Altered Images of Africa in Soviet/ Post-Soviet /Modern Russia: Mass Media and Mass Culture Aspects

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The paper investigates the alterations of images of Africa from Soviet through post-soviet to modern Russia.

The image of Africa in the Soviet Union was a product of considered politics and propaganda. The public manifestation of race intolerance was inadmissible. Soviet propaganda put the pressure upon society so intensively that rare manifestations of racism in private life were a paradoxical form of local dissidence – a sort of reaction to official internationalism.

The Soviet propaganda cultivated the positive image of Africa. African people were "friendly foreigners", socially close and full of merits. This image contrasted with the image of an "alien foreigner", always "white, rich and fat" bourgeois. Later in the Seventies-Eighties we see how the Soviet propaganda responded to the changing world. The images of Africans (countries as a whole and individuals) were divided on whose good, supported by the Soviet Union, and bad, collaborating with "American imperialists'" Africans.

With the beginning of liberal transformation in the post-Soviet Russia the situation changed dramatically and positive image of Africa was rejected along with other legacy of the Soviet period. As a result, many issues of ethnicity, nationality and race – earlier kept in silence and considered a taboo – have rapidly acquired an unusual salience and topicality.

The paper explores the representation of Africa and Africans in Russia through the analysis of the products of the Soviet and modern Russian mass culture and mass media: what are the main ideas and elements of image of Africa; what factors influence on its creation; what is the role of global mass media in this process; and last but not least – how can African diasporas and officials in Russia, Russian non-governmental organizations, etc treat Africa's image.