

25. Münchner Bohemisten-Treffen 2021

PROJECT SKETCH

Name of the project: *Propaganda of the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia after the Second World War*

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Character of the project: preliminary (working) proposal

Project scheme: Research and Development Agency of Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and Slovak Academy of Science (VEGA)

Planned deadline for project submission: 05/2021

Expected date of project implementation: 01/2022 – 12/2025

Description of the scientific objectives of the project

Propaganda, as an important phenomenon of the social sciences with a mobilizing, interfering and limiting nature, had a decisive impact on socio-political events both in the past and today. The striking importance of propaganda due to the modern informational character of the 20th century and the related intensive use of mass-communication means is minimally reflected in Slovak historical research. Marginalized research on propaganda have been published only as partial studies or as a partial part of comprehensive research. The aim of the project is to fill the whitespace within the frequently touched research - the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. The analysis of the propaganda that accompanied the transfer should bring a new light to the topic. Few experts-historians are engaged in the study of propaganda in the Central European area, what, however, does not diminish its importance; on the contrary, it emphasizes the need to increase the implementation of the so-called propaganda studies into the area of Central European historiography. The successful implementation of the project and the associated research results will include significant interpretations of the phenomena that plague today's Central and Western Europe, which increases the relevance of the project.

We will analyze propaganda in the context of the methodological approach of Serge R. Denisoff (1972) and on the basis of a *10-step plan of propaganda analysis* by the authors G. Jowett and V. O'Donnel (2012). This scheme integrates an effective analysis of the propaganda process and consists of the following steps: 1. the ideology and purpose of the propaganda campaign; 2. the context in which the propaganda campaign takes place; 3. identification of the propagandist; 4. the structure of the propaganda organization; 5. target audience; 6. used media techniques; 7. special techniques to maximize the effect / (a) create resonance; b) credibility of the source; c) the attitudes of the society's leaders; d) face-to-face contact; (e) group standards; (f) rewards and penalties; g) monopoly of the communication source; (h) the strength of visual symbols; (i) use of language; j) music as propaganda; k) emotional

arousal); 8. audience response to various techniques; 9. antipropaganda (if present); 10. final effect and evaluation.

The aim of the research is not to demonize the course of the transfer of the German minority, but to understand the correlative relationship of the propaganda process with the migration of the German minority after the Second World War from the Czechoslovak Republic and the related phenomenon.

In order to progress with the historical knowledge, we have defined the partial goals of the research:

- 1) To explore the historical context of analogous migration movements for placing our research in the broader context of the typology of migration;
- 2) To verify the importance of selected methodologies for the analysis of propaganda processes based on international research;
- 3) Proceed with the archival research and research of the Slovak, Czech and, if possible, German press and radio broadcast recordings, which are necessary for further analysis of the propaganda process of the transfer of the German minority;
- 4) Analyze the obtained archival material through the selected methodological apparatus;
- 5) Differentiation of the implementation and development of events related to the transfer in the Czech and Slovak territory - reflection and pointing out the differences in Czech and Slovak propaganda, identification of feedback from the population on the implemented propaganda and its comparison in the Czech lands and Slovakia;
- 6) Interpretation of conclusions and preparation of a comprehensive work summarizing the propaganda processes associated with the selected topic of displacement of Germans from Czechoslovakia.

Current state of the research

The study of migration movements has been an extremely current and necessary component of research activities in the humanities and social sciences recently. The relocation of the population is the result of a combination of "push" and "pull" factors. For "push" factors, we categorize the reasons that force people to move out of their homes. We could include, for example, lack of job opportunities, insufficient security, high crime, famine, floods or war. Conversely, circumstances that force relocation to certain areas are called "pull" factors (job supply, higher standard of living, low crime, food availability, more acceptable climate, fertile land, higher level of employment, or political stability). As today, migration has had its causes and, in particular, its specific course in the past. An indispensable component of these movements, which were caused "from the outside", were accompanying actions, which directly influenced their course, but indirectly have an impact on the perception of these movements today.

The tragic end of the coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks on the one hand and Germans on the other in Czechoslovakia - usually called displacement in Czechoslovak, transfer or expatriation and in German, especially the so-called Sudeten German, emotionally expulsion (Vertreibung) - continues to arouse controversy. In Czechoslovak society, as well as historiography, a free discussion on the German transfer could not develop for a long time, and if it was opened, it was presented mainly as a justification for the guilt of Czechoslovak Germans as "Quislings" of Third Reich and fair revenge committed on them. Displacement was by Czech and Slovak historians until November 1989, almost without exception, defended as necessary, and many even presented it as a just act, which was preceded by the whole centuries-old war between the Czechs and the Germans. It was also perceived as a response to the threat

of occupation of the Czech lands, the Germanization and planned extermination of Czechs (and Slovaks). This regime, especially during and immediately after the war, was not perceived as National Socialist or totalitarian, but as German, as a national campaign against the Czechs. Some politicians, publicists, historians and especially representatives of the Czechoslovak democratic exile (Beneš's supporters) emphasized the geopolitical and security reasons for the transfer, which were the provision of the united state and nation in order to prevent the new German expansion into the Czech lands. The transfer of the German minority as a political act was internationally approved by the Potsdam Conference, which legitimized its implementation, the effects and circumstances of the course, not excluding propaganda.

Mentioning Slovak historians, S. Gabzdilová, M. Olejník, M. Schvarc and D. Kováč in particular published on the issue of transfer, who, due to their erudition, belong to the most important Slovak historians who devoted their work to the transfer of the German minority in Slovakia, respectively in Czechoslovakia. This is evidenced by dozens of publications (whether older or younger data) not only of monographic character and chapters in monographs (eg Zückert, Schvarc, Fiamová, 2019; Schvarc, 2016; Gabzdilová-Olejníková, Olejník, 2004, Kováč, 1999, 1995) , but also publications in renowned journals (Kováč, 2019; Schvarc, 2005; Kováč, 2001; Gabzdilová, 2002, Gabzdilová, Olejník, 2002; Gabzdilová, 2001,), or anthologies (Schvarc, Hanula, 2014; Gabzdilová, 2004, Kováč , 1998, Gabzdilová, 1997).

In the Czech environment, the topic of transfer is also elaborated, as evidenced by work of A. von Arburg and T. Stanek Edition *The Displacement of Germans and the Transformation of the Czech Borderland 1945–1951* for example. Other important works include the publications of T. Stanek (1991, 2002) or the younger historian, in particular Tomáš Dvořák (2003, 2005, 2012).

Interdisciplinary dimension was brought by the study of the Czech historian Barbora Spalová in the journal *History and Anthropology* (2017).

From European perspective we cannot omit the historian of German origin Ulrich Merten (2012) and Norman M. Naimark (2002), whose work maps the displacement of Germans in a broader, comparative level, e.g. compared to Poland. Peter Glotz, who was expelled from the Sudetenland as a child, shows in his work (2004) on the case of the Czechs the mechanism of creating hostility and the emergence of nationalism. Of the foreign language works, we must not forget the publication Prauser, Rees (2004). Older works dealing with the transfer of Germans are e.g. work of G. Ch. Paikert (1962) and W. Benz (1995).

An interesting publication examining the question of how state institutions, political and social elites and the population in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany dealt with the past after the Second World War, including the transfer, is the work of Ch. Cornelissen, R. Holec and J. Pešek (2005).

In addition to the above, we will try also to focus on historical sources and materials such as *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus der Tschechoslowakei* (1957).

Within the research of propaganda, it will be necessary to reflect and include in our perspective the results of the work of Marina Zavacka, whose research has long focused on the issue of propaganda - for example Zavacká, Vajda (2016); Zavacká (2013, 2010, 2008, 2003). Or the work of Ch. Brenner, whose research areas include the history of Czechoslovakia and the publication *Between East and West: Czech Political Debates 1945 - 1948* (2015), takes a very innovative approach to the issue, this period is seen as a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism and through critical discursive analysis applied to contemporary journalism. The basic starting points in grasping and understanding propaganda will be based on the works of many foreign authors such as J. Ellul, H. D. Lasswell, D. Blumenstock (1939), L. Doob (1935), or publications by Czech authors M. Hemelík (2008), P. Verner (2011), M. Kouba, D. Magincová, I. Říha (2012).

Expected own contribution

The unprecedented, massive, forced transfer of the German minority after World War II in Central Europe was also accompanied by an information, agitprop and propaganda campaign. Despite many studies analyzing the context, the course of the transfer, or the fate of the displaced Germans, the study of the cultural side of the transfer has been absent. In the Czech Republic, similar research is covered by the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (ÚSTR) and in Slovakia by the Institute of the Memory of the Nation (ÚPN), but both institutions only partially respond to the propaganda nature of the transfer. This gap should be filled by the submitted project. The main starting source of the research will be the periodical press, the use of which is almost absent in the previously published Slovak and Czech historical works concerning the transfer of Germans. By processing as many periodicals as possible, the results of the project will fill a whitespace in Czech and Slovak historiography.

An analysis of the roots, interactions and changes in the perception of the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia on a comparative level will help to understand the historical context in Czechoslovakia and Central Europe in a broader social and international context. It is the propaganda dimension of the whole researched issue that is an innovative achievement in Slovak and Central European historiography and can thus be included among the current trends in historical science in Europe. The research within the proposed project will show whether the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia was (not) a propaganda act. It is also necessary to ask other questions, such as whether this process meets the characteristics of the propaganda action, the ways in which this action was carried out, how it was perceived by citizens on both sides (German and Czechoslovak residents). The process of German transfer remained a markedly stigmatized event even after more than 70 years, and together with all the processes that accompanied it to this day, raises questions and the social need to return to it again [Film Production in the Czech Republic *The Downfall of the Secluded Berhof* (1983), *7 Days of Sins* (2012), *Odsun - Vertreibung* (2020)].

The successful implementation of the project will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the transfer of Germans as a historical event in a broader context. The result of the research will also be an elucidation of phenomena and facts that have been marginalized or unnoticed in previous research. Specifically, attention was paid mainly to the implementation of the transfer and traditional historical themes, the role of propaganda is something that Czechoslovak historical science has not yet been confronted with in this context.

Research team

The research team consists of four members from CSPV SAV (Lucia Heldáková, Soňa Gabzdzilová-Olejníková, Milan Olejník and Mária Ďurkovská) and the participation of one external researcher from the university environment is expected, but his/her participation has not yet been confirmed. The research team (at this time) consists of one researcher and one independent researcher and two associate professors. From the point of view of age, it is a balanced team of researchers, the younger part of the researchers with regard to publishing activities, involvement in projects as well as additional activities already belong to established and solid researchers. Researchers know the current state of research, have experience with archival research and have formed part of research teams at their workplaces.

Within the Slovak grant agency, it is not possible to involve foreign experts directly in the project solution. However, their participation is necessary in the form of external involvement in the project. Leslie Waters from the Department of History at the University of Texas at El Paso has already confirmed

her participation. The researchers of the project plan to involve in the project further as external workers experts from the Czech Republic or Germany.

Description of used methodological procedures and their justification

The presented project, especially in the initial stage, assumes a heuristic of literature and sources as well as an analysis of older and newer research results that have been published so far. We will focus mainly on the study of literature of both domestic and foreign authors (especially of Central European, German and Anglo-American origin). We will use a wide range of scientific monographs, editions of published sources, conference and non-conference proceedings, as well as studies in scientific journals in order to achieve thematic and methodological balance in the researched issues (see the appendix List of literature).

However, the basic starting point will be archival sources and the press. The press and radio recordings as primary sources in the publications published so far are used to a minimum extent, but for propaganda research they represent an essential and immediate means of researching these processes. Therefore, a specific historical method of criticism of sources is important, which is the most important path from factography to the reconstruction of historical reality. At the same time, it is necessary to reflect the interdisciplinary approach in the analysis of propaganda of the researched issues, primarily the use of critical discursive analysis and semiotic analysis [Critical discourse analysis (CDA)] (Mazid, 2014; Dijk, Meyer, 2001; Wodak, Meyer, 2001). In the context of migration history, various parallels can be drawn. When using comparative analysis, it is important to determine both the objectives of the comparison and the type of time perspective and to determine the criteria for comparison. Only after this phase will it be possible to proceed to the interpretation and synthesis of the facts obtained.

Concluding remarks

The submitted project with its focus and implementation follows the approved international project Visegrad Grant (Visegrad Fund scheme, implementation date: 09/2021 - 03/2023, responsible researcher: Lucia Heldáková) entitled Post-WWII Migration Flows in the V4 States in the Context of Propaganda Studies solved by representatives from the V4 countries (Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland), which pursues two basic objectives:

1. The interconnection of multi-year migration research performed by Slovak, Hungarian, Czech and Polish scientists into a broader, Central European context (V4 countries) in the form of compiling an analytical-synthetic publication yet absent in European historiography.
2. Gaining new research skills in the form of incorporating the methodology of propaganda studies into scientific research performed by the experts from the V4 countries, resulting in a modern - broader - perception of the issue of migration.

The implementation of the project also includes an international conference, see the first Call for Papers, and you are gladly invited to join: