

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Audience AnalysisPRIORITY

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Nov 7

XI-1976

BULGARIAMORALE AND GENERAL MOOD /2000/
Political Situation /2004/PROPAGANDA /2600/
Radio /2605/AUDIENCE ANALYSIS.SOURCE ATHENS: A 21-year-old Bulgarian refugees student.DATE OF OBSERVATION: End May 1956.EVALUATION COMMENT: This report depicts correctly the internal political situation in Bulgaria and the general mood of the population.

The statements received here on various Western broadcasting programs are of a personal nature and usually differ according to the individual opinion of our sources.

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Source's father owned a 1939 "Philips" battery radio /made in Germany/, because there was no electricity in his native village of TSAR PETROVO. This set was registered with the government, but source did not remember the tax. Source's father was a patriot, and during the war he and other village leaders would listen to LONDON and other allied broadcasts, afterwards, between 1944 and 1950, listening to Western stations until in 1950 source and his family were deported to KOTEL for anti-Communist political beliefs. The family at that time lacked money to buy new batteries even had they been available, so the father went daily to visit friends who owned a radio set. Source himself did not have much opportunity to listen, and only heard Western broadcasts a few times but, as his friends had radios, they would discuss the programs with him. He remembers Radio Free Europe, Radio GORIANIN, Radio LONDON and the Voice of America through SALONIKA.

In source's opinion RFE is the most popular with the intellectuals, and GORIANIN with the uneducated masses, because it appeals to their imagination and desire for action with its "stirring playing of the national anthem "Shoumi Maritsa"
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and its opening "Brothers Bulgarians." He does not consider that LONDON and PARIS are much listened to.

"The intellectuals and those who have a certain political knowledge prefer to listen to RFE," source said. "For example, when CHERVENKOV was replaced by YUGOV, RFE broadcast the most accurate comment and analysis of the causes. From these commentaries the educated people were in a position to estimate the extent of the confusion reigning in Russia and Bulgaria. But for those who lack political insight, RFE broadcasts present no interest." Source stated that when radio GORIANIN in 1949 or 1950 mentioned for the first time guerrillas in the Rodopi mountains, there was an immediate movement of enthusiasm among the young men who suddenly brought to light hidden weapons and started cleaning them and testing their marksmanship in the woods. "The Communists were most confused then," he said. "I remember that in our small village a neighbor asked the little daughter of Vassil GEORGIEV, a Communist, how her father was. The little girl answered: 'He's hiding. He doesn't sleep in the house anymore. He's sleeping in the barn because he's afraid that GORIANIN will come and kill him.' The personal animosity of the people toward the Communists is bolstered by Radio GORIANIN, which broadcasts more slogans than news. That's why it is considered the most lively and active anti-Communist propaganda."

Source suggested that RFE should broadcast suitable programs for those who are not politically enlightened, to encourage them because their courage is lower today than in 1950-53. "Time goes by, and nothing happens. The people begin to feel discouragement, so they need strengthening from outside." He also suggested that exile leaders should broadcast the measures taken to channel the feelings of the Bulgarian people onto specific targets. "The Soviet propaganda aims constantly at identifying Bulgarian policies with those of Russia. That's why the nationalistic sentiments of the people should be aroused, and they should constantly be reminded that Russia's policy is 'Zad Dunavska Gubernia'; that if the Russians had helped Bulgarian win liberation from the Turks, it was for the same selfish reasons and interests which they pursue today."

News Concerning Religion, Agriculture.

Source stated that he would like to hear more religious talks and discussions broadcast, since the Church is still under passive if not active persecution. "Despite fear people will always listen to news if they are convinced of its truthfulness," he said. "That's why we must have impartial world news. Agricultural broadcasts are always

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followed with great interest in Bulgaria, both the strictly utilitarian -- which should be destined to help the individual who is holding out against collectivization, since the domestic broadcasts are for the TKZS -- and the news about how the Regime is acting to force farmers and peasants into the collectives."

Source did not think the musical programs were good enough. "Young people are very fond of jazz music. This was banned at the beginning, but is now permitted and very popular in Bulgaria. What we would like is something we cannot get from domestic stations, such as last-minute jazz records but more particularly the folklore songs of our traditional past, Christmas carols, hymns, etc. These we would like to hear to remind us of better days."

The best listening hours, said source, are between 1900 hours and midnight. People are back from work, and the broadcasts can be heard relatively more clearly at those hours. But it is extremely difficult to listen to Western broadcasts, especially RFE, which is always jammed. Source doubts if any listener has been able to listen clearly to an entire program.

"Even though the listening is difficult, people always try to hear. They glue their ears close to the loudspeakers, keep their fingers on the tuning and volume knobs, twiddling slightly all the time to improve the quality -- and always ready to switch to another station in case of a visitor. Of course another reason for keeping the radio low is fear. They are always cautious not to be overheard by spies and are afraid that their next door neighbors might report them. Then they would be considered to be enemies of the regime and that might well cost them their jobs. That's why group listening is possible only among families or very close friends in whom one has the utmost confidence."

Although there are laws against repeating news heard over a Western station, it still spreads very rapidly through entire communities, said source.

Source stated that all Western stations influenced the Bulgarian people. They were especially pleased to know they had not been forgotten by the Western democracies and that the free peoples of the world were well aware of conditions prevailing in Bulgaria.

"People seek to know the truth. They also often learn about different persons and events within their own country and are able to form a proper appreciation of their rulers. Listeners to Western broadcasts," said source, "believe what they hear over the Western radio stations. They do not

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think they are either being fooled or bombarded by propaganda. Their hope and morale is increased and their anti-Communism intensified. Anything related against Communism, even the most trivial bits of information, gets a welcome.

"As the years pass, the importance of Western stations increases. Today the people are tired of waiting and hoping, and their morale is low. They do not believe in decisive events in the near future any longer, nor in the hope of liberation after an immediate World War. This does not mean that they have abandoned hope; but merely that they realize that the situation is not yet ripe. They are aware they cannot be given any promised deadline for liberation. They still hope, but they need encouragement. Were it not for that hope, life in Bulgaria would be unbearable. "Let it come after a dozen years, but come it must," say intelligent people."

No Immediate Promises.

Foreign stations are nearly always objective, said source, but they must use the utmost reserve in any promises they make. The Communists make propaganda out of any unfulfilled promises.

Source saw a leaflet only once and did not understand it. He thought it was in Serbian. He believed that Western books and newspapers should somehow be smuggled into the country.

Jamming was the Regime's strongest weapon against broadcasts. It was used almost exclusively against RFE, and as soon as RFE Bulgarian language broadcast had ended, the jamming ceased, and those who could understand other languages were able to listen to PARIS, ROME, etc. He had no knowledge of the location or the technic of jammers.

Referring to domestic news, source said that the people did not believe anything they heard on the radio or read in the newspapers. They are well aware it is all propaganda. The only programs listened to over the radio are musical, especially folksongs which, however, have been altered and the traditional non-Communist ones eliminated. Everything in Bulgaria is linked to propaganda, in the streets, in the movies, in the theaters. The people are forced to take it and like it. But the radio they can switch off.

"The films are so filled with propaganda that movie attendance has fallen off," said source. In some instances schoolboys are forced into attending certain shows since they have to comment on it for examination purposes. Despite

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the publicity given to Communist movies, the houses are only filled for foreign productions. Lately some Austrian and French movies were shown."

Source could not estimate the number of radios existing in his neighborhood but thought that perhaps one or two per cent of families owned radios in the villages, much more in the towns. People would even do without bread and semi-starve to save money to buy a radio, he said, adding that the cheaper sets cost approximately 1,000 leva. He has seen the following radios: "Telefunken," "Philips" and "Siera" /all pre-war models/; "Tesla" /Czechoslovak/, "Orion" /Hungarian/, "Oberon" /German, and the most expensive ranging from 2,800 to 6,000 leva/, "Voroehilov" /Russian/ and "Christo Botev" and "Pioner" /Bulgarian/. He had no knowledge of wave-bands.

Regime in Bulgaria.

Referring to the present regime, source said that the vast majority of the people were against it. "I do not believe there are more than four per cent of ideological Communists in the country," he said, "for despite the impression given by those wishing to appear Communist for reasons of security, economy or other, they are continually grumbling against the regime.

"The Communists have no real strength with any particular section of the people. They are weakest in peasant areas because these people are the most oppressed of all and live under the hardest conditions. The peasants are the most relentless enemies of the regime. They have been despoiled of their land and forced into collectives.

"Even the youths, on whom the regime had based its hopes, were no longer easily influenced by Communist ideologies. They had come to realize the misery of the people through their own parents, relatives and friends. Approximately 75 per cent of all schoolboys and youths belong to the DSNM. The other 25 per cent are not wanted by the DSNM which charges them with bourgeois or anti-Communist sentiments. Membership in the DSNM is not compulsory, but without a certificate from it no one will be accepted into a university nor even find a job. But out of the total number of organized members of the DSNM, I do not believe more than between three and four per cent are real Communists. The remainder join and frequent the centers in order to be left free to study and help their future careers."

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According to source, he could see no good points in Communism, but many bad ones. "Its worst aspects are lack of freedom, that fact it serves foreign /Russian/ interests in Bulgaria, low salaries and the abolition of private initiative. Never has human labor been so little rewarded. Life has become unbearable, not only for the farmers and workers, but for the whole population. Taxes are exorbitantly high. There are people in my village who sell their clothes and furniture just to pay these taxes. It is an everyday sight to see tax-collectors confiscating clothing, furniture, sewing machines, radios, etc., because of unpaid taxes. It has become so common that even the children now play a game called "The tax-collector." Sometimes taxes are collected in kind, mainly wheat, but the State pays so little the people are still obliged to sell their belongings to make up the deficit."

All to be Swept Away.

Source stated that nothing whatsoever that the Communists had introduced should be retained the way it is. He would prefer to see everything the Communists claimed to have accomplished uprooted and the very name of Communism to be forgotten forever.

"I do not admit that the Communists have accomplished any achievements peculiar to Communism and only to be accomplished by that regime," he said. "The schools that have been built, the hospitals, the roads, the power and water supplies -- all these would have been done under any post-war regime as being indispensable. And they would not have been carried out at the expense of the people's well-being as has happened under Communism."

According to source, no Communist leader is popular. No one believes in them. The Communists were the first to employ the weapons of distrust and hatred, and they have rebounded upon them. Georgi DIMITROV, STALIN's weapon, who was sent to Bulgaria to kill and who was one of the chief murderers of Nikola PETKOV, and CHERVENKOV were the most hated Communist leaders.

The most unpopular officials, according to source, are the police, the commissars of the Party and, in general, all the activist functionaries of the regime. They are so compromised personally and are so morally low that the people cannot respect them and are in terror of them. Source knows of no government or Party official who enjoys any popularity. They are all equally disliked. Source became considerably excited. "There is no sense in talking about such individuals."

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Members of the Party are all in very good jobs and are well paid, said source. They constitute a privileged society, and all are Russia's agents. Most of them are ideological imposters and opportunists who follow Communism because it gives them power and comparative wealth. And their education is only basic. In source's opinion, only a small number of government employees are fanatic, sincere Communists.

He considers that the morale of the average government employee is not high. "They feel that the regime's policy is wrong, but the fear of persecution and the need to hold a good post make them cautious," he said. "If they continue in their work, it's because there is no way out for them. Often they criticize Communism to those in whom they have confidence. They would be the first to help in any revolt they thought might succeed."

Source believes that the regime has become more powerful lately although the number of sincere trustworthy Communists has decreased. He bases his opinion on the very much larger numbers of government agents. They are not Communists, but they become agents for material gain and other advantages. "Even in the Labor Army, where the majority are intellectual anti-Communists, they fear to talk freely because of agents," said source.

Internal Resistance Useless.

Any revolt within the country would be immediately and drastically suppressed, said source. Such a thing is virtually impossible. The country's armed forces, controlled by the Party, safeguard the regime. The prisons are full. For a small, unpublicized riot, the police arrest hundreds of persons. There is no resistance against the government, but it takes place often against the TKZS, including demonstrations and complaints. Source related that in his own village the inhabitants killed the local Party prosecutor and then threatened to flee "en masse" to Yugoslavia. The government publicized an enquiry into the local TKZS and pretended to have found and punished the culprits. Actually a few of the TKZS employees were changed but, significantly, after a few months had elapsed the real village culprits were, for one reason or another, arrested and imprisoned. At this stage the people were too afraid to show any resistance.

In source's opinion, such resistance would not bring about the fall of the regime, but it might have a nuisance value and maintain people's morale.

He was convinced that the West made all efforts to avoid a new war and wanted to change the status of the

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Bulgarian people through free elections. This he considered impossible, for although the Bulgarians, too, wished to avoid a war, they knew they could never be liberated without one, and they preferred a possible holocaust to continued Communism.

"Even the slightest assistance to the Bulgarian people by a Western military force would start an inevitable conflict in the country, and the people would arise against the regime," he said. "If Greece attacked Bulgaria, the great majority of Bulgarians would not fight against the Greeks but would help them drive out the Communists. Presently only the young men dare criticize the regime, but at a given moment everyone would arise and help. The soldiers of the Labor Army, who are unarmed now, would prove a considerable force if given arms. The soldiers of the regular Army, too, would cross to the other side. This situation is well known to the Communists. They have no confidence whatsoever in the Bulgarian Army. The soldiers even now are being told that in case of war they will be closely watched and controlled. By this they aim at instilling mistrust of one another in the Army and so prevent any mass anti-regime reactions. They believe too, in support from the Russian armies whose invincibility is widely publicized."

Exiles Will Give Lives.

Source stated that the great majority of exiles and refugees had fled because of prevailing conditions, but that all, especially the younger ones like himself, were prepared in case of war or for any other reason, to return and offer their lives for the cause of liberation.

He said that the general opinion in Bulgaria was that their life in the Western countries was undoubtedly much better than in Bulgaria. In America they are well organized and their activities for helping the nationalists in Bulgaria are very considerable. The people of Bulgaria believe that the exiles are closely collaborating with the Western countries and especially with the US. They are not dispersed but come under an organization which represents the Bulgarian nation abroad and which includes and leads all exiles and refugees.

Source said that G.M. DIMITROV had often spoken on the radio but that he could not remember whether it was over RFE or VOA. He said that while there might be misunderstandings between the exiles as to methods of proceeding toward the liberation of Bulgaria, they were all united in the common goal. "They belong to various political parties,

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but in Bulgaria we know they are united to help us. These exiles know the situation in Bulgaria, and their moral support is considerable. We in Bulgaria are very much interested in the exiles. Their activities in the West help to maintain our morale. The hopes of the entire nation rest upon these exiles.

"The best liked of the exiles is G.M. DIMITROV. He is the most famous and loved by the people. Vlada KARASTOYANOVA, who speaks often over the radio, is also very popular." Source stated he listened to her at 1950 hours when at home.

In his opinion, Dimitar GICHEV, who did not escape but who had preferred to remain a prisoner in Bulgaria and has consistently refused to sign any declarations of adherence to the regime, has the best chance of becoming the eventual leader after liberation.

"Those who signed the Communist declarations are much despised in the country," said source. "Two lawyers, Mladen GOLEMANSKIY and Petar BRADKOV, who had been on PETKOV's defense, were asked to sign declarations to avoid prison. The first signed, but the second refused and is still in prison. People despise GOLEMANSKY but speak with pride of BRADKOV."

De-Stalinization.

"The newcomer is not better than his predecessor, and the situation goes from bad to worse," was source's comment on the replacement of CHERVENKOV. "Criticism of STALIN was heard with joy in Bulgaria. Many believed that the situation would change. But the greatest part of the population is not in a position to weigh the situation with any accuracy. They thought the fall of CHERVENKOV was linked with the depreciation of STALIN. But as nothing happened and time passed, they realized that those who criticized STALIN were merely trying to reinforce their own positions by putting the blame on STALIN. The monster has only changed its outer fur. STALIN, BERIA, BULGANIN, CHERVENKOV, YUGOV, whatever the name, one is as bad as the other."

Pictures of STALIN and DIMITROV are only to be seen in some barbershops today, said source. Those of LENIN, KHRUSHCHEV, BULGANIN, MALENKOV are usually all together in a group to ensure that none be omitted. Source had never seen a photo of TITO in Bulgaria.

"When TITO first broke off relations with the USSR, he became very popular with the Bulgarians. But his whole behavior after that disappointed everyone. TITO's

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policy is not liked by Bulgarians. The Bulgarian people do not want any partition of Bulgaria, they are against the Macedonia Republic which would amputate Bulgaria, but they believe TITO will betray Russia all over again, no matter how many verbal ties are propagandized.

Referring to the SUEZ dispute, he said that while the Communists claimed that the Egyptians were "sick of British capitalism," the quarrel was a source of hope to the Bulgarians because whenever there is a local conflict, such as in Korea and Vietnam, the people of Bulgaria hope it will spread throughout the world and eventually lead to their liberation.

Future Reorganization of Bulgaria.

Source stated that a desire for "National Communism" did not exist in Bulgaria. "Communism is always Communism whether it is called "national" or not. The Bulgarian people would prefer occupation by a foreign democratic power to any national Communist regime. Any regime would be preferable to the present existing one, but I personally would like to see a regime like that of Alexander STAMBULIISKY. I believe the greater part of the people would prefer a democracy to a monarchy."

Source said that like his father he was a convinced anti-monarchist. He said that BORIS III, like his father FERDINAND, had been pro-German without examining whether or not this would serve Bulgaria's interests. At least, in World War II., Bulgaria should not have been on the German side but with the Allies. King SIMEON, he said, is rather liked in Bulgaria, and his life abroad is followed with interest. He said there were two main trends in Bulgaria, royalist and agrarian, and, in his opinion, the latter was the strongest today.

End