

The clarity of the Cold War: truth and literary communism between the USA and the USSR in the era of postmodern globalization

# The clarity of the Cold War: truth and literary communism between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in the era of postmodern globalization.

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## Title

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the cultural logic of the Cold War, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as a symptom of postmodern globalization. Following Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson's 1947 proclamation that Cold War propaganda should be crafted as "clearer than truth," this study investigates the complicated relationships among truth, production, and interpretation that emerged in similar manners between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. during the Cold War period. In particular, I consider literary, visual, and critical texts that contest a logic of truth which seeks to dissociate truth from its conditions of production. In so doing, I assert that a second Cold War took place between a global creative class, which has been termed "the multitude," and the (unwittingly) allied forces of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Accordingly, I argue that the Cold War cannot be understood simply as a battle between East and West, capitalism and communism, two world orders, or disparate modes of production. In chapter one, I explore the transition to postmodernism, as the cultural logic of late capitalism, to detail the changing conditions for aesthetic and political dissent against the neo-liberal management of American capitalism and the socialist management of Soviet state capitalism. I explore diplomatic correspondences between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. as well as a number of examples of aesthetic dissent ranging from popular magazines to Soviet subcultures to Leftist American avant-garde visual art and a ten-year old American schoolgirl's quest to discover the truth about the Cold War. In chapter two, I provide a close reading of E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*, a meta-fictional, "autobiographical" novel about political life during the Cold War period. I read this text alongside Louis Althusser's autobiography, *The Future Lasts Forever*, to examine the complexities of locating truth that have resulted from postmodernity's complication of the distinction between subjects and objects. Chapter three presents a historical case study of how the concept of truth was contested within samizdat, the underground late-Soviet self-publishing movement. In particular, I look at *Metropol*, a 1979 samizdat literary anthology, which, I argue exemplifies a form of literary communism within the creative block of actually lived "communism." The fourth and final chapter explores the autobiography of Assata Shakur-- communist, former Black Panther, and escaped convict who writes from socialist Cuba. I argue that the complex interplay of narrative forms in her text, as well as her use of intuition as a methodology, exposes a logic of truth that is non-representational, points to similarities between late capitalist and prison temporalities, and radically remaps the discursive parameters of the Cold War.

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Cold War, the open yet restricted rivalry that developed after World War II between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. It was waged on political, economic, and propaganda fronts and had only limited recourse to weapons. The term was first used by writer George Orwell. Millions of people were killed in the proxy wars between the US and the USSR during the Cold War. The "hot" parts of the Cold War included the Korean War, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion into Cuba, and the Vietnam War. Load Next Page. Inspire your inbox – Sign up for daily fun facts about this day in history, updates, and special offers. The Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union lasted for decades and resulted in anti-communist suspicions and international incidents that led the two superpowers to the brink of nuclear disaster. The Cold War: The Atomic Age. The containment strategy also provided the rationale for an unprecedented arms buildup in the United States. Both socialism and communism are essentially economic philosophies advocating public rather than private ownership, especially of the means of production, distribution and exchange of goods (i.e., making money) in a society. Both aim to fix the problems they see as created by a ...read more. HISTORY Vault: The Cold War. Balditsyn said that those in the USSR who secretly listened to and discussed what they heard on Western radio stations also doubted the content because they were accustomed to homegrown propaganda. "But Voice of America broadcasts were seen as more or less trustworthy," he said. Listeners remember how they turned the dials on their receivers to hear music or literary programs. Balditsyn recalls that once when on duty at night while serving in the army he listened to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, which was banned in the USSR and only officially published in 1990. The end of the Cold War also meant the end of VOA's glory days. The U.S. propaganda radio station had more or less accomplished its mission.