

SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI
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BULGARIAN RADIO DURING SOCIALISM
1944 - 1989

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY AND ASSURANCE

By Assoc. Prof. Vyara Alexandrova Angelova, PhD

I hereby declare that the dissertation presented by me on the subject:

“Bulgarian Radio during Socialism: 1944 – 1989”

for the award of the Doctor of Science degree, under professional area 3.5. Public Communications and Information Science – Media and Communications, is an autonomous and original copyright work. The sources of scientific and empirical information used are correctly documented and referred to in compliance with copyright protection requirements.

Date: July 2019

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(Assoc. Prof. Vyara Angelova, PhD)

Precisely 30 years after the start of the so-called transition in our country, *Bulgarian Radio during Socialism (1944-1989)* looks back on the time of socialism. The dissertation work is part of a long series of research material on a historical period bringing the attention of a variety of researchers (historians, sociologists, culturologists, etc.).

It is a challenge to explore a time for which there is no single assessment (researchers are in dispute even whether to refer to the period as “communism” or “socialism”) and there are enough witnesses who remember it. Each of them with their feelings and attitudes. In this sense, while dealing with socialism is considered important to society, researchers are under pressure to respond, in their interpretations, to opposing politico-social interests and treatments.

General characteristics of the dissertation

Selection of the subject and level of development of the problem

The current text is devoted to the Bulgarian radio between 1944 and 1989. Why is the topic of socialist radio important? First, because this history has not been written yet. Veselin Dimitrov’s detailed work on the history of Bulgarian radio ends with 1944. The longest episode of its existence so far (1944-1989) remains unlooked into. Therefore, the **subject has not been studied** to a high degree. A partial exception is Rayna Nikolova’s book “Emergence and Development of Radio and Television in Bulgaria”, which presents the history of radio, along with that of television, from their creation, almost to the present day (Nikolova, 2006).

The role of mass media during socialism is rarely a subject of study in its own right. Usually, the subject is partially touched upon and existing specialized literature is focused more on the historiographic review of media development (Ivanova; Deenichina) throughout the period. The development of socialist-time radio has been studied only fragmentarily, which we regard as a deficit in view of the understanding of the significant role of radio during socialism.

Socialist radio is also in the peripheral spotlight of many researchers, even if its instrumental role has been recognized. Among them, for example, Ivan Elenkov refers to it as part of the “cultural front”, and Alexander Vezenkov – as

a resource used by communist leaders. As a valuable source of information, I use the works of Mihail Minkov (Minkov, 1973; 1980) and Veselin Dimitrov (Dimitrov, 1977; 1980, 1985; 1992; 1994; 2007) that also contain data and examples of socialist radio. Some of them were published during socialism and bear the features of the interpretational framework within which the radio was considered at the time.

Second, unlike other public and state-owned spheres and institutions, **the socialist period for the radio started on 9 September itself**, even though the official power was not yet in the hands of the communist party. Vezenkov comments on the “bottom-up” control of the radio and the resulting organizational chaos, while taking into account the existing competence of communist leadership on the importance of the radio, accumulated in the “black radio stations” (Vezenkov, 2014: 313). This makes **the radio a special case of socialist institution preceding the socialist state**. This fact (elaborated on in Chapter 1) gives me a reason to outline the outset of the socialist period for the radio as from 1944.

Third but not least, the unfolding of an independent history of socialist radio reveals additional touches on the history of socialism in Bulgaria in general, as well as on the narrower **history of the media**. The reconstruction of the mechanisms under which the “radio machine” works provides a clearer picture of the overall ideological landscape, the social interactions and the overall spirit of the time.

Relevance of the topic

The subject of socialism continues to be very relevant and seemingly traumatic. This is affirmed by many books and media publications by professionals and amateurs. Newspapers and websites focusing on the socialist past enjoy particular popularity. The publication of memories and memoirs from the period (by both well-known and less well-known authors) is still unabated.

The subject is **kept relevant** due to the continuing opening of the archives from the time, containing valuable and previously unpublished information

about the manner in which the state, its organizations, and society itself used to function.

Beyond any doubt, the history of the socialist Bulgarian radio has the potential to provide a more comprehensive account of what happened before and after 1989 in the areas of radio broadcasting, government policies toward this media, and the media-audience-power relation.

Structure and philosophy of the dissertation

The *Bulgarian Radio during Socialism (1944-1989)* dissertation comprises 299 pages. It consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion and references (in Bulgarian, English, and Serbian; 7 stocks (27 inventories) of the Central State Archives; 5 stocks (7 inventories) of Sofia State Archives; 26 in-depth interviews and other sources). More than 2,000 archival units were reviewed and some of them were analyzed for the first time in a research paper on this subject.

The narrative is structured in three chapters, incorporated into a single logical framework. Consecutively analyzed topics include: the development of the “radio” institution (viewed “from above” through the minutes of managerial meetings and other documentary evidence of relations between the radio and other party and state institutions), the image of the radio (viewed “from aside” through the publicity of professional publications dedicated to the radio and radio journalism), and the modus operandi in the radio (viewed “from the inside”, reconstructing it based on memories of former employees).

The general philosophy governing this work (justified in the introduction to the dissertation) is based on the understanding of Bulgarian radio as part of the shared European media culture. The radio shares similar development processes with other European radio stations. In this sense, the author agrees with the idea that there are no absolute differences between socialist and capitalist media from the Cold War (Imre, 2017: 7); and also with the reasoned position that a new paradigm is needed to understand socialist media shared by many authors, including Aniko Imre, Sabin Mihelj, Andreas Fickers, Alexander Badenoch,

Martin Marinos, Thomas Beutelschmidt, Richard Oehmig, Christian Henrich-Franke, Colin Sparks, Romina Surugiu, etc. A fresh look at socialist media that takes into account their political stake, yet putting them in a wider culturological context, making it possible to identify not only national circumstances, but also transnational features of electronic media. In considering the radio, account is taken not only of its political instrumentalization, but also of its professionalization, which, in particular at the end of the period, seemed to bring Bulgarian radio closer to non-socialist radio stations than to its socialist partners. In this sense, the text does not completely abandon the ideological framework in which the radio developed, but avoids the understanding of socialist media mainly and only as implementers of party doctrine. This does not mean depoliticization of the approach or failure to take into account power implications and ideology, but rather indicates an extension of the understanding of socialist media. This will make it more visible that in the media field (both in the East and in the West), similar processes and understandings were underway. According to Imre, for example, the concept of public media was also shared by the Soviet Union and hence in Eastern Europe. As to television in particular, Fickers believes that program and symbolic construction are more or less similar across all European countries (Fickers, 2016: 3). Similarities stem from the unceasing communication between the two blocs (both in technological development, and in what they call “ping-pong” communication¹). Albeit separated, the two camps never stopped communicating in the media field and turned into “allied enemies” (Beutelschmidt & Oehmig, 2014: 60).

During socialism, several parallel processes were underway: on one hand, cultural exchange (which creates a common cultural European field) and, on the other hand, political control and restriction of transnational exchange of “unwanted” information (e.g. “suppression” of foreign radio stations); and the

¹“Ping-pong” communication as referred to by Badenoch, Fickers and Henrich-Franke, is the process when certain information material transmitted from one side of the Wall was picked up by the other side and commented on, on air, with the presumption that it was watched even “beyond” the Wall (Badenoch, Fickers & Henrich-Franke, 2013:13).

third process includes cross-border listening on both sides of the Wall². In this sense, the picture is very complex: it is shaped by various formal and informal, legal and illegal, state and subversive activities (Badenoch, Fickers & Henrich-Franke, 2013: 19)

The Bulgarian radio is a special case of a socialist institution prior to the socialist state. Changing its leadership was one of the immediate tasks of the new ruling power and radio content changed immediately. This was not by accident. The radio was included in a political project that included the building of a new socialist nation.

The concept of a specific “socialist nation” appeared to be a brand new concept for society and people. While preserving the characteristics of a classic understanding of a nation (e.g. ethnos, language, territory, cultural heritage, etc.), the idea (based on the philosophy and political views of Marx and Lenin) gives it a new interpretation. The concept also includes the Socialist International, which should help to bring about the gradual integration of fraternal socialist countries³. This process of formation of the socialist nation is instrumental to the understanding of the functioning of Bulgarian radio in the period 1944-1989. Because it explains some of the policies occurring *via* and *in* the radio: the composition of the radio program and the institutional building following the example of the Soviet Union (as a leading socialist state) until mid-1950s; but also the actions to build a national radio program having distinctly Bulgarian features (after 1960s). The deployment of activities was inconsistent, they were often coercive (the radio was subjected to prescriptions by the party and the state), and they were frequently mutually opposing.

However, the involvement of the radio in the formation of the nation should not be seen as a specific characteristic of socialist media alone. Electronic media have the indispensable function to co-participate in the construction or invention (Gellner and Anderson) of every community. As Eric Louw puts it, the essence of construction of collective identities happens through

² Authors of interesting works on the subject of cross-border listening of radio stations and watching of neighboring television stations on the Balkans include Annemarie Sorescu-Marinkovic (Маринковић, 2018) and Svetlana Antova (Антова, 2018)

³ Chavdar Marinov talks about a movement from “internationalism” toward nationalism (Маринов, 2009)

the “manufacturing of stories, memories, myths and beliefs”, and “the media...has become the main storytelling vehicle, journalists have become the key (but not only) players in myth making and identity building” (Louw, 2005: 96-97). In this sense, the Bulgarian radio does not constitute a special exception. It was involved in common European processes marked by the opposition during the Cold War. Above all, in the patronizing attitude of state-owned media toward the audience. The latter was perceived as educable and conducive to modeling in the spirit of political doctrine in every country. In the general case, this was done using a wide cultural cultivation of people including the deployment of music, radio theater and artistic works. The Bulgarian radio preferred to take the stand of an “educator of taste” instead of satisfying mass desires. Moreover, such pedagogical treatment of national audiences also extended to other European electronic media outlets at that time. In turn, listeners perceived the Radio as an extension of the State (unlike McLuhan or Clausewitz), not just as an informant for public policy, but as a co-player in the field of its production. Both producers and consumers of radio content perceived the radio as part of national identity (by the way, a perception shared on both sides of the Iron Curtain). The illusion that a specific Bulgarian radio sound (“national program design”) can be achieved was actively pursued almost to the end of the socialist period.

In order to understand the role of the radio, we have to bear in mind that the cultural life of the Socialist Republic of Bulgaria was comprehensible. Heads of State monitored it in the same way they listened to the only radio. They had direct impressions, notes and intentions towards cultural content. This made them also personally involved in the development of the spiritual sphere, which also included distortions of not only ideology, but also personal tastes and preferences. Thus, political indoctrination took place much more efficiently and deeper through the messages of culture, understood in the broadest sense.

Part of this process of (new) formation of the nation is also radio propaganda for abroad. “External” programs were particularly important during the Cold War. They not only “exported” the image of what was happening in the country, but were also the mirror, which reflected society through the eyes of the

foreign audience. In this respect also, the Bulgarian radio showed a significant development disproportionate to the size of the country. In end 1950s, it joined the world's top 20 countries having overseas programs, and the Overseas Programs Editor's Office became the biggest in the radio. Largely, the rules of "radio war" during the Cold War influenced also the development of our radio. The political and geographical situation of Bulgaria (surrounded by the hostile at the time Greece, Turkey, and, at certain times, Yugoslavia) predetermined strategies for the protection of population from foreign radio propaganda. In this sense, the radio played the role of one of national security cornerstones. "External programs" had to simultaneously carry out several functions: serve national radio propaganda by informing (in this case promoting) about socialist construction, Bulgaria's politics (activities of the Party and the government), but also exposing counterpropaganda by capitalist countries, and, not least, reflecting the reality of each individual country to which they were directed.

Therefore, when looking at socialist-time media, we must take into account both common international political context, and general audiovisual European development that simultaneously (albeit often divergently) influenced the development of the radio.

In parallel to the political and state commitments, the radio in the period 1944-1989 also marked a significant development. First, it **grew larger in number**, i.e. the staff increased from 300 employed in 1944 to nearly 3,000 in end 1989⁴. Second, its profile **became multi-profile**: at the end of the period, the Bulgarian radio had four national and five regional (Varna, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad and Shumen) programs⁵. Third, it **became more professional**, i.e. the enhancement of the radio resulted in an increased self-reflection: specialized publications on radio journalism appeared, a staff training school was set up, a particular radio lingo was created to incorporate the internalized distinction of radio genres as opposed to existing publicist and literary genres. Fourth, it **turned into a propaganda institute**: the radio was the first electronic media that was (self) perceived as an extension of state and party

⁴ By contrast, in 2019, BNR employed 1,364 staff.

⁵ The radio stations in Stara Zagora and Varna were established before 1944, and after 1989, another 4 regional radio stations were launched (Sofia, Vidin, Burgas, Kardzhali)

policies. Fifth, its **content became multi-layer**, i.e. it featured various cultural, educational and political narratives.

Goal and objectives

This text aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of the way in which socialist Bulgarian radio functioned in three directions: institutional building and principles of leadership; work processes and specific features of staff; and perception of radio-related problems by professional publications. In pursuance of this goal, I have identified objectives as follows:

- Detect the widest possible range of documents from the period to ensure the institutional description of the radio;

- Describe, compile and analyze basic management lines in the Bulgarian radio;

- Describe and compile specialized publications on radio in the period, with some of them undergoing content analysis;

- Analyze the Radio “from the inside” through critical thematic reading of in-depth interviews with Radio staff from the period.

Object and subject matter of study

The main object of the study is the Bulgarian radio from the 1944-1989 period. Various aspects of radio activities are subject of analysis: institutional affiliation; leadership; programming activities; multi-program nature; staffing issues; radiofication; professional roles; professional themes and solutions; music; international relations; overseas programs; audience; western radio stations; professional publications on radio; the process of work at the radio; employees’ views on censorship, etc.

Methodology

Like any media, the Radio is subject to multidisciplinary interest; it can be and must be studied from the perspective of both its technological nature, and strictly media specifics (e.g. genres, functions and the like), social relations it

initiated and established (with the audience, with other institutions), but also through its relations to power.

Therefore, the text employs a combined methodology requiring historical, sociological and media tools. Overall, we can summarize the work in three types:

- **Working with archives.** The text presents found and described primary and simultaneous sources (meeting minutes, records, internal memos, reports, etc.). Many of them have not been published to date. They were compiled and typologized by thematic nests and, as such, they were analyzed in detail.

- **Analysis of specialized literature and content analysis.** The text describes and analyzes 13 specialized professional publications dedicated to the Radio. Radio Review magazine in the period 1946-1947 was content analyzed.

- **In-depth interviews.** The text presents and analyzes 26 in-depth interviews with radio staff from the period of socialism.

Main points

The text builds the argument that the Bulgarian socialist radio had similar problems with the other European radio stations (independently of the east-west divide). It should not be seen only as a grown offspring of national propaganda. It fits into two contexts, within which it must be understood, i.e. that **it belonged to the socialist radio stations** and the associated features (influence of the Communist Party that had merged with the state, and its ideological scrutiny), but also the fact that **it belonged to the pan-European radio landscape**, which imposed similar processes (albeit not rates), phenomena and structures. Some of them were completely identical to western European ones, others were hollow (facade or dummy) and merely simulate similarity. I have tried also to outline specifically Bulgarian phenomena, as far as I could find such, born in particular political and social circumstances.

I have also sought to show **the dual role of the party elite**. The overall penetration of ideology in society made possible by the party elite is well known and well studied. This gives reason for the Party's decisions to be interpreted in an unequivocal manner as restrictive to freedom and modernization. However, I

would point out here that the party elite (part of its representatives employed in management positions in the radio) served also as a conduit for renewal processes and trends in the radio. The reasons for this are, on the one hand, the access of the elite to specialized literature and direct impressions of the work of foreign radio stations (goods not accessible to those ranked lower in hierarchy) and, on the other hand, their close position to the central government, which provided some opportunities for bolder action. This dual role of the elite became particularly visible in the 1970s and 1980s in the radio. I provide evidence in that regard in Chapter 3, in the analysis of interviews with Radio employees, but also partly in Chapter 1, where I look at the institutional archives.

In this sense, it seems to me that the Radio can be looked at **through the mutual infiltration of political and professional discourse**. Often, professionalization and modernization took place by virtue of (and not despite) political and ideological intervention. Speaking from the time of socialism (similar quotes can be found in the text) indicates a “suggested reality” of the influence of the Party leading all public organizations (including the radio), but not managing them. The latter was left to the hands of professional managements. They, in turn, worked in line and following the instructions of party structures. Very often, these instructions are undocumented. They were verbal and their respect was self-understandable in as much as each employee became part of the system. A good illustration of the mechanism is the wording “you are aware of what needs to be done yourself”, which party functionaries used to communicate with radio staff and motivate the work of self-regulating instincts which actually reproduced the system.

I have also found out an ambiguous answer to the question of whether the radio was always only a contractor of decisions made “upstairs” (i.e. the government in general). In particular, preserved documents show that some of the changes occurring in the radio came “from below” (i.e. from the Radio itself). Heads of departments, and the radio management itself, drew up draft decisions on a number of occasions to be taken by the Party or the Ministry concerned. These decisions (often with minor revisions) were taken and then returned to the Radio as instructions on what the radio was to do. This line of

procedure is characteristic of the work of the administration, not only during socialism. It shows that the government relied also on competence inside the radio, not only on itself.

In the course of the dissertation, I prove yet another thesis. It is linked to the influence of foreign radio stations on the professionalization of the Bulgarian radio program. The actual influence of these radio stations is in their **indirect impact on the professionalization of programs and radio journalism.**

Difficulties:

In the course of my work, I encountered a major problem, namely the impossibility of carrying out a content analysis of the radio because there is no audio archive⁶. The radio can only be understood in its population of music and text content and its delivery. The accessible published audio fragments are selected and give an idea only of the sounding of the radio on certain occasions (ceremonial or protocol), in part of some programs or interviews with public figures. The “daily” sound, however, is irretrievably lost. It could only be “recreated” in memories, which has both positive and negative consequences.

The analysis of the programs could possibly be done using documents. However, this is also partially beneficial. The reason lies in the internal specificity of radio programming (I share Veselin Dimitrov’s view), i.e. in the discrepancy between prescription (views on how it should appear) and realization (how it sounds in practice). “The radio program is an organism” that is “sensitive to external and internal violence” (Dimitrov, 2007: 114-115). It is therefore particularly important that the practices of radio staff “meet” documentary evidence, which I do, respectively, in Chapters 3 and 1.

The impeded reconstructing of the delivery of radio-content of the time stems also from the possibility of misinterpretation of the indications used at that time. From 1944 up to 1960s, various terms associated with radio practice (such as program, news report, etc.) were used completely chaotically. I address this issue in Chapter 1.

⁶ In this respect, the radio resembles the theater. In both cases, the impact takes place at the moment of performance, with every following reproduction being different, just like reception.

Last but not least, I have identified as a difficulty the ambitious scope of the study period (1944-1989). Although in a number of places I have provided a historical context explaining the various social changes that occurred (and turned socialism not into a static coherent whole, but in a period of divergent processes), some of them certainly remain outside the scope of attention. Therefore, the text does not seek to provide a complete historical timeline of the Radio, but is an attempt to reconstruct milestones of its development in this period.

Thesis overview

Chapter 1

This chapter examines the development of Bulgarian radio in the socialist period based on a study of the Radio's institutional archives⁷ included in stock 206 (19 inventories) of the Central State Archives, and of the Radio's party archives stored in Sofia State Archives. I have also used other relevant stocks, such as private stocks and resources of public institutions. The documentary evidence contains mainly: minutes, reports and internal memos, orders and instructions, decrees, establishment plans, etc.⁸

The work with the archives requires a number of caveats that explain why, through them, we can only partly reconstruct the history of the radio. There are several reasons for this. One of them is that the documentation of the Radio was maintained with different care over the years, for example, for some periods there are no minutes of radio management meetings, in other years they are extremely detailed. On some subjects, documents were stored in several versions, on others there is a total lack of written evidence. The reader will note that the archives on 1970s and 1980s is incomplete, which explains why sometimes my review ends before 1989.

Moreover, the fact that the Radio underwent various institutional metamorphoses, e.g. working together with the television for some time and

⁷ Here and throughout the text, where I write down Radio with a capital letter, I refer to the Bulgarian radio.

⁸ A detailed description of the content of the archives used is provided in the Reference Literature at the end of the work.

being subordinated to various institutions over the years, should not be forgotten. The frequent mergers and divisions of radio and television led to a non-systematic deferral of documents, as well as consistently maintained/stored institutional archives.

Inconsistencies in the data, dates and facts of the various documents are not insignificant. Whether a case of unintended error, lack of knowledge or deliberate misleading of the various managements, would be a bold assumption, which we would not allowed for.

Last but not least comes the problem of identifying the power center. A number of decisions were taken by the direct management of the radio, and then formulated into official documents of the State or the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP). On other occasions, the process is reverse. This makes it particularly difficult for the researcher, as it is not possible to set out an unambiguous approach to management strategies. The language of institutional documents is highly ideologized and this often masks the true reasons for one decision or another. Nevertheless, on some occasions the register of speaking “drops” and certain attitudes both within the institution and among the audience of the Radio can be detected.

These caveats should explain the respect of some necessary critical distance in archive work. This text does not aim to be a fully-fledged historical (and thus chronological) presentation of the development of the Radio, even if it contains such an element, but rather to shed light on certain practices in the radio system. I have chosen different thematic focuses, with the idea of covering a wide range of aspects of the functioning of the Radio: institutional development and governance, relations with BCP, internal debates in the Radio, program elements, etc. Using them, I analyze phenomena and processes in the socialist radio. I choose this approach because it enables me to search for contextual links going beyond chronological frames.

I have split this chapter into thematic focuses as follows:

The first part (entitled “The New Radio”) sets out the steps to break up with the previous history of Radio Sofia (1929-1944) and the third birth of the

Bulgarian Radio, which began after 9 September 1944. The new government in the country and the management of the radio accepted as their predecessor the Comintern radio broadcast under the name of “Hristo Botev” during the Second World War from Moscow, and gave the same name to the radio’s first program. For several decades, the radio used the dual name “Radio Sofia” – “Hristo Botev”. I look in detail at the tasks of the radio that have changed over the years: at the beginning, they related mostly to the spread of the new ideology across the country and the promotion of the state power, and later on, increasingly to the professionalization of the radio (its establishment as an institution) and the satisfaction of different listeners’ needs. The assignment of these tasks relates to the relationship of the radio with the leading party, the communist party. I refer to examples of how bi-faceted these links were and the role of party elite in the radio (which was often also part of the professional leadership) as one of the initiators for the modernization of the radio. I prove the merger of the party and professional discourse as a characteristic of the socialist period. I also refer to the frequent changes in the institutional affiliation of the radio. Over the years, it was under the authority of different ministries and the Council of Ministers; it merged, separated and then reunited again with the television. I look at the directors who were running the institution over the years, as well as personnel policies with a view to strengthening the media. Since, particularly in the early years, the primary care of the country’s government was dense radiofication, I employ systemized data on the number of radio receivers, radiofied settlements over the years (for comparison, I also use data on the growing number of TV sets in the same period).

The second part of Chapter 1 (entitled “On Program Activities”) goes further into professional debates among radio management. First, the talks about the multi-program nature of the radio, understood both as a guarantor of national security (in so far as it will make listeners avoid foreign radio stations and stick to the Bulgarian program), and as a necessity to address the needs of the growing audience, but also as a necessary condition for catching up with other European radio stations. I study the different groups of professionals and their work: presenters, dispatchers, controllers, correspondents, translator-presenters,

editors and journalists, actors. I pay special attention to the compiling of the news release (and its transformation into the “news”); reflections on the objectivity in journalism. I address in detail the subject of genres, i.e. their definition, conjunctural favoritism of some of them, in the context of the radio’s political tasks (e.g. the lecture) and the acquisition of a specific radio lingo. In this process, the Radio’s Methodological Office played an important role and I present its production. I look at two mutually contradictory processes in programming policy: the aim for all programs to be broadcast “on tape” (up to 95% of programs) and the phasing of “live” programs (starting early 1970s). I discuss the policy of Glavlit (General Directorate of Publishing Houses, Printing Industry and Trade in Print Works) in the Radio, the process of dismissing the cult of personality and criticism options provided to the radio after 1956. In this respect, I also refer to “Ognyan Velkov”, an alias under which international commentary was broadcast and which set the path toward the personification, albeit contrived, of radio content.

A separate part in this section is dedicated to music as perhaps the most important element of the radio program. Paradoxically or not, it turns out to be forlorn in the radio, it is everywhere (in the musical design of the program and in individual programs, music shows, in the works broadcast in between speaking, in the production of music bands at the radio) and is difficult to manage. I find the data I have compiled on “speech-music”, “music genres”, “Bulgarian-foreign” music to be of particular importance. The section also looks at the supply of new music and the purification of the music stock from “unwanted” works.

A separate theme are the international relations maintained by the radio including an overview of OIRT (International Radio and Television Organization whose members were mostly socialist countries) cooperation and membership. I draw attention to the greater permeability of the Iron Curtain from the West to the East.

I pay considerable attention to overseas programs and in particular those in Esperanto, “programs in Macedonian language” (created for political reasons and then abandoned), programs in Turkish language targeted at countryside

listeners and audiences located in Turkey. I also draw attention to the fight with foreign radio stations, their listening and jamming. I make the conclusion that they had an important influence on radio professionals.

The end of Chapter 1 looks at radio audience outreach, i.e. meetings organized with listeners across the country and consideration of their opinions, listeners' letters as the most effective feedback; the professional study of the audience.

Chapter 2 presents the results of the analysis of 13 professional publications dedicated to radio and radio journalism: "Radio Center", "Radio Voice", "Bulgarian Radio News Release", "RTV Specter", "Issues of Modern Journalism", "Correspondent", "Radio Correspondent", "Radio and Television Review", "Radio-television Audience", "Art and Culture Committee Newsletter", "Radio News Release", "Bulgarian Journalist: Journalism and Society" and "Radio Review". In its substance, this chapter shows the radio "from aside", through a specific segment of publicity. It is a kind of media story where one media is talking about another media. The interest in this aspect of publicity comes from the particular punitive role played by press articles during socialism, including their claim to provide information on public opinion. The objective is to describe and analyze the thematic areas of presented publications. Subject of study and description are publicly available publications and publications that remained confined to a narrow range of readers (marked "for official use"). Using compiled data, I prove the existence of an inverted pyramid in terms of knowledge of the outside world: those closest to the power center are best acquainted with what was happening around the world, and those on the periphery (the radio centers across the country) were hardly aware. I also comment on the role of the specialized release on correspondents in the process of correspondents' self-awareness as a separate community within the radio organization.

The content analysis of "Radio Review" for the period 1946-1947 is a separate section. It makes it clear that the greatest attention was paid to culture, followed by politics and, lastly, by professional radio subjects. I refer to information evidencing the increasing Sovietization of subjects and the gradual

“disappearance” of some western countries from the focus of the publication.

Chapter 3 presents the analysis of 26 in-depth interviews with employees in the socialist radio (journalists and hosts; presenters; music journalists; engineering and technical assistants). This look “on the inside” of radio work is complementary to previous chapters. The majority of respondents provide testimony of the radio of the 1970s and 1980s. The analysis is divided into a number of thematic clusters. Sometimes, I look for direct comparisons with the documentary evidence of Chapter 1, and I find their practical application in radio activities. Such topics include introduction into the profession; organization of the work of individual professionals; issues of broadcast music by genres and nationality quotas; merging party and professional principles. I have paid particular attention to the modernization of the radio after 1970s, the choice of a model, the source of modernization and the international recognition of the process. I have provided brief information about Radio Varna and in particular programs for holidaymakers, and about Radio Blagoevgrad and its significance for the Pirin region.

A separate part is the analysis of the important subject of censorship. It has been examined in detail, comparing respondents’ assessments of whether censorship existed and in what form, who applied it and the mechanisms to avoid it.

The chapter concludes with the analysis of responses to comparisons between socialist radio and today’s journalism. The reflections on how it was “before” and how it is “today” identify many evaluations of socialism, as well as explanations about the post-socialist situation.

In the conclusion, I summarize the main outcomes that the dissertation has achieved. I stress the uneven institutional development of the media. The dual role of the party vis-à-vis the radio is identified: on one hand, it put it into an ideological framework; on the other hand, it was a guarantor of its professionalization. Based on the overall development review, I conclude that the Radio, at the beginning of the studied period, was one of the first socialist institutions (before socialism), and at the end, one of the first democratic

institutions (preceding democracy). The modern sounding of “Horizont” in late 1980s is considered symptomatic of the opening up to democratic processes.

Again, I refer back to the fundamental proposition in the thesis that the Bulgarian Radio shared a common audiovisual European development.

Contributions in the author's view:

- The text applies a comprehensive approach to understanding the socialist development of the Bulgarian radio: institutional functioning, public image and work at the Radio. A combined research methodology is used.

- Various archival institutional documents, selected and thematically analyzed, are presented. New facts and data on the Radio's development derive from them.

- Specialized print publications on radio journalism are analyzed and previously unstudied processes and trends are identified.

- Through the analysis of the in-depth interviews, new information, in the form of documentary evidence, related to the understanding of radio operations is identified.

- An original key to understanding the influence of foreign radio stations on Bulgarian radio experts, as one of the sources of modernization of radio sound, is proposed.

- A new interpretation of the use of radio genres is proposed. Their functioning is looked at from both professional and political perspective.

- Interpretations and theses of socialist radio are identified by deploying it in several contexts: its belonging to the European audiovisual culture; its belonging to socialist radio stations; its functioning as a propaganda institute; its establishment as a professional media, etc.

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- 2) Българското радио през социализма. Професионалните медийни издания (1944-1989),** Медиалог, брой:4, 2018, ISSN (online):2535-0846, **2018**
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