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## **DISCOURSES IN THE PRESS DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS IN UKRAINE IN 1993-1994**

### FINAL REPORT ON RESEARCH CONDUCTED AT OSA ARCHIVUM

#### Overview of Research Project

At the Blinken OSA Archivum, I intended to study the Ukrainian Emigré Publications in the framework of my research on the discourses of Ukrainian diaspora in the press. Marked by consistent engagement in the struggle for Ukrainian sovereignty, the diasporic publications are often the only documents of historical events that were otherwise rather narrowly presented by the mass media of greater coverage.

I was specifically interested in the Soviet Red Archives of the Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute dedicated to the subject of Ukrainian Diaspora and Migration as well as in the Records of the Open Media Research Institute.

The other noteworthy resources were the OSA collections of Informal Press of Ukraine, many of which ceased to exist already, notably "Postup" from Lviv, whose journalists fought against defamatory articles in Moscow's "Pravda" as early as in 1989.

The aim of my research was to examine the methods of representing Ukrainian reality in the Ukrainian press, both domestic and foreign, as well as in the international media, using significant historical events as a starting point for shaping readers' attitudes to the past and present.

Over the course of my two months research at OSA, one such event that particularly stood out was undeniably the economic crisis in Ukraine in 1993-1994, reporting on which differed drastically in its approach when taking into account the case studies of other countries of Eastern bloc.

### Problematics and preliminary hypothesis

Despite the large number of printed publications and television channels that were predominantly transmitting Russian narratives and worldview, the immediate reality of Ukraine was very little documented in an unbiased manner during the decisive period, given the change of political era in Ukraine in the 1994 (start of Leonid Kuchma decade-long presidency and disarmament of Ukraine in the mid-90ies).

The research question under consideration was how attitudes towards reality were constructed on the basis of the representation of everyday life and relationships between people in the media and through cultural and artistic products, and how the opinions were shaped in the light of the menace towards the preservation of identity.

The diaspora press is distinct for its perceptiveness and lucidity, as it does not risk being condemned by the masses, given that the target audience is usually relatively small and that its partial loss does not really pose a threat to the survival of the publications.

International media of wider reach, like The Economist, Financial Times, The Independent, The Times, were consistently depriving Ukraine of its agency and subjectivity, using dysphemisms to an extent that cemented the country's reputation as that of dependent and unreliable. Moreover, instead of distinguishing Ukrainian reality from that of Russian, the rivalry between countries was constantly put into the paradigm of power structures with obvious Russian domination in regard to granting only the latter country its true legitimacy after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The right to self-determination was as crucial in the beginning of Ukraine's independence as it is still paradoxically the case even now in 2024. This raises concerns about shaping Ukrainian image today by means of new media dispositifs that are supported and accepted based on pre-existing declarations.

For the Ukrainian diaspora, especially for the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Ukrainian bureau, the most important thing was to present Ukrainian culture abroad in the Ukrainian language, to preserve the sense of belonging to the Ukrainian identity which, for many people, became tangible for the first time with the very experience of emigration.

Parrhesia, the ability to speak loudly about injustice and oppression, has appeared and disappeared in the Ukrainian national press periodically with each change of political regime, however sustainable it is only in the discourse of diaspora testimonies, whose texts and transmissions can be summed up in one important word: commitment (the closest English translation of the Ukrainian word *небайдужість*).

At this point in history, for me as a Ukrainian artist and researcher, Ukrainian reality can be described without manipulation and exploitation in a way that has historical and artistic value, by the example and given the experience of diaspora publications and various forms of independent production including samvydav, which have proved to be systematically committed to major Ukrainian issues.

### Research Process at the Open Society Archive

Taking as a focal point the economic crisis in Ukraine in 1993-1994, I aimed to study how one event interpreted through the lens of various journalists (Ukrainian, Russian, as well as that of international correspondents reporting from Kyiv and Moscow) led

to establishing the country's image as that of an outcast and consequently to Ukraine's involuntarily exclusion from the European integration processes.

Reconstruction of Ukrainian reality of the first years of Independence with the use of printed sources that were not available to most Ukrainians then (and remain largely ignored today), shows how foreign policy was being shaped based on juggling with external aid and forcing massive migration of Ukrainian population abroad.

The announced attempts of politicians to find "one's own path of development" since 1991 in order to get out of Russia's zone of influence and at the same time reluctance to follow the "Westernization" market reforms, were a subject of my analysis through a survey of publications in the press of that era.

### Findings and conclusions

As a result of my research, I came to a conclusion that media reporting on Ukraine influenced not only perception of the country from abroad but also on self-consciousness where identity was reduced to a marginal status of pariah beyond acceptable social structures.

Instead of exploring individual particularities and differences in lived experience in Ukraine, marked by centuries of constant oppression and resilience, the journalistic and political discourses ultimately eliminated Ukraine from the international arena as a respected equal partner and colleague, putting "Ukraine project" into a closed "institution" with no right to leave or have visitors as if being someone hospitalized without consent, depriving Ukraine of one's agency yet unjustifiably imposing Ukraine's sole accountability for possessing nuclear arsenal, for instance.

Semantic input of publications in the press emphasizing impending doom by overly exploiting the word "sick" as dysphemism in regard to the state of economics transformed a temporary situation into a permanent event of media discourse.

Favoring an explicative bottom line grounded on evaluation, judgement, patronizing and derogatory attitude can be traced through linguistic choices of apprehensive (sensory) rather than comprehensive (engaged) interpretation of facts.

LIST OF CONSULTED DOCUMENTS:

HU OSA 300-81-2:46	Informal press of Ukraine
HU OSA 300-80-6:68/4	Ukraine: Foreign Affairs: Diaspora
HU OSA 300-80-6:68/9	Ukraine: Foreign Affairs: Foreign Aid (Granted and Received)
HU OSA 300-80-6:67	Ukraine: Education: Language Issues
HU OSA 124-2-1:4	Forced Migration Project: Ukraine, June-July, 1994
HU OSA 205-4-206:155	Politics: Former Soviet Union: Ukraine: Diaspora
HU OSA 300-80-6:76	Ukraine: Social Issues: Emigration, Immigration
HU OSA 300-80-6:69	Ukraine: Foreign Affairs: Foreign Policy
HU OSA 300-80-6:66/6	Ukraine: Economics: Labor and Employment Issues
HU OSA 300-80-6:66/2	Ukraine: Economics: Illegal Economic Activity
HU OSA 300-80-6:65	Ukraine: Economics: Foreign Economic Relations
HU OSA 300-81-2:11	Economic Reforms. Press Club of Economic Reforms
HU OSA 300-60-1:156	Economy: Economic Reform in Comecon [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance] and Socialist Countries: Hungary
HU OSA 300-60-1:155	Economy: Economic Crisis: Restrictions
HU OSA 300-60-1:168	Economy: Planning: Results Plan 1990
HU OSA 300-60-1:166	Economy: Planning: Plan 1991-1995
HU OSA 300-50-1:1717	Economic War East-West / Cocom
HU OSA 300-50-1:1711	Economic crisis, prosperity
HU OSA 300-50-1:1615	Post-war economic development of the country
HU OSA 300-30-9:11	Economy: Economic Policy: Czech
HU OSA 300-30-9:10	Economy: Economic Development

HU OSA 300-30-9:29	Economy: Work Ethic
HU OSA 205-4-206:157	Politics: Former Soviet Union: Ukraine: Foreign Policy
HU OSA 205-4-206:156	Politics: Former Soviet Union: Ukraine: Economics
HU OSA 205-4-201:30	Countries and Areas: CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States): Ukraine: Ukrainians in the Diaspora
HU OSA 205-4-201:32	Countries and Areas: CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States): Ukraine: Language
320.94771 SHY	Shyroke more Ukraïny : dokumenty samvydav u Ukraïny
7/6/1/1	Documents of Ukrainian samvydav : smoloskyp samvydav series
947/.71085 KUZ	Dissent in Ukraine under Gorbachev : a collection of samizdat documents
947/.71 POT	Ukraine in the seventies : papers and proceedings of the McMaster Conference on Contemporary Ukraine, October 1974
909.82 KAM	Krai, emigratsiia i mizhnarodni zakulisy
320.9/47/71085 UKR	Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R., spring 1974 : an underground journal from Soviet Ukraine
HU OSA 318-0-6:3	Advocacy, Human Rights Advocacy and Implementation Seminars in the NIS Countries: A Cooperative Program with Local NGOs: Ukraine
HU OSA 318-0-5:160	Ukraine: Helsinki Group
HU OSA 318-0-5:159	Ukraine
HU OSA 300-80-6:72	Ukraine: Mass Media: Censorship
HU OSA 300-80-6:77	Ukraine: Social Issues: Refugees
HU OSA 300-80-6:74	Ukraine: Science and Technology
HU OSA 300-80-6:69	Ukraine: Foreign Affairs: Relations with CIS
HU OSA 300-81-2:59	Ukraine and the CIS
HU OSA 300-80-10:2	CIS Media
HU OSA 300-80-6:70	Ukraine: Foreign Affairs: Relations with Other Countries
HU OSA 300-81-2:13	Russian Mass Media on Ukraine
HU OSA 300-81-7:1	Ukraine and Belarus Today: Polish Media News and Features Digest
HU OSA 300-81-2:58	Ukraine and Russia

HU OSA 300-80-2:18	Mass Media and Culture: Press: General
HU OSA 300-80-10:5	Mass Media - Multinational Corporations
HU OSA 300-80-6:33	Russia: Foreign Affairs: Foreign Aid (Granted and Received)
HU OSA 300-80-6:47	Russia: Opposition and Dissent
HU OSA 300-80-6:46	Russia: Mass Media: Newspapers and Periodicals
HU OSA 300-80-6:62	Russia: Social Issues: Values and Mores
HU OSA 300-80-6:37	Russia: Foreign Affairs: Relations with Eastern Europe
HU OSA 300-80-6:38	Russia: Foreign Affairs: Relations with Western Europe
HU OSA 300-80-6:35	Russia: Foreign Affairs: Relations with Former USSR Republics

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