA, V., *Ocelová koncepce hospodářského vývoje Československa (1947–1953)*, Praha 1968, pp. 8–150; PRŮCHA, V. (et al.), *Hospodářské a sociální dějiny Československa 1918–1992 — 2. díl, období 1945–1992*, Brno 2009, pp. 249–294; RÁKOSNÍK, J., *Sověťzace sociálního státu — Lidově demokratický režim a sociální práva občanů v Československu 1945–1960*, Praha 2010, pp. 102–174.

<sup>32</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25–1, *Usnesení Organizačního...*, pp. 1–8.

<sup>33</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25–1, *Usnesení Organizačního...*, pp. 1–8; BLAŽEK, P. — KUBÁLEK, M. (eds.), *Kolektivizace venkova v Československu 1948–1960 a Středoevropské souvislosti*, Praha 2008, pp. 13–198; JECH, K., *Kolektivizace a vyhnání sedláků z půdy*, Praha 2008, pp. 51–228; ROKOSKÝ, J. — SVOBODA, L. (eds.), *Kolektivizace v Československu*, Praha 2013, pp. 10–425.

included all the main ingredients typical for communist propaganda; however, above all it aimed to strengthen the KSČ's position in Czechoslovakia. After the Korean War broke out, this position took on a more hysterical tone because the United States revealed its "plundering intentions" and the Soviet Union its "dedication" to peace.<sup>34</sup>

The unique nature of the Cold War made the so-called "counterpropaganda" another part of communist propaganda. According to documents of the Department of Culture and Propaganda of the ÚV KSČ, its basic task was "...to help gradually liquidate influence of enemy propaganda on masses, cause active opposition against disseminators of rumours and arouse atmosphere of general contempt of broadcasting of western radio stations".<sup>35</sup> The definition further stated that it should focus on the constant exposing of "false" arguments such as lack of freedom or the presence of terror in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, it should attack western enemy propaganda as a whole. On one hand, special concern was supposed to be put on the defence of the Soviet Union and, on the other, to emphasise the hypocrisy of the imperialists in the arguments that were related to questions of war and peace.<sup>36</sup> However, communist counterpropaganda should not merely have a polemic character but rather confidently and independently persuade working people about its truth.<sup>37</sup>

Analyses of the basic principles of communist propaganda showed how complex this phenomenon was. It came out from a sophisticated philosophical system which claimed to possess the only key to the true understanding of the world. However, under the scientific, or perhaps pseudo-scientific, surface hid desires to get control over entire society and secure a monopoly on power. Due to these facts, communist ideology was *a priori* hostile to any potential rival, opposition or even people who thought differently. Propaganda became one of the most visible reflections of such paranoid thinking. In this context, western radio broadcasting represented almost the "ideal" enemy because it brought an alternative view on current affairs.

## THE KSČ AND MONITORING OF WESTERN RADIO BROADCASTING

The fact that western radio broadcasting was able to bring information across the Iron Curtain to Czechoslovakia became inconvenient problem for the KSČ. In order to adequately respond to enemy propaganda as well as to protect its monopoly on information, the Communists had to monitor it. A special department of the Czechoslovak Radio functioned for this very purpose during the whole communist era. What was its genesis? How did this service work?

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<sup>34</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 25-1, *Letter from Josef Frank to cultural and propagation secretaries of district and regional committees of KSČ*, July 19, 1950, pp. 1-5.

<sup>35</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 13-2, *Návrh na opatření pro vedení protipropagandy*, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> Even though the KSČ created a lot of instructions for both propaganda and counterpropaganda, their transition into the practical use was, from the Central Committee's point of view, still insufficient. Particularly counterpropaganda lacked central direction which caused its inadequate activity. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.



The Monitoring Service of the foreign radio broadcasting in Czechoslovakia was not created until after Victorious February. Its beginnings can be set to late May 1945 when the Ministry of Information took the first steps in organising the service.<sup>38</sup> The primary reason for its creation was, according to a document, following: "Listening and recording of the radio from foreign countries constitute an important part of information service and therefore it is necessary to build this service as thoroughly as possible."<sup>39</sup> The first radio sessions that were recorded came from mid-June 1945.<sup>40</sup> In following months, the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio expanded. It focused on various radio stations from all over the Europe as well as across the Atlantic Ocean; however, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and broadcasting from Moscow occupied probably the biggest attention during the period of the Third Republic. All daily radio broadcasts from each day were processed into bulletin and then offered for disposal to various state institutions.<sup>41</sup> In spite of some obstacles such as insufficient technical facilities, a lack of staff or certain persistent bureaucratic chaos, the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio achieved a significant increase in its activities. By the spring 1948, it had fifty-seven employees who collaborated in processing sixty-six various radio broadcasts.<sup>42</sup> On average, the bulletin had between two hundred and two hundred and fifty pages and it was published daily in twenty-three copies. The Office of the President, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Information belonged to institutions which subscribed to it.<sup>43</sup> By 1948, the basic structure of the Monitoring Service was more or less completed; however, it did as yet not have big political importance.

"Victorious February" became an important turning point for the history of Czechoslovak Republic and it naturally influenced the Monitoring Service as well. Its

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38 In fact, institutions such as Czechoslovak Radio, the Ministry of the Postal Service or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were, on some level, monitoring foreign radio broadcasting; however, the Ministry of Information tried to take a leading role in organising centralised service. NA, Ministry of the Information, Collection 861, Carton 27, Document no. 60381/1945, *Pozvání k poradě o vybudování naslouchací služby*, August 14, 1945, p. 1.

39 Ibid.

40 On June 13, 1945, Winston Churchill made election speeches — this was one of the first radio sessions that was recorded by the Monitoring Service. NA, Monitor, Collection 311, Carton 1, BBC Home Service and Forces program, June 13, 1945, 9 pm 15 min, *Election speech*.

41 NA, Ministerstvo informací (further only MI), Collection 861, Carton 43, Document no. 60087/1947, *Monitorovací služba*, January 15, 1948, pp. 1-2, Inserts 1-4.

42 Not all Members of staff were monitoring of foreign radio broadcasting; in fact, only a minority of them. This situation was often criticised. NA, MI, Collection 861, Carton 43, Document no. 61811/1948, *Porada o monitorové službě*, April 19, 1948, Insert, *Zápis porady o monitorové službě konané dne 19. dubna 1948 v ministerstvu informací*, p. 1.

43 NA, MI, Collection 861, Carton 43, Document no. 61284/1948, *Zpráva o návštěvě v monitorovací službě Čsl. rozhlasu v Bubenči*, March 22, 1948, Insert, *Letter from Czechoslovak Radio to the Ministry of Information, IV. Department*, March 16, 1948, p. 1; NA, Monitor, Collection 311, Carton 102-103.

primary responsibility, to collect information from foreign broadcasting, was put into a whole new context. The lowering of the Iron Curtain spurred in particular the Voice of America to much more intensive activity. From the KSČ's point of view, the VOA and other western radio stations became potential threats that could endanger their monopoly on power. The original task of the Monitoring Service remained the same but information should be used for ideological purposes of propaganda use.<sup>44</sup> Another emphasis, no lesser in its significance, was put on surveillance purposes. During a meeting that concerned this entire issue, one of the participants aptly said: "... because we have to know what our people are listening."<sup>45</sup> Generally, the importance of the Monitoring Service for the Communists increasingly grew after February 1948.

Which major tendencies occurred during the late 1940s and the early 1950s? As western radio broadcasting intensified after Victorious February, the leaders of the KSČ wanted better as well as more extensive monitoring. This demand was possible to reach only to certain degree. The Monitoring Service of Czechoslovak Radio had to struggle with a few constant problems. A large amount of technical facilities and staff were big difficulties lacking to meet rising quantity of tasks — in particular, a lack of vacuum tubes and insufficient working spaces became the most serious problems.<sup>46</sup> In order to cover a maximum number of enemy radio broadcasts, attention to the broadcasting from the Eastern Bloc slowly diminished. Information such as this was possible to get also from different sources. Due to the vital importance of Soviet radio, the KSČ saw this as a guideline for media and the reduction did not affect it.<sup>47</sup> Probably the most significant tendency of all was the general inclination towards ideological as well as political approach towards everything that concerned the Monitoring Service. Contact with delicate information created for the staff a new requirement — to share "correct" communist views. People who did not meet it had to leave as soon as candidates with a more "suitable" profile were found.<sup>48</sup> The distri-

44 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru, kterou provedl Československý svaz novinářů ustavenou komisí ve složení: s. Kořínek Václav (ČTK), s. Kalina (zahr. odd. ÚV KSČ), s. Zimmer Rudolf (kádr. odd. Čs. rozhlasu)*, p. 1.

45 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Zápis z porady o monitorovém materiálu, konaném dne 15. června 1951 v 10,00 hod. dopol. v budově Čs. rozhlasu*, p. 3. Another participant — Rohan from "Rudé právo" — also said during the same meeting almost the exact statement: "The Monitoring Service is one of the most important sources for us because it gives us a perspective what our people are listening from foreign broadcasting." *Ibid.*, p. 2.

46 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, pp. 1-4; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Letter from J. Prokop (Czechoslovak Radio) to V. Kalina (Secretariat of ÚV KSČ)*, September 29, 1950, pp. 1-2.

47 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, Annex 3, p. 1; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Zápis z porady...*, pp. 4-6.

48 The personnel situation of the monitoring service was not ideal even after couple of years since February 1948. The main criticism aimed at the lack of political activism. The majority of employees were described only as "lukewarm". NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, pp. 4-5; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Pracovní prověrka v monitoru Čs. rozhlasu*, pp. 1-6; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Seznam zaměstnanců v Monitoru se závěry prověřovací komise*, pp. 1-8.

bution of bulletins also changed. There occurred a strong tendency to limit access to all processed radio broadcasts. Only carefully chosen institutions or persons received the full version that also included complete information from the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe or the BBC.<sup>49</sup> In short, Victorious February turned the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio into an institution with special status and a very delicate task and therefore the KSČ took strict control over it.

Cooperation of various professions was necessary to achieve successful functioning of the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio. There existed a relatively wide range of “auxiliary” jobs such as archivists, librarians, secretaries, cleaners, canteen staff, etc.; however, two of them were significant above all. Monitoring of foreign broadcasting required various radio and recording devices so skilled technicians became vital to keep everything running. At least the same importance was placed on employees working in printing because of the daily circulation of the bulletins.<sup>50</sup> Although all these positions did not directly participate in the monitoring process, the KSČ emphasised that even these positions needed to be politically and ideologically reliable.<sup>51</sup>

Which positions played key roles? The leading function of the Monitoring Service was given to an editor in chief. His responsibilities were: “...to manage and plan entire work of the institution, to be politically responsible for work of the monitoring service and to create a list of radio sessions for processing. On daily basis, he controlled the work of all employees and created conditions for their constant political development. He took care of the relations with the subscribers of bulletins and with management (of the Czechoslovak Radio — note by D. S.).”<sup>52</sup> Political as well as ideological maturity became one of the most important requirements for this function.<sup>53</sup> Regular editors had almost a similar occupation except for lesser authority. They were responsible for the management of work in the Monitoring Service during their shifts and for preparation of political and economic supplements from material that was gained from foreign broadcasting.<sup>54</sup> Another important position became the so-called “observer”. “According to the actual political situation in the world as well as to the schedules of radio stations or rough dispositions, they had to prepare daily

<sup>49</sup> During May 1953, this process took on a concrete form. It was decided that bulletins would be published in two different versions. The so-called “Red Review” included all processed radio sessions while the so-called “Blue Review” only the informative ones without politically or ideologically “controversial” content. However, form bulletins kept changing in following years. NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, Annex 5–8; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Seznam odběrateů Monitoru*, pp. 1–3; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Návrh na novou organizaci a distribuci zpravodajství o zahraničně politických událostech*, May 19, 1953, pp. 1–3.

<sup>50</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, pp. 2–6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Jindřich Prokop was an editor in chief during the late forties and the early 1950s. *Ibid.*; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Pracovní prověrka...*, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

listening program for monitors...They are searching and studying new radio stations in case of changing political situation; they also evaluate structure of newly found shows or if necessary they process important radio sessions.”<sup>55</sup> Generally, observers had to very carefully follow major Czechoslovak as well as world events in the political, economic and cultural field, and therefore the KSČ awaited proper education in communist ideology from them.<sup>56</sup> Finally, the last position was the so-called “monitor”. These employees did the primary processing of radio broadcasts: “...they make an audio recording then evaluate it and choose material which is according to its political, economic and cultural significance converted or translated into a full transcript or abstract so that it includes all important information.”<sup>57</sup> Naturally, also in this case, absolute political reliability became crucial condition.

Working in the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio was quite demanding for all professions, however, for editors and monitors probably had the most demands because they played the key role in the processing of radio broadcasts. Even though the monitoring of foreign broadcasting was running through entire day, the busiest part started from 5 pm and lasted until midnight.<sup>58</sup> The most intensive activity therefore went through the night. One monitor processed on average two or three fifteen minute long radio broadcasts. In case of poor audio quality or some technical problems, this number naturally decreased.<sup>59</sup> Generally, the working routine of monitor was quite tough. According to a document “he has almost constantly headphones on his ears and his hearing is exposed to various interfering sounds. Transcription of radio broadcasts was done over loud noise in common writing rooms. All this as well as stress during shifts had an influence on their nervous system”.<sup>60</sup> The wide range and quantity of duties in combination with big responsibility put editors under considerable pressure. Moreover, the majority of them also had to work through the night — roughly until 4 am.<sup>61</sup> In its final stage, a complete version of bulletin went to a printer and by six o'clock in the morning it was ready for distribution.<sup>62</sup>

The Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio had its roots in time right after the World War Two; however, the primary purpose was an informative function. Victorious February became an important breaking point. The Communists saw it as another instrument in the fight against western radio broadcasting. Therefore, it

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Pracovní prověrka...*, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Přehled relací monitorovaných pravidelně*, September 22, 1950, pp. 1-3; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Přehled relací monitorovaných nepravidelně*, September 22, 1950, pp. 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Pracovní prověrka...*, p. 2; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Due to this, monitors worked only thirty-six hours a week. NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Uzávěr prověrky monitoru...*, p. 4; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Pracovní prověrka...*, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 611, *Pracovní prověrka...*, p. 2.

had significance for the political and ideological field and even for national security. Moreover, the KSČ was convinced, as one of the members of the KSČ said that "...we (the Communists — note by D. S.) have to know what our people are listening".

## WESTERN RADIO BROADCASTING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE KSČ

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia perceived western broadcasting with considerable hostility. Propaganda depicted it as "seditious radio transmitters" that spread lies and hatred. Reaction such as this was absolutely natural; however, how did their perspective look in detail? Which radio stations did they consider as the most dangerous or the most erudite? Which were, according to the members of the KSČ, the major campaigns of western broadcasting and what was their main message? These issues will be discussed in following part.<sup>63</sup>

"It is clear that constantly growing success of democratic forces leads and will lead to more and more intensive propaganda that aims against us."<sup>64</sup> This statement introduced a document that analysed anti-Czechoslovak foreign radio broadcasting. Generally, the KSČ put great accent on this premise. It was further emphasised that Czechoslovakia represented one of the most important targets of western propaganda. Party's materials and statistics claimed that the Foreign Service of the Voice of America, which broadcasted in seventeen languages, had in total 1278 minutes — of which a little bit more than ten per cent were dedicated to Czechoslovakia.<sup>65</sup> However, if only the countries of the Eastern Bloc and China are taken into account, the share reached to twenty-nine per cent. This put the Czechoslovakia in second position behind the Soviet Union. The foreign broadcasting of the BBC did not radically differ from this trend as well.<sup>66</sup> Equally significant became a premise that western radio broadcasting had hostile nature even before the KSČ took over power. In this context, the Communists had a strong tendency to understand criticism of the party and its policy as an attack against the entire Czechoslovak Republic. Victorious February only spurred the intensity of aggressive behaviour which significantly increased in following years.<sup>67</sup> The worldwide tension that surrounded the Berlin Blockade not

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<sup>63</sup> This part will be based primarily on the document entitled, "Analysis of Anti-Czechoslovak Radio Propaganda". This document is part of materials of the Department of Culture and Propaganda of the Central Committee of KSČ — particularly a file that considered foreign broadcasting. Exact dating is missing, however, from the content and used material it is possible to set it to February or March 1950. NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové propagandy*, 1950.

<sup>64</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové...*, A. *Prostředky a rozsah rozhlasové propagandy Západu*, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>67</sup> NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové...*, B. *Dosavadní vývoj západní rozhlasové propagandy*, p. 1.

only confirmed this scheme but it also allowed the KSČ to emphasise the international character of a new bipolar conflict.<sup>68</sup> Attacks on Czechoslovakia did not aim only to the one state but to the all people's democracies at the same time and to communist ideology as well.

Quite a big number of foreign radio stations broadcasted to Czechoslovakia, although not all of them were considered as primarily dangerous. The British Broadcasting Company and the Voice of America in particular gained the greatest attention of the KSČ at the beginning of the Cold War. How did the Communists perceive them and how did they evaluate their broadcasting? There existed wide accord that the BBC was far more professional than the others. According to the document of an Analysis of Anti-Czechoslovak Radio Propaganda "...in terms of content as well as psychological side the structure of programs had the most sophisticated nature and so it is the most dangerous because of its ability to persuade listeners".<sup>69</sup> The KSČ also emphasised the fact that the BBC usually very quickly commented on internal events in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, it partly used objectivity in news coverage but only in order to cover false attacks against people's democracies. The Communists concluded that "an ideological field is the most favourite way of the BBC how leads its fight against us. Its radio sessions are primarily aimed on the middle classes — particularly on intellectuals".<sup>70</sup> Czechoslovak broadcasting of the Voice of America did not meet such high standards as the BBC. Czech and Slovak radio broadcasts were not that psychologically sophisticated. Some of them had an openly tendentious character. Generally, they gave a lot of attention to economic as well as agricultural problems and they also focused on activities of political emigration from ČSR more than the others.<sup>71</sup> Despite this obvious limitation, the KSČ still classified the VOA as one of the most dangerous radio stations: "...the broadcasting of the Voice of America represents the biggest danger in the terms of propaganda. This is not caused by its content but rather position on medium waves and its strength. If our listener tunes radio from station Prague I to Prague II he usually comes across this strong station."<sup>72</sup> Other foreign stations, with exception of broadcasting from Tito's Yugoslavia, were not seen as such serious threats.<sup>73</sup>

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68 Analysis of Anti-Czechoslovak Radio Propaganda quoted one of the examples of this rhetoric: "Softon Delmer from the Daily Express would welcome, if the British broadcasting took to it, a more offensive stand against ČSR. Furthermore, he thinks that it would be desirable from BBC to bring more information to Eastern Europe so that communist propaganda would not be able to enforce its position in the states which are subjugated." Ibid.

69 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové..., E. Rozdíly mezi rozhlasovou propagandou západních států*, p. 1.

70 Ibid. The analysis also emphasised the good reputation of BBC due to its broadcasting during the World War Two. NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové..., A. Prostředky a rozsah rozhlasové propagandy Západu*, p. 1.

71 Ibid.; NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové..., D. Využití emigrace zahraniční propagandou*, p. 1.

72 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové..., A. Prostředky a rozsah rozhlasové propagandy Západu*, p. 1.

73 Ibid., pp. 1–3.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia identified several major campaigns of western radio broadcasting. The first one rallied against the relationship towards the Soviet Union. According to the document of the Analysis of Anti-Czechoslovak Radio Propaganda the main message could be summarised like this: “Czechoslovakia is a satellite of the USSR and the USSR is trying to seal up the Iron Curtain as much as possible and to eliminate influence of the West in Czechoslovakia.” The following passage was then added: “...western propaganda is trying to prove that Czechoslovakia is completely dependent on the USSR on the political as well as economic and cultural field.”<sup>74</sup> The Voice of America largely emphasised the last one — particularly in connection with preparation of Stalin’s seventieths birthday celebrations.<sup>75</sup> Another important campaign was labelled by the KSČ as “The Creation of the Atmosphere of Fear”. Western radio broadcasting focused on two issues. First, it informed about mass arrests, political processes and generally about corrupt nature of communist judicial system. Second, it promoted concerns about the future of individuals who cooperated with the people’s regime because they would be persecuted after a restoration of democracy in the Czechoslovak Republic. The VOA and the BBC also usually reminded its audience of the ideals of the First Republic or the humanism of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš.<sup>76</sup>

The two campaigns mentioned above focused primarily on the intellectuals or the middle classes, the next one on the contrary aimed particularly on the working classes. “The Voice of America brings at regular intervals news and commentaries that are trying to prove how much higher American worker’s standard of living is in comparison with a worker in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, the ‘freedom’ of workers in the West is being praised, while Czechoslovak workers are, for example, according to one expatriate magazine called ‘New-yorský deník’ from January 28 labelled as ‘modern galley slaves’.”<sup>77</sup> Generally, western broadcasting emphasised the notion that the communist regime exploited people more than the capitalist system and the majority of society is not happy with “the Soviet way to socialism”.<sup>78</sup> Very similar arguments were also used in radio broadcasts that addressed farmers. Wide dissatisfaction with collectivisation process in agriculture became one of the key topics in this context.<sup>79</sup>

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia naturally became one of the most frequent targets of “seditious radio transmitters”. As was stated above, western broadcasting tried to demoralise members of the KSČ by threats of their prosecution after a potential restoration of a democratic regime in the Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, there also occurred a considerable number of speculations about a new round of massive purges within the party or about an existence of a hidden “Titoist” fraction.

74 NA, A ÚV KSČ, collection 19/7, č. a. j. 601, *Rozbor protičeskoslovenské rozhlasové... C. Současné kampaně západního rozhlasu*, p. 1.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., pp. 1–2.

77 Ibid., p. 2.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid., p. 5.

According to the *Analysis of Anti-Czechoslovak Radio Propaganda*, attacks like this should above all undermine unity of the KSČ.<sup>80</sup> Other topics, which served to the same cause, were conflicts among high functionaries on one hand, and huge differences between regular members and party elites on the other. Particularly the *Voice of America* commented regularly on the account of the last issue — it literally talked about establishment of a “new aristocracy”.<sup>81</sup> Finally, western broadcasting also frequently emphasised the existence of a crucial gap between the regular people and party members. This claim was, apart from other things, supported by predictions about preparations for purges against anti-communist elements.<sup>82</sup>

Apart from the major campaigns discussed above, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia designated also a few others with lesser significance. The first one dealt with Czechoslovak-German relations — particularly it was claimed that the Soviet Union favoured the interests of the Germans instead of the Czechoslovaks. Western radio stations counted on local antagonism between both nations.<sup>83</sup> The next campaign tried to enforce a “war psychosis”. According to the KSČ “we see here an attempt to transfer war hysteria, which is permanently increasing in the West, also to our country”.<sup>84</sup> Due to this, the *Voice of America*, for example, broadcasted many speeches from chief executives of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation or other radio stations that brought news about significant improvement in the field of armament technology. Finally, the last one focused on various criticisms of Czechoslovak culture. The basic premise stated that after Victorious February, Czech and Slovak culture went through total decay. Apart from dependence on the Soviet Union, western broadcasting attacked the presence of censorship practices, despotism and sycophancy.<sup>85</sup>

The Czechoslovak Communists considered the British Broadcasting Company and the *Voice of America* as the most dangerous foreign radio stations during the beginnings of the Cold War.<sup>86</sup> Despite the fact that the broadcasting of the BBC had bigger quality in terms of journalistic craftsmanship, both of them were perceived by the KSČ with considerable animosity. Campaigns that concerned the relationship between Czechoslovak Republic and the Soviet Union, unsatisfactory situation on the political, economic as well as legal field and attacks on the local communist party became the most significant ones. In combination with others which did not gain such an attention, they all tried to create or enforce an atmosphere of distrust in the Czechoslovakia towards the KSČ and the USSR.

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80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid., pp. 5–6.

84 Ibid., p. 6.

85 Ibid.

86 Radio Free Europe quickly came under the spotlight as well after it started its activities in May 1951.



## CONCLUSION

The reaction of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to western broadcasting was heavily determined by communist ideology. From its very nature, it did not permit any other source of information than the ones which were fully controlled by the party. This became an important element for “Red” propaganda that had as its ultimate goals to get absolute control over the people and to create a society based entirely on new foundations. The case of the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio confirmed this notion. Even though it functioned during the entire existence of the Third Republic, the primary responsibility never exceeded the gathering of information from foreign radio stations. A communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, however, gave the Monitoring Service a completely new purpose — it became a significant tool of political importance. From the KSČ’s perspective, western broadcasting was naturally evaluated as highly aggressive, seditious and false. The BBC and the VOA in particular took positions of the most hated radio stations at the beginning of the Cold War. Generally, this study has illustrated how great attention the Communists paid to western broadcasting. The reason why is quite simple — they feared that it could spoiled their monopoly on power.

### ABSTRACT

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE VOICE OF AMERICA: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR

The Cold War became, apart from other things, a conflict of two radically different ideologies. Both sides led a fight in various fields — radio broadcasting can be seen as one of the most significant. The study discusses certain aspects of the KSČ’s perception of western “enemy” broadcasting during the late 1940s and the early 1950s. The first part debates the basic principles of communist propaganda and the so-called counterpropaganda. Afterwards, attention is focused on the Monitoring Service of the Czechoslovak Radio. Finally, the last part analyses communist perspective of several major campaigns that occurred in broadcasts of western radio stations — special concern was given to the Voice of America.

### KEYWORDS

Cold War; Communist Party of Czechoslovakia; Western Broadcasting; Voice of America

### ABSTRAKT

#### KOMUNISTICKÁ STRANA ČESKOSLOVENSKA A RÁDIO HLAS AMERIKY: PŘÍSPĚVEK K DĚJINÁM PROPAGANDY NA POČÁTKU STUDENÉ VÁLKY

Studená válka se, kromě jiného, stala střetem dvou radikálně odlišných ideologií. Tento zápas se promítl do řady oblastí, střet na radových vlnách lze bez nadsázky považovat za jeden z nejvýznamnějších. Studie se zabývá vybranými aspekty vztahu Komunistické strany Československa vůči západnímu “nepřátelskému” vysílání na konci čtyřicátých a počátku padesátých let. První část analyzuje základními principy komunistické propagandy a tzv. protipropagandy, druhá se poté věnuje monitorovací službě Československého rozhlasu. Poslední část představí, jakým způsobem KSČ vnímala

několik hlavních kampaní, které se objevily ve vysíláních západních stanic — zvláštní zřetel je přitom kladen zejména na Hlas Ameriky.

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