



Ca' Foscari University of Venice

PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE: TAMIZDAT - Transnational Book Diplomacy in the Cultural Cold War: between Dissent and Soft Power. For a Socio-Cultural History of the Symbolic Production of Tamizdat

FUNDING PROGRAMME: HORIZON EUROPE

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KEYWORDS: *Cultural Cold War, Transnational Book Diplomacy, Agency of Socio-Cultural actors, Soviet and East European Literature, Tamizdat, Dissent*

HOST DEPARTMENT: Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies

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€ 265.099,19	€ 265.099,19

ABSTRACT:

The transnational production, circulation and reception of Soviet and East European literature in the West during the Cold War challenges the dominant two bloc narrative and tells us a different story about the cross-border flow of knowledge and ideas. Focusing on the intense cultural exchanges of the time across and beyond the 'Nylon Curtain' –an ideological and geopolitical border extremely permeable to cultural objects– this research project aims to challenge: 1) the traditional representation of Western and Eastern cultures as divided into two isolated blocs and 2) the representation of tamizdat as a mere ideological weapon of the 'Cultural Cold War'. The term TAMIZDAT ('published abroad') refers to Soviet and Eastern European texts, unpublished in the Eastern bloc and clandestinely smuggled and published in the West. As an alternative transnational publishing practice with a specific socio-cultural value, tamizdat highlights «cooperation across apparent ideological division and cross-border interaction instead of hostility» (Mikkonen, Scott-Smith et al. 2019). The «emphasis on smaller national and transnational actors instead of governments» (ibidem) demonstrates the crucial role of book diplomacy in preventing the cultural isolation of the two blocs. Following O. Sanchez-Sibony, who questions from a socio-economic perspective the representation of the Cold War as a bipolar contest between superpowers (2014), I will address the socio-cultural dimension of this narrative. Treating tamizdat as the result of socially and culturally regulated activities, I will consider the agency of social (activists of social movements, dissidents, Soviet and East European émigrés, diplomats etc.) and cultural actors (writers, editors, translators, literary agents, critics, journalists, etc.) who contributed to its transnational production, circulation and reception, in order to outline a comparative socio-cultural history of the Cold War.

Planned Start date	Planned End date
01/10/2023	30/09/2026

PARTNERSHIP

1. Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Italy	Beneficiary
2. Stanford University	USA	Associated Partner