

Media Presentation of Miroslav Zikmund and Jiří Hanzelka in the years 1947–1969

Abstract

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Miroslav Zikmund (1919–2021) and Jiří Hanzelka (1920–2003) were Czech travelers who, in the years 1947–1967, realized two great journeys together with the original plan of circumnavigating the globe. Their motivation was not only to get to know foreign countries, but to present and defend the commercial interests of Czechoslovakia, also to offer Czechoslovak goods and to establish new business contacts for their country. Already during the first journey, however, there was a communist coup in Czechoslovakia (1948) and most of the prearranged agreements were cancelled. However, because they sent engaging reports from their travels, and after their return their books and films received phenomenal success, soon this pair, known by the abbreviation H+Z (or Z+H), became one of the best-known public figures alongside athlete Emil Zátopek. At the time of the Prague Spring, i.e. until 1968, they performed publicly and openly, even some people could Jiří Hanzelka nominate for the presidency of the republic. After 1970, by occupying Warsaw Pact troops, the communist regime did everything to silence the two travelers. Miroslav Zikmund spent the time of 20-years “normalization” by saving the archive and Jiří Hanzelka made a living as a gardener – and after the signing of Charter 77 he could not find a job. After 1989, his health did not allow him to actively return to public life. Zikmund was more fortunate, he made some more journeys that the previous regime did not allow them (e.g. to Australia), and he experienced considerable media attention. He died at the respectable premature age of 103.

The media production of both travelers is admirable: it includes 4 feature-length documentaries, 147 shorter documentaries, thousands of articles and interviews, photographs and a total of 20 books translated into dozens of languages.

The author of this work, Petr Horký (*1973) (also traveller, writer, journalist and filmmaker) has been working with this pair for over 30 years. He wrote several books with M. Zikmund

and filmed a full-length documentary portrait of *Miroslav Zikmund's Century* (2014), which was nominated for the Czech Lion national film award.

In his dissertation, he decided **to focus on the ways in which both travelers worked with the media both in the preparatory stages of their journeys and during them (media routines and workflow), and of course how they processed their materials into books and films after their return.** An indispensable aspect is, of course, the ideological framework of communist Czechoslovakia, which somehow had to be influenced their work. Although the journeys and all this work took place in the middle of the 20th century, i.e. without modern mobile phones, internet, satellites, etc., their work with the media was exemplary.

The basic thesis of the work was that Hanzelka and Zikmund fulfilled their own concept of working with the media in a long-term and targeted manner, while they understood the media as a single communication unit, and thus laid the foundations for certain types of communication strategies that are still used today. The author proves that in a certain sense they became pioneers, if not outright founders, of Czech media and especially marketing practices, such as: series, media partnerships, press conferences in Czechoslovakia and abroad, creation and preparation of press kits, advertising events, product placement in contents, happening, following the story as it develops, product tests, call to action, public relations, the emergence of new journalistic genres, specific editorial logistics, or feedback and revision of published materials. Of course, the author does not claim that H+Z were the first in these areas, but the way in which they fulfilled these media communication principles was unique at the time, not only in **their precision and consistency, but mainly in their complexity. The main result of the dissertation is the substantiation of the thesis that H+Z media communication was thought out as a complex and closed whole.**

Methodologically, the work is based on so-called **biographical research**, which takes into account a) the individual's internal perspectives, b) the individual's interaction in the social context, c) the individual's experience in different roles during different moments of life. As part of the research, the author carried out massive heuristic work in the study and analysis of documents stored in the H+Z Archive – the center of modern Czech travel of the 20th century in the Museum of Southeast Moravia in Zlín, where the remains of both travelers were stored. Furthermore, analyze materials in the National Library of the Czech Republic, the National Museum in Prague, the National Heritage Institute in Czech Republic, the Archives and program funds of the Czech Television, the archive of Short Film (Krátký film) and the National Film Archive in Prague. He did not forget the archive in the film studios in Zlín. He

conducted numerous structured interviews with Miroslav Zikmund, who also made available to him previously unpublished information.

The work also demonstrates how the media practice of both travelers changed over time, both as a follow-up to their experiences, but also to political changes, how these political changes were reflected in the journeys themselves. And how media presentation gradually became the main product of their travel projects.