

## Captive States, Divided Societies: Political Institutions of Southeastern Europe in Historical Comparative Perspective

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Some relevant publications:

- The Holocaust and the Transylvanian Question in the 20th Century. In *The Holocaust in Hungary: Sixty Years Later* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, forthcoming 2005).
- Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case (eds.): *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*. Stanford, Calif. 2003.
- Slovene Self-Perception through the Slovene- and German-Language Press: 1848. In: Metoda Kokole, Vojislav Likar and Peter Weiss (eds.): *Historični Seminar 3*. Ljubljana 2000.

### **Listening In, Tuning Out. The Media and State Power in Southeastern Europe during the Twentieth Century**

I propose to prepare a chapter on media in the history of southeastern Europe with a focus on radio. The study will begin with an overview of the ways in which media institutions (independent and state-run newspapers, radio and television stations, etc.) affected politics and society in this region, specifically state-building practices. The overview will place special emphasis on regional inter-dependence, international penetration and the ways in which media “crossed borders.”

Following the overview, the chapter will “zoom in” on the impact of radio stations in particular on the politics of southeast European states and sub-state units (municipalities, ethnic minorities, special-interest groups, private and illegal operators, etc.). I will show how radio stations, both physically and symbolically, stood at the center of revolutionary activity throughout the last two-thirds of the twentieth century, playing a critical role in such diverse events as the Iron Guard’s attempted coup in Romania in 1941, the “ripple effect” on southeastern Europe of radio broadcasts relating to the Hungarian revolution of 1956, and the importance of the independent radio station B-92 in Serbia during the Milošević era. In addition to these more localized themes, I will also address the ways in which Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty “operated” vis-à-vis the states and peoples of southeastern Europe, the variety of responses to their broadcasts (including state policies and legal provisions for jamming broadcasts or penalizing individuals who listened illegally), and also the ways in which RFE/RL raised lingering questions about state sovereignty and the extent to which “the West” in general and the United States in particular should get involved in the domestic affairs of these countries. Examples drawn from different state contexts and time periods will serve to highlight a set of more general themes, including:

- Development of state-controlled media and its role in state-building
- Censorship, jamming, licensing and other state controls on the media
- Private, independent, and clandestine media and its uses

- “Foreign” media between state and society

The sources I intend to use for the study are both primary and secondary. There is a growing literature on the importance of media in transforming or maintaining social, cultural and political institutions. I intend to present a brief overview of this literature as it relates to southeastern Europe and propose a “model” for understanding the impact media has had and continues to have on societies in the region. As I am an historian, the model will serve more as a conceptual framework than as a means of quantifying by any supposedly “objective” means the impact of media on various elements of society (including but not limited to people of a given class, gender, age, nationality, religion, etc.). Nevertheless, I will not neglect statistical data that point to the validity of my claims (including readership, reception, and other quantitative data relating to the number of radios or televisions owned in a given country, the circulation of a given newspaper, etc.). Among the primary sources I will employ for the study are documents from national and regional archives in the region, documents of the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Archives in Budapest and Palo Alto, and period newspapers, magazines and other periodical publications themselves. Although an exhaustive study of the topic is not possible given both the time and length constraints, it is my intention to produce a study that will both synthesize the findings of earlier research on the subject (both within and beyond the region) and provide a useful springboard for further research while offering a compact narrative suitable to the textbook format proposed.

I have already begun work on this project since the conference in Constanța. I spent three weeks in Budapest after the conference doing research in the RFE/RL archives there, where I found a wealth of material on Romania and Yugoslavia during the period from approximately 1950-1980. These two countries will be at the core of my research as I am familiar with the languages, but because RFE/RL archives include many reports in English, coverage of Bulgaria for this time period will not be lacking, either.

My research plan for the next 2 years includes research trips to Palo Alto, Zagreb, and Cluj to examine the sources outlined above, as well as a return to the RFE/RL archives in Budapest. I made a brief visit to the Radio Free Europe holdings at Stanford’s Hoover Institute Archives already in January 2006. During the upcoming summer I will visit either Zagreb or Cluj to examine print media sources in the university libraries there. I plan to complete a draft of my chapter by the summer of 2007, but parts of it, specifically the synthesis of previous research (which is to make up the first 1/3 of the project, as I understand), will be completed by the end of summer 2006.