- Thesis of PhD dissertation

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Journalists and Foreign Traders in the Intelligence Services of the Kádár Regime

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2016
1. The background of the research and questions to be answered

In January 2014 I was invited by the Rendszerváltás Történetét Kutató Intézet és Archívum to write a study on any subject from 1989. Prior to this I was researched pre-1962 documents on the secret police organization, the Stalinist-style show trials and documents relating to the post-revolutionary repression at my workplace, the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security [Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, ABTL]. I knew mostly the documents of the political police "internal reaction security" specialized divisions. I have read the intelligence documents before mostly in connection with the Hungarian emigration.

Due to this request I started to study an emigration topic I have known before, and was also published in a short paper by Orbán-Schwarczkopf Balázs in the archive’s online periodical, the Betekintő in 2008. The story was about to purchase the Griff publishing company of Újváry Sándor from his widow. It was regarded as one of the most famous publishing company among the Hungarian emigrants. The buyer was the Hungarian secret service, coordinated by the BM III/I. (Intelligence) Division. Their purpose was to influence the emigrants through this company. But after studying the documents it became clear that the main motivation behind the operation was business related rather than security measures.

The subject was interesting, as it highlights changes of the system, which have already been a topic of a lot of news articles. This aspect however was not studied by professional historians. I had the opportunity to see a tiny part of this activity through the files. I was able to discover the operation of this criminal network, which is indeed interesting, but there is an even more interesting question: who were they, where they come from, there was only one smart officer behind the scenes, or there are deeper relations behind my findings. As I proceed with my research it became clear that the key person in the operation was Siklósi Norbert, the head of the


biggest newspaper publisher company, the Pallas Lap- és Könyvkiadó Vállalat. Siklósi is well known even now, often referred as ,,Uncle Norbi”. He was a powerful media mogul during the Kádár-era. His career has started just after the 1956. At the beginning of my research I have realized that the connection between the journalists and the secret services is a blind spot for the historians. There are a few study exist on this topic, but neither deals with the greater system behind its operation.

2. The followed methodology

The lack of any usable information on Siklosi Norbert made me look at alternative information sources to discover his work and connection network. To start the research I have studied his workplaces, such as the Federation of the Hungarian Journalists [Magyar Újságírók Országos Szövetsége, MÚOSZ] documents, the ABTL documents, and press articles from that era. This study led to success shortly: it has been proved that the intelligence press network is worth to study in more detail. I have continue the study with identifying the persons related to the case, collecting information on them in the archives. This work was similar to complete a puzzle. There were only small informations available at a time, and I had to find their place in the great picture. The fact that there were rivalry between the military and homeland security provided additional valuable information on the case by documenting each other operations. The study of the information led to interesting findings. There were investigations stopped due to the suspected intervention of the soviet intelligence. This investigation was a good source of the information, since well documented and available at the National Archives of Hungary [Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Leváltára]. I have also used company databases to find further information on connections, owner structure, etc., which helped me to move on with the research. The above mentioned helped me to outline a connection network, which includes both companies and persons. Knowing this network I went to the MUOSZ archives. The
documents there are not well organized, difficult to research, but it was well worth to read through the papers. My main interest was the international operations of the MUOSZ, since it was evident that a mayor player was in this organization a covered company operated by the soviet secret service. My findings are confirmed that my theory is correct. Additional information also revealed, such as the way the soviet secret service funded the international communist organizations to increase the Bolshevik influence. After revealing the context behind the operations I could run targeted searches for persons involved in those companies, which led to a new territory: the role of the foreign trades.

3. New results

The foundation of my work is considered to be a new statement in the historical literature. It was believed that the Hungarian intelligence was a weak and incompetent organization compared to other socialist countries. My finding are proving that there are other operations that modify this opinion.

The KGB operated International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) made operations in Hungary and its Hungarian member (MUOSZ) had a key role in the secret operations. They main task was to help increase soviet influence in the IOJ. They had operated training center, recreation resort to provide optimal environment for international meetings.

The IOJ supported at least two business enterprises, which had gained major market share in Hungary: Interpress Nyomda és Lapkiadó Vállalat, and the Idégenforgalmi Propaganda és Kiadó Vállalat. Both had strong ties to KGB, however there are only indirect clues to this statement.

The military secret service illegal business operations were documented by the homeland security service, thanks to their rivalry. This supply new information and help to better understand the yet rather obscure military secret service role and how they operated covered companies to provide hard cash, and how they transferred the money to off-shore accounts beginning from the 70-ies.

It turned out that some of the Hungarian foreign trade companies were controlled by the military secret service. It includes using stated owned companies to increase their management private wealth. These operations also revealed how they recruited „supporters” for their purposes.

I have explained a special terminology referring to corruption, called constitution expenses

I have summarized the hungarian engineering society works for the intelligence, which is also barely researched.

I have summarized aspects and methods of the business creation process in the military and civil secret services. I have pointed out the differences, their rivalry and how they tried to learn from each other.

4. Publications

