

Media and the Cold War, 1975–1991

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Twenty-five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, with Günter Schabowski's botched press conference announcement and live TV coverage of the various intra-German border crossings, Volda, Norway, served as the location for the November 2014 conference „Media and the Cold War, 1975–1991.“ The conference, convened by Rolf Werenskold, Henrik G. Bastiansen (both Volda University College), and Martin Klimke (New York University Abu Dhabi) gathered international historians and media scholars to present papers on topics ranging from representations of the Nicaraguan civil war in Austrian newspapers to the East German children's bedtime television series „Das Sandmännchen“ on Swedish television, from international underground art exhibits in 1980s Hungary to iconic representations of the Tiananmen Square protests in China in 1989. The following is a selection of papers presented.

ODD ARNE WESTAD (London) held the conference's first keynote address. According to Westad, the recent change of focus in Cold War historiography from a state-centered to a grassroots perspective mirrors the technological innovation of the final decades of the Cold War that allowed for increasing participation of non-state actors from the 1970s onward. Westad stressed that secrecy was an integral part of the concept of the Cold War and that revolutions in communication technology and the availability of real-time financial information fundamentally changed people's use of information from below. Major technology changes and the battle for information control that ensued between governments and non-state citizens eventually led to a decentralization of information outside of state-operated communication channels in the final decades of the Cold War.

In the first panel – on television as a border-crossing popular medium – SABINA MIHELJ (Loughborough) presented her ongoing transnational comparative study that examines television series from various com-

munist Eastern European countries to identify differing and shared topics and narratives. MARIE CRONQVIST (Lund) showed how the East German children's series „Das Sandmännchen“ served as an example for the cultural exchange between Swedish and East German television stations with intersections among market interests (Sweden seeing GDR productions as valuable qualitative additions to its programming), personal relationships, and political repercussions (cultural acceptance preceding Swedish political recognition of the GDR). JON RAUNDALEN (Trondheim), in a close reading of two popular 1980s East German TV series, argued that ideology and the Communist party increasingly took a backseat, if not becoming almost invisible, in these television productions – an observation that led to an insightful exploration of notions of the „private“ in communist and socialist societies. Closing this section, HANS FREDRIK DAHL (Oslo) presented a compelling case for the legacy of World War II in collective transnational memory that only increased in intensity after the end of the Cold War.

In the panel „Print Media 1,“ PAWEL JAWORSKI (Warsaw) detailed the ways in which the Scandinavian press, based on its own foreign correspondents, covered developments in 1980s Poland, their reports wavering between optimism (that Solidarity could really bring about change) and pessimism (that the Soviet Union would crack down on Poland, as it had done on dissenters in its sphere of influence in 1953, 1956, and 1968). PAUL BJERKE (Volda), who compared the coverage of espionage cases Günter Guillaume (FRG, 1974), Geoffrey Prime (UK, 1982), and Arne Treholt (Norway, 1984) in different countries' (UK, Norway, FRG, GDR) newspapers and news magazines, argued that the coverage of these „Mediated Spies“ was fueled more by a lust for sensationalism than for „facts“: fraught with James Bond references, these journalistic accounts largely treated the cases as national „affairs“ devoid of their wider Cold War context. LAURIN BLECHA (Vienna) showed how the Austrian press interpreted the Nicaraguan revolution and how Austrian state actors from the socialist as well as the conservative party tried

to utilize the conflict for their own (domestic) goals while Austrian NGOs developed as a grassroots response to provide humanitarian aid to the Nicaraguan people.

The Cold War in Latin America also figured prominently during the conference's second day, as seen in DANIEL C. HALLIN's (San Diego) keynote address. In tracing the evolution of reporting strategies from the beginnings of the Cold War to revolutions in Latin America and the war in Iraq, Hallin first argued that while early Cold War media coverage in the United States harked back to World War II conventions of presenting a bipolar, geopolitical conflict, journalists covering the Vietnam War did not experience the same level of (self-)censorship. Furthermore, the advent of live on-the-ground reporting in Vietnam gave way to more graphic representations of world politics in general and therefore allowed for a more detailed look at the tensions of the Cold War. Analyzing U.S. television coverage of conflicts in 1980s Latin America, Hallin illustrated how the dualism between offering simplified narratives on the one hand and providing a wealth of background information for a more nuanced picture on the other enabled producers to present the same footage with radically different interpretations.

In a panel on „The Construction of Bloc Narratives,“ WILLIAM KNOBLAUCH (Hancock) demonstrated the various ways in which privately funded organizations tried to influence the domestic discourse on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in the United States, drawing upon scientific assessments, science fiction movie actors, pamphlets, TV ads, computer graphics, and even sweepstakes to support their messaging. DMITRY STROVSKY (Ekaterinburg) then argued that „liberalism“ never existed as a political force in Russia; rather, it has always been part of the agenda of autocrat rulers – from Czar Alexander I to Lenin to Leonid Brezhnev to Vladimir Putin – who introduced, from above, a „liberal“ element into their policymaking to soothe domestic public sentiments in order to secure their own power positions. BENEDICT VON BREMEN (Tübingen) showed how public debates about improving NATO's military capabili-

ties and deterrence via cooperative multinational defense projects in the 1970s were representative of internal conflicts within one of the two major political blocs of the Cold War and can function as a lens to look at the transition period between „détente“ and the „second Cold War.“ ANDRADA FĂTU-TUTOVEANU (Cluj) illustrated how Nicolae Ceaușescu's personality cult as Romania's „most beloved son,“ the „new man,“ and various other guises was inspired by the orchestrated mass parades in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China, and how this increasingly monarchistic representation steeped in a constructed national past, grew in proportion to the deterioration of Romania's economy.

In the following panel on cinema, BJØRN SØRENSEN (Trondheim) delineated how „Orions Belte,“ a 1977 bestseller and critically acclaimed novel by Norwegian Marxist-Leninist politician Jon Michelet, became the first Norwegian movie condensed to „the book, the hook, and the look“ – based on a successful novel, built upon Norwegian Cold War fears, and presented Hollywood-style with stars, explosions, and helicopters. NIKOS PANAGIOTOU (Thessaloniki) then provided an overview on how fictional representations of the Cold War on television and the big screen changed from the 1980s to post-9/11 TV series such as „The Americans“ (2013–), the latter often nostalgically looking back upon a Manichean world.

The final panel shed light upon „Media Dissent & Dissent in the Media.“ PATRICK BURKE (Westminster) outlined how in the case of the British peace movement END (European Nuclear Disarmament) and the Czechoslovak civil rights movement Charter 77, activists sought to impact their respective national publics as well as shape the debates among various countries' movements in the face of different challenges and goals. JULIANE DEBEUSSCHER (Barcelona) examined how Hungarian underground artists reached out to fellow artists worldwide to develop exhibitions and garner support for their plight – and that of their country – via Western media. IRINA CHIABURU (Bremen) explored how Soviet director Andrey Khrzhanovskiy's animated movie adap-

ations of Alexander Pushkin's life were able to criticize his country's political situation through allegories and other fictional techniques, thereby circumventing censorship. ANNA G. PIOTROWSKA (Krakow) continued this theme by showing how Polish punk bands could comment on the situation in their country while emphasizing the importance of understanding artistic forms of criticism in oppressive regimes within their specific historical context(s).

The conference concluded with a „Meet the Press“ panel discussion with former Norwegian NRK foreign news reporters and correspondents Kari-Grete Alstad (Washington, D.C., Nairobi), Kjell Dragnes (London, Moscow), and Hans Wilhelm Steinfeld (Moscow) recounting their journalistic experiences during the final decades of the Cold War and the intersections of media and politics.

The wide range of contributions showcased the major and multifaceted role of media and media representations from 1975 to 1991, both in reporting about and trying to shape the Cold War. Together the papers also underscored the historiographical move from a state-centered perspective to a more diversified view, which includes a tremendous amount of grassroots diversity reflected in the fascinating array of media types explored, from print to television and film to creative arts to music to literature, by authors of all social, political, and cultural backgrounds. „Media and the Cold War, 1975–1991“ therefore gave a powerful snapshot of the state of Cold War studies in 2014, twenty-five years after East and West Berliners danced on the wall in front of CNN cameras transmitting live footage.

Conference Overview:

Keynote Address

Odd Arne Westad (London School of Economics), *The Globalization of Information and the End of the Cold War*

Television

Sabina Mihelj (Loughborough University), *Screening Socialism: Television and the Politics of Privacy and History in Late Socialism*

Marie Cronqvist (Lund University), *Entangled Television Histories. Sweden and the*

GDR, 1969–1989

Jon Raundalen (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim), *Popular Television Series in the GDR in the 1980s*

Hans Fredrik Dahl (University of Oslo), *From Frank Capra to Jeremy Isaacs: Images of the Second World War during the Cold War*

Media Practice

Annette Vowinckel (Center for Contemporary History Potsdam), *Photojournalism East/West*

Yuliya Komska (Dartmouth College), *Killer Technologies: Radio Free Europe vs. German Environmentalism*

Jan Fredrik Hovden (University of Bergen) / Rolf Werenskjold (Volda University College), *Who were the Journalists? Norwegian Foreign News Reporters and Foreign News Correspondents during the Cold War*

Print Media 1

Pawel Jaworski (Warsaw University), *A View from beyond the Iron Curtain: Communist Poland and 'Solidarity' in Swedish Newspapers, 1980–1982*

Paul Bjerke (Volda University College), *Mediated Spies*

Laurin Blecha (University of Vienna), *Vietnam in Latin America! The Nicaraguan Revolution in the Austrian Press*

Keynote Address

Daniel C. Hallin (University of Southern California, San Diego), *From Vietnam to the War on Terror: Transformations of Cold War Reporting Conventions in the United States*

Print Media 2

Jacek Tebinka (University of Gdansk), *The Use of Western Press in Polish Propaganda. Construction of Image of Margaret Thatcher in 'Forum'*

Kristian Fuglseth (Volda University College), *Fear of Nuclear Power and Risk Communication in Cold War Perspective*

Birgitte Kjos Fonn (Oslo / Akershus University College), *Tracing Ideological Argumentation in the Norwegian Business Press during*

the Second Phase of the Cold War

Henrik G. Bastiansen (Volda University College), Towards Glasnost? A Case Study of the Norwegian News Coverage of Mikhail Gorbachev as Soviet Leader in 1985

Construction of Bloc Narratives

William Knoblauch (Finlandia University), Selling 'Star Wars' in American Mass Media

Dmitry Strovsky (Ural Federal University, Ekaterinburg), Conservative vs. Liberal as a Primary Trend for the Soviet Media in the 'Period of Stagnation'

Benedict von Bremen (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen), Experts, World War III, and Intra-Alliance Rivalry: Public Print Media Debates about NATO's Military Capabilities, 1974-1979

Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu (Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj), Ceauşescu's Golden Age Media Representations: Myth Construction and Communist Iconography in 1980s Romanian Press

Cinema

Bjørn Sørenssen (Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim), Orion's Belt: Birth of the Norwegian 'High Concept' Movie in the Shadow of the Second Cold War

Nikos Panagiotou (Aristoteleio University, Thessaloniki), The Hunt for Red October: From MacGyver to the Americans, Visual Depictions of Cold War

Visual Representations

Ekaterina Vikulina (Russian State University for the Humanities), The Power and the Body: Images of the Leaders in the Soviet Magazines during the Cold War

Erling Sivertsen (Volda University College), Pictures of Political Leaders during the 'Second Cold War', 1975-1991

Stuart Franklin (Volda University College), The Iconic Photograph and its Political Space: The Case of Tiananmen Square, 1989

Media Dissent & Dissent in the Media

Patrick Burke (University of Westminster), Di-

alogue and the Cold War: Peace Movement Media in the 1980s

Juliane Debeusscher (Barcelona), Mediating Alternative Culture: Two Controversial Exhibitions in 1980s Hungary

Irina Chiaburu (Jacobs University, Bremen), Exciting and Dangerous Games with the Censor: Aesopian Language as a Subversive Strategy in Andrey Khrzhanovsky's 'Pushkiniana'

Anna G. Piotrowska (Jagiellonian University), Irony in 1980s Polish Punk

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