

REVIEW for

EVERYDAY LIFE AND periodical press IN YUGOSLAV MACEDONIA (1945 - MID-1960s) Dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (New and Recent General History - Contemporary Balkan History: Political and Social History of Yugoslav Macedonia after World War II)

DOCTORAL STUDENT: Andoni Andreev

SCIENTIFIC SUPERVISOR: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Naum Kaichev

I don't want to play the role of a prophet who predicts only bad things, but it seems to me that we are facing a modern version of James Fenimore Cooper's "The Last of the Mohicans." In the past two years, none of the students I teach has been interested in where they can find materials on the topic they are developing, in which library there are the most journals in which they could find articles or even data for their research, in which archive they should go and dig. They ask me where on the Internet there are sites with various already developed materials, and when I tell them that certain titles are not digitized, they wrinkle their noses in displeasure. Even when it comes to monographs - and in our field, as we well know, many of them have not yet been uploaded to the Internet - they expect me to give them the authors and titles of the main works and rarely go beyond that. In fact, I don't know how many of them can work with catalogs. We used to teach them in the first and second year, but it seems to me that this practice has been abandoned. The work of doctoral student Andoni Andreev is a classic study, with deep knowledge of archival materials, periodicals, and historiography, and it was a pleasure for me to read it.

Let me admit that when some time ago – not to mention exactly when – I heard the topic of my colleague Andreev's dissertation, I was puzzled. Somehow it did not seem like a topic worthy of a dissertation to me. Now, however, after carefully reading the text, I have a different opinion. The topic is indeed worthwhile for a dissertation and Andoni Andreev has managed to write a good dissertation. I begin with my positive opinion, contrary to established practice, because I have many questions and some disagreements, which, in my opinion, is proof of the significance of the text, because a flat, smooth text does not raise questions, as it should be in a valuable work. Many of the recommendations that I will make – whether the author will comply with them is another question, in any case, he is not obliged to – concern the possible future publication of the dissertation as a monograph. I will begin by saying that the volume of the dissertation far exceeds that accepted for this type of work. The author has tried to cover it up with a trick – I don't mean it in a bad way – by inserting a lot of text that could otherwise be in the main text, in the notes typed with petite notes, but he could also shorten some pages. The introduction makes a very pleasant impression with its deep knowledge of the theory of the problem considered in the dissertation. It is obvious that the doctoral student is not copying judgments that he liked, but is reflecting on their suitability for the topic he is developing. I was particularly impressed by his reflections on the term "everyday life", although they did not completely convince me. I myself do not particularly like this term, insofar as the "everyday" by default, in my opinion, also contains "life" even though this is not directly stated. The bad thing is that although the term used by the doctoral student does not seem convincing to me, I

myself cannot make a meaningful suggestion for a better one. And so I turned it around, and so on, and so on, and I could not agree. And the long analysis of the theoretical titles used shows that this problem is faced by different historiographic schools, which offer different solutions, and Andoni Andreev, although with obvious reservations, has accepted one of them. The good thing is that unlike some young historians who, in the early stages of their research work, completely rely on theory and try to adapt the facts to it, in the proposed dissertation, theory is only an aid, a crutch for the author, and not a motorized wheelchair, and that is how it should be.

I share the author's conclusions about the transformations of the press and journalism after World War II and the observation (which is of course not his alone) that despite the significantly greater freedom that journalists in Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia have, there are "taboo" topics. First and foremost, this is Tito. I was curious why another taboo topic was not mentioned at the beginning - that of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, or rather the imposed line of their presentation in the Macedonian press. Of course, at a later stage the author also touches on this problem, but it seems to me that his place was more here. The dissertation also shows the real difficulties that the historian faces today - especially if he is Bulgarian - with access to authoritative sources in our western neighbor, and not only to those approved by the authorities. What I would recommend is to add a page or two here with an analysis of the Yugoslav - understand Macedonian press - from those years. What newspapers and magazines are published, who or which institution approves the composition of the editorial boards, what is their circulation, where they are distributed. The author writes generally about the press, mentions the difficulties in finding printing paper, and it is not clear whether there was any internal specialization among journalists. The columns covering certain topics are not analyzed, their duration, why they were interrupted - if they were interrupted, etc. It was also necessary, in my opinion, to search for and cite party documents about the role expected by the party institutions of the press in building a new Yugoslavia. This is necessary in order to be able to more accurately assess the influence of the periodical press on the citizens of Macedonia. For example, I would be interested in understanding - if possible, of course - what is the spread and influence of the official party newspapers in the regions with an Albanian majority, where the percentage of literate people was probably even lower than the generally low percentage of literate people. The pages devoted to the mobilization of the population are convincing. I fully approve of the author's thesis that celebrations, demonstrations, and actions become part of everyday life. The bad thing is that the press, by definition, cannot show what the true attitude of the masses towards them is. Because it is entirely possible for someone to go to a demonstration, gritting their teeth, because their absence would affect both their life and that of their family. In general, this is the main difficulty facing the author - to what extent what is presented in the press is actual everyday life in its public manifestations and to what extent it is a mimicry of those who want to survive. It seems to me that an exact answer to the problem cannot be given. The topic of the dissertation is rather the press's idea of what everyday life should be like, and not what it is like with all its trivialities like "salad with brandy."

What is striking is that in our country many authors writing about the post-war period in Bulgaria emphasize how quickly the communists mastered all the wheels of the machinery of power, but a comparison with Yugoslavia shows how much faster and more effectively this actually happened there. In any case, the purely quantitative indicators of mobilization are impressive, although official journalists, in their desire to be even more exalted, willingly resort to exaggerations that do not seem realistic. For example, when welcoming Tito in Skopje,

350,000 people came out! (101). At that time, the population of all of Yugoslav Macedonia - and this five years later - was 1,272,000 people, and the population of Skopje was about 100,000 people. There was no logistical possibility, especially with the infrastructure at that time, to bring such a large number to the capital, even if we consider the small territory of the region. I was interested in whether there were similar demonstrations in the villages. Judging by the Bulgarian example, there probably were, and the author does not very clearly hint at such. In any case, it seems to me that the descriptions of the first rallies and celebrations (80-82) can be shortened, no matter how colorful they may seem. We rarely realize that within three years the consciousness of the masses had to change three times - from the undisputed for many, but denied after 1945, belonging to Bulgaria; through the fanatical love for the USSR in 1945-48; and the mutations of propaganda after the resolution of the Cominformburo. All this was not easy at all and would have been impossible without the repressive apparatus in the country or the "republic" at that time. It seems to me that more space should have been devoted to the participation of minorities in this mobilization. According to the data presented, only 5% of the members of the CPM are from minorities (92), and even they are mentioned in the text rather incidentally (an Albanian youth brigade, a Turk, the hero of a report, etc.). There is no evidence - or perhaps there was not - of any special efforts directed at them, and it seems that their interest was much more difficult to attract, which is understandable considering the events in Western Macedonia in 1943-1944. It seems to me that in the first chapter, the possible influence of the press should have been considered, with all the conditions of the assessment. It is true that 67.5% of the population is illiterate (162), but this, of course, is not a valid indicator, considering the practice of newspapers being passed from hand to hand. Nothing is said about the authors of the materials in the press. Were there any journalists with experience from the pre-war years among them or was journalism at the level of *tabula rasa*. Were there authors from other republics or not? The notes mention the names of dozens of authors, but it was probably not possible to find data on them. Only somewhere in the middle of the dissertation is the price of a newspaper mentioned, but it is still not clear how much its purchase would affect the daily budget. And what was the practice with subscriptions? In Bulgaria during those years, people were often obliged to subscribe to one of the party publications. Was there such a practice in Yugoslavia? From the point of view of relations with Bulgaria, I fully accept Andoni Andreev's reasoning that a kind of Yugoslavization of Gotse Delchev (99) is underway, who is "alienated from Bulgarian history and absorbed by that of the South Macedonian statehood in Tito's Yugoslavia. On the one hand, he finds his place in the imagery of the Yugoslav partisan movement, and on the other - reduced to a lower "rank" than that of the Yugoslav marshal". Or as the author convincingly and figuratively expresses it, "the image of Gotse Delchev is integrated into the South Macedonian nation-building process in the People's Republic of Macedonia, and the light, warmth and heroism flowing from the memory of Delchev are reduced to another badge on the lapel of Josip Broz"

When analyzing the press's attitude towards economic problems and attempts to solve them in Vardar Macedonia, it seems to me that a slightly more detailed analysis of the region's economy would have been appropriate (now it is limited to repeating that 80% of the population is employed in agriculture). It is not until page 274 that the coupon system is mentioned for the first time (excluding the briefly mentioned coupons for tourist services). I think this should have been done earlier in the analysis of the recovery of the economy, because examples from all over Europe from those years clearly indicate that it had an extraordinary influence on the minds of citizens. In this regard, the dissertation, clearly relying on the press, pushes the idea that

monopolies on tobacco and mines are something new brought by the communists. Is this so?. It seems to me that they also existed in different forms in pre-war Yugoslavia? It is curious, as the doctoral student convincingly shows, how the tone of the press changed to correspond with the political attitudes of the moment – from the sharp denial and demonization of those unwilling to enter cooperative farms to the praise of the developed socialist village in the first half of the 1960s (123). The tone towards the peasants outside the cooperatives became softer; they were “producers” just like the “cooperative members”, on whom the “everyday initiatives for more modern cultivation of the land” had an attractive influence for “cooperation with the cooperative. A curious touch is that, as can be seen from the photographs in the text, among the “cooperative members” (119), as in Bulgaria, women with hoes and sickles were the main workers in the fields. It was mainly men who worked with machines. Incidentally, in the photograph of a workers’ restaurant, men were again sitting separately and women separately (149). In this regard, it is striking that the “unveiling” campaign began at the end of 1950, i.e. significantly later than other events in society – Muslims and especially Turks are more conservative – and as far as can be understood from the text of the dissertation – it was not that successful (126). What is repeatedly and quite rightly emphasized in the dissertation and which is characteristic of every totalitarian model is the desire to completely monopolize and direct the time of the worker – not only at work, but also in his free time, he is squeezed into the vice of new requirements. In everyday life at the workplace, the unions are the leading structural unit, whose main task is to maintain this complex machine of collectivism, discipline and ideological training, to the point that the priests, along with everyone else, also hold their own conferences within the unions (128). Incidentally, almost the same thing is happening in Bulgaria at that time. In the case of religion, it is striking that the quotes used by the author are only for Orthodoxy (60), but not for Muslims – they remain somewhere on the sidelines, although formally they are the object of propaganda. As my colleague Andreev rightly points out, the carrot and stick mechanism was successfully applied – the shock workers received better food in separate canteens (133) – a fact that categorically contradicts the preached idea of equality. In almost all cases, everyday life was put into the Procrustean bed of propaganda – shock workers, voluntary overtime work (140). The entire text convincingly proves that everyday life is actually not personal, but public life. And yet, everyday life was not completely destroyed by propaganda. In the second half of the 1950s, it can be seen that on the pages of the press, everyday life was increasingly associated with well-being (157). That is why I wished there were more concrete data about this welfare in the text – the appearance of the television, refrigerators, washing machines, their price and the real possibility of workers to purchase them (124). Data of this kind are available only for cars, and even for them it is not clear how many were purchased by citizens. It is no coincidence that the dream of the worker, reflected in the pages of the press, is to have his own apartment. And how big was the apartment expected to be? It seems to me that more attention should have been paid to what makes everyday life not only a daily burden, but also pleasant. It is about music – that is, what songs were listened to. From the texts used in the dissertation, the reader should be left with the impression that the peak was the amateur ensembles in the enterprises and brigades (by the way, it is interesting whether these ensembles were Macedonian or Yugoslav), but their songs were hardly at the top of the preferences of young people. It seems to me, judging by similar processes in other Balkan countries, that before the Cominformburo resolution, Soviet songs must have been popular. This must have been present in the pages of the press and it would be indicative to trace how they disappear. The issue of the “monetization” of childhood is not touched upon. What toys do children play with and what do they dream of owning. Was there a Santa Claus or a grandfather

Santa Claus? What is their place in pre-New Year publications in the periodical press. Are there any films aimed at children? Children are actually the most literate part of the population at an elementary level and it would be interesting to see what books are recommended to them for their everyday lives. It is not clear to what extent the traditional holiday system is included in the new holidays and new characters instilled by the press. The construction of Tito's image in the press is magnificent. I have not encountered a comparison of the type "beautiful as a swan" for any party leader in Eastern Europe. Does his glorification replace traditional objects of veneration? Andoni Andreev aptly describes his welcome in early 1945 in Skopje. There is something of a religious ritual in the festivities then - they kiss his hand, as they would kiss and have kissed the relics of some saint who promises them a connection with the afterlife, the unreally beautiful. To get to the quote from a song that really made me laugh (198): A drum beats: "Tick, tick! Re-pub-li-ka!" The press is one-sided - it cannot give the real picture, as the doctoral student correctly notes. According to the press, recreation includes mostly tourism and physical education - there are no visits to exhibitions, cinema, theatre, concerts. But even in tourism and recreation, the conditions are primitive. If we believe the photo on page 235, in the room in a station, intended as a rest room, but located in a school in Ohrid, there are no less than 10 beds. This, if nothing else, says that this is not a family vacation. And hence the question of whether there are family rooms in the so-called hotels and whether family vacations are included in the calculations of the rulers at all. It is not clear what the citizens of Macedonia read in their few free moments. The colleague Andreev mentions that the number of published books has increased, but it would be good if this opinion expressed in the press was supported by statistics and analysis of the imposed topics. Quite rightly, attention is paid to education, especially in view of the imposition of a literary Macedonian language, of a new or at least changed alphabet. It is interesting that the press does not note, if the text of the dissertation is to be believed, educational initiatives in the army, and it is there that they would make sense, especially among minority groups – Albanians, Turks, Gypsies.

It is obvious that for the periodical press the theme of women's emancipation, the so-called "masculinization", is of particular importance. Their enthusiastic inclusion as comrades alongside men in the struggle is emphasized, and the understanding is introduced that the new woman is an anti-fascist fighter (248-250). There are no hints about the place of eroticism, as far as can be understood. According to the journalists, the struggle for emancipation is not without problems, it encounters prejudices that are difficult to overcome (especially among Muslims); a curious touch here is that the propaganda avoids direct confrontation with men – the messages are directed either at the whole society or only at women, explicitly avoiding the creation of antagonism between women and men. The texts promote a relatively new trend that it is not divorces that are the problem, but bad marriages (261), an understanding that is quite provocative compared to traditional understandings. I could not understand what was the impetus for introducing sex education in schools as early as the fall of 1954 (262). This was much earlier than in Bulgaria. It is true that the press, albeit cautiously, began to recommend comfortable and beautiful clothes for women (262). What is not clear, neither from the text nor from the published advertisements and photographs, is whether these clothes were already mass-produced or whether they continued the old models of individual cuts and sewing. In this regard, I would like to say that my colleague Andreev does not mention fashion magazines, magazines with patterns. Was there no or did he not consider it necessary to pay attention to them? The same question can be asked about the lack of cooking courses. And would such courses in the Macedonia imagined by propaganda be of benefit to the woman who prepares

the family dinner or to the one who feeds dozens of workers in the factory canteen? In general, if we talk about everyday life, it is clear that for the press the place of women in the household is much more significant than that of men, this is emphasized, and from this it becomes clear that in the subconscious of the authors of journalistic materials, everyday life, although not highlighted in the foreground, overshadowed by the major problems of the time, still has considerable importance. Seen from another angle, however, there are no comments on the desire to free women from the burden of housework or in other words, while welcoming the entry of women into mass production, the traditional division of labor within the family is not challenged.

fully support the author's observation that "If at the beginning of 1956 the New Year's wishes of the workers were presented as those related to the enterprise - new halls, higher hygiene in the workplace, implementation of the work of reforms in the economy, increasing professional qualifications, etc., then by the end of the decade the "little man" was already the "everyday" one" (334) and this indicates that, although cautiously, there is a realization that the old slogan "not by bread alone a man lives" or from the Bulgarian translation of the Gospel: "Not by bread alone will a man live" must now be supplemented with the realization that bread alone is not enough in the new conditions. "The exemplary socialist personality already has projections beyond the profession she practices," emphasizes the author. Her separation from modesty is very delicate - when she is not dreaming, she does not crave possessions, but at the same time shows a developed consumer consciousness. The pages dedicated to the humorous press are curious. They make it clear how uncomfortable the official propaganda feels in the field of humor and satire. The sad story of "Osten" is indicative - founded, stopped and restored for years. It is clear that for those in power, humor in its importance as a critic of social ills has no place in the official picture of everyday life, it is limited either to illustrative repetition of the theses of propaganda or to toothless jokes on everyday topics. Or, as Carl Jung says, "The line that separates laughter and pain, comedy, tragedy, humor and suffering is very thin," and the supporters of sharp humor must have been convinced of this on their own. This seemed to be instinctively felt by the party magnates in the press, so they did not encourage the efforts of the humorists. That is perhaps why, as the dissertation notes, while in the official cheerful picture of everyday life there is a collective, the "little people" fall into it mostly with their negative actions (330). I fully approve of the author's introduction of the so-called "fragments", which is another word for the adopted term case study, because they allow the focus of his attention to be sharpened on individual, but very indicative moments in the presentation of everyday life in the press.

One of the most interesting of them is dedicated to the foreman movement, which is the embodiment of the periodical ideal of an everyday life, ensnared by official recommendations from morning to night. An interesting touch is that in the enthusiastic dithyrambs for the youth in the construction of railways and roads, there is not a word about deaths during construction - and such cases do exist, I am sure (177). It is interesting that constructions of such a scale exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Croatia, but there seem to be none in Macedonia during those years and it seems to remain the sixth wheel in the federation until the end of Yugoslavia (198). On the other hand, I find that excessive attention is paid to the disasters in Mavrovo and the earthquake in Skopje (277-308). They are more an example of propaganda than of everyday life (and thank God they are not). On the other hand, I may be wrong. It seems to me that they served as an example of the unification of the otherwise still heterogeneous mixture of people into something that propaganda had long ago begun to call the "Macedonian people," but the

tragedy and the way they dealt with it made people realize that they were one with those around them.

The dissertation also poses problems, the answers to which I do not know, but I would be curious to learn. For example, there is no evening of the “little” person or his Sunday morning; there is no analysis of the family budget – who contributes to it and how it is distributed; were there Bulgarian names of streets and squares before 1944 or were they only Turkish. I realize that many of the questions I raise deserve separate research, so this is more of an outline of some of the possible paths for the future work of my colleague Andreev.

I would be happy to see in the dissertation not only what was on the pages of the press, but also what was not and an analysis of the reasons for the lack. I also have smaller specific recommendations - some terms that have come down from Serbian-Macedonian "cattle herds" should be corrected; "chrome mine" ; more attention should be paid to some Russianisms. I

In a word, Andoni Andreev's dissertation is a successful attempt to dissect the varnishing of reality by the periodical press and the probable adaptation of citizens to the requirements of the authorities.

The abstract corresponds to what is stated in the text of the dissertation.

The author has published articles on the problem and has fulfilled all the requirements of the law.

I will confidently vote for awarding Andoni Andreev the educational and scientific degree of doctor in professional field 2.2. History and archaeology and I call on the other members of the scientific jury to do the same.

Prof. Ivan Ilchev