

ITEM No. 3455/56

A.A. Distribution

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Political Advisor
Audience Analysis

PRIORITY
ES
April 3
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BULGARIA

PROPAGANDA (2600)
Radio (2605)

WEST-EAST RIVALRY ON THE AIR WAVES.

SOURCE ISTANBUL: A 21-year-old Bulgarian, native of MALKO SHARKOVO, who later lived in SUNGURLAR village where he completed his highschool education. Graduated in 1955, source escaped to Turkey in November of the same year.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until November 1955.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This office has no knowledge of CHERVENKOV advocating a change of Bulgarian radio program policy in 1955. The rest of this report, bringing no essential news, corresponds with the opinion of a majority of Bulgarians interviewed so far.

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PART. I.

In source's native village, MALKO SHARKOVO, District ELHOVO, there is only one radio at the collective farm. The village has no wired radio service and none of its inhabitants own a radio. In the village of SUNGURLAR, District KARNOBAT, where source's family was deported and where he completed his high school studies, many were those who owned regular tube receivers. The locality also had a wired radio service but source does not know of anyone having both tube and wired receivers.

According to source, all radio sets sold in Bulgaria have at least three wave-lengths, namely, long, medium and short. There are no restrictions on the sale of radios, and spare parts for all new models are available at reasonable prices. In SUNGURLAR source saw the following tube receivers:

(a) Bulgarian-made "Septemvri" 4-tube sets which sold for 1,460 leva in 1955;

(b) Bulgarian-made "Voroshilov," which were smaller than the "Septemvriye" and sold for roughly 1,200 leva.

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- (c) Soviet made "Ural" receivers having 6 tubes and which sold for roughly 4,000 leva in 1955.

Source added that there were a large number of pre-war Western models in SUNGURLAR, but he was unable to name these sets.

Many different kinds of antennas were being used in SUNCURLAR. The most common one was composed of two vertical poles with wires stretched parallel between them.

Source could not give detailed information concerning the wired radio center because he had never been inside the building. All he knows is that a powerful tube receiver is located in the building, and broadcasts are relayed throughout the village with the aid of special wires. The wired radio system does not use any electricity. Wired radio receivers sold for 160 leva in late 1955.

Source was unable to tell how much had to be paid as annual fees for the use of radios. His landlord at SUNGURLAR paid three leva a month for the use of his wired radio receiver. Source has never heard of radios being confiscated, nor did he hear of any receivers which were limited to one wavelength only.

PART II.

"Although I did not particularly care for listening to Bulgarian State broadcasts I found this inevitable. During my stay at SUNGURLAR I heard various programs every day as these were being relayed through the wired radio system and beamed at the population through the loudspeakers in the village squares and public buildings. Broadcasts from Radio STARA ZAGORA and both SOFIA stations were being put on the air through the wired system. With the exception of the news, all other programs were broadcast at different hours every day." Source stated that he regularly listened to the news, popular songs, dance music, radio sketches and sports programs.

According to source, the Bulgarian State radio network has certain advantages over Western stations. The most important factor is that Bulgarian broadcasts are not jammed and, therefore, are clearly audible. Of late the program material has improved to include more music. Folklore, "hora" music, popular songs, radio sketches, operettas, sport programs, and Russian and Czechoslovak folk music can be listened to on the Bulgarian State network without the fear of getting into trouble with the authorities. This is not quite the case when listening to Western stations.

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Although there is no law prohibiting such listening, source claims that most people think twice before tuning in on a Western station. Source does not remember many new changes in his country's radio programs, but in 1955 he read in a newspaper that Prime Minister CHERVENKOV, during a congress, voiced the request of Bulgaria's youth to include more dance music in the daily programs. This has been carried out toward the end of 1955.

Source does not believe that the Bulgarian radios have printed programs of their own. Once in a while he saw such programs in the daily papers, and he knows that weekly programs are given in advance but he never laid his eyes on such a publication. As far as source knows, there is no obligation to listen to the Bulgarian State radio nor does one have to subscribe to any newspaper. As he was interested in literature, source subscribed to the "Literaturen Front," the publication of Bulgarian authors and poets. While at SUNGURLAR he sometimes bought a copy of the BURGAS paper 'Chernomorski Front.' 'Rabotnichesko Delo,' 'Zemledelsko Zname' and 'Otechestven Front' are the most widely read papers in Bulgaria although source claims all Bulgarian papers carry the same news and are written in the same spirit.

In source's opinion, the main difference between Bulgarian and Western radio programs is that while the first include more internal news the latter give much greater importance to international events. He analyzed the various Bulgarian State network programs as follows:

News: usually unreliable. Internal news, whenever production is concerned, is usually exaggerated. Foreign news is mostly falsified.

Sports: such broadcasts, whether dealing with internal or external events, are usually reliable.

Military news: utterly unreliable. The listener is made to believe that the USSR and her allies reduce their armed forces in an attempt to convince the West of their desire for lasting peace. Western countries are described as making frantic efforts to increase their war potential.

Agricultural programs: cannot be believed as these are packed with propaganda material encouraging the population to increase agricultural output. Women's programs: as source has not heard similar programs over Western radios he was unable to say whether his State's radio told the truth or not. Local news: in many cases this is corresponding with the facts, but this program often serves as a propaganda tool for the State.

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PART III.

Source outlined in Part II when and how he listened to wired radio programs. He does not feel that the wired radio system decreases the population's interest in Western broadcasts. On the contrary, the fact that the Bulgarian Government wants its people to listen to specific programs only, such as relayed through the wired radio, spurs the population to show greater interest toward broadcasts from the West. The SUNGURLAR wired radio usually gave the daily news and musical programs from STARA ZAGORA and SOFIA and then devoted most of its program time to local news. The decisions of the village council were always announced over the wired service as also such events as the coming to the town of visiting theatrical groups or movies. The high school student chorus regularly performed over the wired system. Agricultural news of local importance, usually concerning vine growing, was broadcast over the system and was much appreciated by the population. Political indoctrination on a local level was also held which usually consisted of reading biographical studies concerning leading Bulgarian and foreign Communists. Special programs were arranged on national holidays such as May 1 and September 9.

Source greatly appreciated the above-listed programs which had a purely local character. It gave the possibility to the townsmen to find out in detail what was happening all around them. Source stated that newspapers never give small town news in such detail, and that SUNGURLAR inhabitants would not have known many things were it not for the wired radio system. In SUNGURLAR the wired radio broadcasts were directed by a committee which was composed of the village council president, the Communist Party secretary, a representative of the collective farm and a number of teachers from the local highschool. Source is of the opinion that the wired radio system is very advantageous. It makes the simple peasant more self-conscious. When people are asked over the radio to pay more attention to the cleanliness of their village or to show greater interest in a local project, then it can be expected that the listener will react to this more promptly than if he were to read about it in a newspaper published in a town many miles away. The wired radio system by giving much local color bolsters the pride of its listeners in their community.

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PART IV.

Since source has not heard of any Regime attacks against Western broadcasts, nor of Western reactions to such attacks, he was unable to answer questions concerning this topic.

PART V.

Source was not afraid of listening to Western broadcasts but it never crossed his mind to spread information thus acquired. Source stated that he always listened to foreign broadcasts together with a number of people. These were usually members of his landlord's family but they took no special precautions when family friends showed up. The only time source and his friends turned off the radio was when some Communist friends came to pay a visit.

The best suited hours for listening are around 1200, 2000 and 2100 hours. Foreign broadcasts are best heard on short wave and source feels that short wave broadcasts cannot be jammed as efficiently as broadcasts on medium and long waves. During the past two years the jamming of foreign broadcasts has been increased and source thinks that not all jamming stations are located in Bulgaria. He claims to have heard that stations from Poland and CSR are so beamed as to jam Western broadcasts to Bulgaria.

Source has never seen leaflets although he was told that during the summer of 1954 foreign airplanes dropped pamphlets over the ELHOVO region. A friend of source's who served as a soldier at the BOYANOVO village, District ELHOVO, told him that they had received orders to collect all the leaflets. It is possible, according to source, that these leaflets were not in the Bulgarian language.

PART VI.

Source listened to almost all Bulgarian-language Western broadcasts. His reasons for listening: to find out the truth about international events and to catch an indication that the Western powers were making preparations to liberate Bulgaria. Source and his landlord's family quite often listened to Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America and found these stations objective and well informed. Musical programs, scientific talks, and other similar programs broadcast over Western stations did not interest source to any great extent because such programs he could get over the Bulgarian State network without jamming and more to his liking.

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Of the Bulgarian-language speakers of Western radio stations source knows the name of MATSANKIEV. He stated that he disliked the latter's intonation and pronunciation and said that he always thought that MATSANKIEV must be a very old man who had difficulties in talking. Source also thinks that some Western broadcasts in the Bulgarian language are too high class for the Bulgarian listeners. A high school student himself, he has had difficulties on some occasions to grasp the full meaning of certain programs. He feels that simpler and more popular language would have to be used to increase the popularity and effectiveness of Western broadcasts to Bulgaria. Source declared that he was too young and too inexperienced to know what results Western stations had with their various listeners. He also gave the same excuse for not being able to make a comparison between two or more foreign stations. In his eyes the most important factor to be borne in mind by Western radio stations is to remain objective. Source is of the opinion that leaflets, although dangerous, would have positive results in Bulgaria but feels that Western broadcasts to his country do not need to be increased because the Bulgarian listeners would not have sufficient time to listen to additional programs.

Never in his life did source write a letter to a foreign radio station.

Source remembers one occasion when a program broadcast by a Western station gave birth to open discussion. Radio Free Europe or the Voice of America, source does not remember correctly which, broadcast in early March 1953 that Marshal Stalin was on the verge of dying. The program stated that it was to be expected that a struggle for power would break out after the death of the dictator. A few days later Stalin's death was announced. In the days immediately following this news, the director of the SUNGURLAR high school addressed students of the two senior classes and, making an open reference to the earlier Western radio program, stated that no struggle for power would break out in the USSR. This is the only instance where source remembered that a Western broadcast was openly mentioned and discussed. According to source, it is very difficult to say which Western station is most popular in Bulgaria. He stated, however, that should Western stations cease their Bulgarian-language broadcasts, then the Bulgarian people would be deprived of their only source of true information. Speaking of leaflets, source declared that he is not in favor of sending balloons bearing leaflets over Bulgaria. In his opinion, everything that has to be said can be broadcast over the radio and leaflets would only bring harm to those who were found to have them in their possession.

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Opinions of Source.PART VII.

"It would be unfair to state that the Communist Regime has done nothing for Bulgaria and its people. The great number of public buildings which were put up by the Communists actually serve the people. The same is true for the new roads, railroads, and uniform prices. I do not want to be misunderstood and quoted as someone praising the Communist Regime, all I want to do is to point out certain services rendered by the present Regime. The main drawbacks of the Communist government are: forcing the farmers to deliver their products at low prices to the State and reselling the same at exorbitant prices to the population, suppressing the freedom of thought and speech and the introduction of terrorist methods."

According to source, the Communist Regime constantly misleads the population by declaring that "we build Socialism by increasing the industrial capacity of the country. This is the only way whereby the standard of living of the country can be raised." What the Communists do not say is that the peasant class, which forms a majority in the country, actually suffers more than ever before. Source said that in his eyes Socialism should not serve one class, i.e. the working class, only.

In naming the three most unpopular Communist personalities in presentday Bulgaria, source did not name the usual trio of CHERVENKOV, YUGOV and Georgi TSANKOV. He picked out Premier CHERVENKOV, Foreign Minister Mincho NEYCHEV, and Defense Minister Colonel-General Petir PANCHEVSKI.

Source stated that he was not well enough versed in international politics to be able to give a full appraisal of Yugoslavia's Marshal TITO. It is his opinion that TITO cannot be trusted because he has proved in the past eight years that he can change sides all too easily. In the days when TITO visited one Soviet satellite after the other, he was always heralded as a great Communist and revolutionary. After Yugoslavia's withdrawal from the Kominform, TITO was branded a traitor and a hireling of Western imperialists. After the first GENEVA Conference the Bulgarian press and radio suddenly had nothing more to say concerning the Yugoslav leader. Source stated that it was obvious that the Bulgarian Government did not know what line to follow in connection with the Yugoslav dictator. TITO's recent rapprochement with Russia's new leaders was welcomed as a triumph of Soviet policy, but many are those in Bulgaria who still do not know on whose side TITO stands. Speaking for himself, source stated that a man who has endorsed Soviet-dictated Communism cannot be trusted at any time in the future even though he may change his political beliefs.

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In source's estimate, roughly 25 per cent of all government employees in Bulgaria are active Communist Party members. Source thinks that attacks directed against Communist individuals by Western radio stations may have good results. He fears, however, that some outstanding Communists expect such attacks and, therefore, are not really affected by them.

Source stated that he never had any political affiliations and that his joining the D.S.N.M. while at high school was obligatory. He said that he is too young to be able to say which former Bulgarian political party's program would be best suited for a liberated Bulgaria. He feels that so many basic changes took place in the country that no pre-1946 program could be effectively applied.

Armed resistance does not exist in Bulgaria and, according to source, cannot be expected. On the other hand, however, he stated that the Communist Regime has shown increased weakness over the past years. Quite a few Communist Party members have resigned without, however, losing their jobs or suffering other damage, and the State machinery is no longer as brutal as a few years ago. The most striking example of this is that the families of escapees are no longer deported. A further example: relatives of escapees were formerly not accepted into collective farms, but since 1954 this ban has been lifted.

Source strongly believes that his homeland will sooner or later be delivered from the Soviet yoke, as also the other captive countries of Europe. He is convinced, however, that liberation can be achieved only by military means which must be directed by the Western powers.

PART VIII.

Concerning German affairs, source's knowledge was limited. He has heard of ADENAUER and believes that the latter is a political strongman. Source believes that Germany should not be reunited because a powerful German nation will again breed military leaders who could cause an armed conflict. Source believes that war will be necessary to destroy the Soviet empire but he wants the Western powers, not Germany, to launch an attack against Russia.

Source refuses to believe Communist propaganda that the United States and its allies are in favor of war. He said that the Korean and Indo-Chinese wars have proved that the Western powers prefer to settle disputes at conference tables rather than shed blood. The Soviets and their allies have often stated that America is preparing to strike at the people's democracies. Source does not believe these assertions and points out that the Americans could have attacked the USSR

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long ago when the Soviets and their allies were not yet as strong as today. On the other hand, source is convinced that sooner or later the Communist bloc will start an offensive war. He bases his assertion on speeches made by Stalin and other leading Russian politicians who often stated that Communism and Capitalism cannot co-exist.

(Source did not believe that the new leaders of Russia had officially reworded this doctrine and have declared that war is not inevitable.)

PART IX.

The only Bulgarian political exile whose existence was known to source was Dr. Georgi DIMITROV. He confessed knowing very little about DIMITROV and that he has no idea about his political affiliation. Source said that he did not know refugees from behind the Iron Curtain were active in helping Western radio stations. His own reasons for escape were to find means of continuing his education in the free world. Source hopes that all exiles would return to their homeland after liberation of their country and work in the reestablishment of order and democracy. He is opposed to the idea of banning certain political figures from returning to their homeland because of political or military crimes committed many years ago. He feels that all errors of the past should be forgiven so that a true unity could be formed which would then erase the harmful effects of Communism.

Source has heard of only one case of redefection. A young peasant from ELHOVO's LALKOVO village had returned to Bulgaria after spending some time in the West. Although this man denounced life outside Bulgaria as very difficult, his words were not taken seriously when it was learned that he brought back with him two suitcases full of clothing.

PART X.

After the defeat of international Communism, source would like to see a truly democratic republican regime established in Bulgaria. It is his opinion that nationalized heavy industry, as set up by the Communists, should be left unchanged. People who had lost factories during the era of Communist nationalization should receive some recompensation but their factories should remain State-owned. Only small enterprises and workshops should be returned to their former owners. Source declared that collectivized land would have to be redistributed and private ownership of land should be reestablished. He does not advocate, however, that great landowners should get all their property back. It would have

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to be established how much each household would need, and land would have to be distributed according to these measures. Any new government would have to give full assurance to the people that the doors to educational institutes would be open to all who qualify. No one should be left without an education out of purely political reasons.

End