

Chapter 4: Investigative Journalism in Bulgaria: A Postponed Renaissance

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Nothing could be more irrational than to give the people power and to withhold from them information without which power is abused A popular government without popular information or means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.

—James Madison

Introduction: Media Ecology

Investigation, whether in journalism, science, or law, seeks to reveal in a systematic way the responsible agent(s) for a current situation. "Western" style journalism is the child of a culture that believes in reason, individual freedom, and therefore responsibility.¹ These cultural presuppositions tend to reject anonymous forces like history, curses, or "god(s)" as the major determiners of current conditions in lieu of self-determination. By contrast, neutrality or balance regarding history and politics is seen by Byzantine standards as either an expression of a bourgeoisie plot to defuse legitimate political criticism (commentary) or as pathetic intellectual/political naivete about the inescapable inertia of uncontrollable forces. It seems that if a people believe and behave in accordance with a faith in the fatalistic influence of the environment (both "internal" and "external" including history, politics, genetics,

religion, etc.) it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy irrespective of the direction of physical causality. So to understand such a situation including its causes, motivations, and essential characteristics, one must attempt to understand the environment as the locals do.²

No Public Debate

Working in a Byzantine environment (which may resemble your local American city hall), presents special problems for the investigative reporter. For instance, on July 26, 1993, the Central Bank in Moscow launched a two week process of replacing old currency with a new bank note. This caused widespread anger and anxiety among the citizens of Russia because for many years they had frugally hoarded rubles which were suddenly, without public debate or prior consent, decreed worthless. The citizens were given two weeks to bring their valueless currency to the banks for exchange.³ They could exchange only about 35 U.S. dollars worth of the old currency. Anything in excess was useless. Consequently, millions frantically tried to spend their old rubles, but shop keepers naturally refused to accept them. The ruble nearly collapsed, threatening to send inflation into orbit.

On Monday morning, July 26, one American network newscast (ABC) explained the currency exchange policy in economic terms as an attempt to control the annual 750 percent inflation rate and to confound counterfeiters. These seemingly noble reasons were given by officials at the Central Bank and simply repeated by the U.S. reporter. On another American network (NBC) that same morning the reason given was political, and I suspect more accurate. The Central Bank of Russia is controlled by the same conservatives who are President Boris Yeltsin's opponents in the Russian Congress. Most

economists seem to agree that banning the pre-1993 ruble will do little more than cause the insecurity and hysteria that it has. No doubt bank officials explained their exchange policy as an attempt to control inflation caused by their nemesis Yeltsin's economic program. Yeltsin's story is quite the opposite, that this move to exchange currency is purely a political attack on his effort to modernize the Russian economy.

The lesson is: to do Western style (as opposed to the indigenous Byzantine style) reporting in Eastern Europe means to do *investigative* reporting because nothing is simply what it seems. One cannot get the story "right" if the political dimension is ignored. In a Byzantine environment ignoring politics is self-imposed ignorance. What I call indigenous "Byzantine reporting" means reporting in the service of some political interest which is often concealed behind layers of double-speak and intricate paradoxes. In the local news reporting of Eastern Europe including Bulgaria, hidden and not so hidden agendas abound and are expressed through *double entendre*, innuendo, implied meanings, and unsubstantiated accusations.

The Threat of Nihilism

During my nine-month Fulbright in Bulgaria (1992-1993), several colleagues confided that nihilism is a real threat to social order. There always have been those who hold the absurd position that there is no truth and that's the truth. The ethical implication of such a nihilistic position is that since there is no truth, there can be no liars, which is convenient for both anarchists and fascists. But what does one do when the truth is much more painful than lies? The euphoria of late 1989 and early 1990 raised expectations impossibly high. As revenge for being rejected, the Communist *nomenklatura* who

had sole managerial control over all the systems of distribution did two things. First, they sold everything that wasn't nailed down, and even some things that were, to foreign buyers. Never mind that the merchandise was supposed to be state property, the hard foreign currency went into personal bank accounts abroad. For instance, the Russian-born former Communist Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Andrei Loukanov, (whose family lives in Vienna) has been charged with millions of U.S. dollars worth of theft. During his time as leader of Bulgaria (1990-1991), Loukanov sold (the contract was signed) what was probably the most valuable and newest skyscraper in Sofia, to Robert Maxwell, the former owner of Maxwell Communications, for a "ridiculously" low price. Fortunately, for Bulgaria, Maxwell's financial difficulties and alleged suicide nixed the deal. When the Union of Democratic Forces (led by Filip Dimitrov) lost power in September, 1992, the Socialist forces managed to get Loukanov released from prison. Loukanov is now a powerful member of Parliament and leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party.

Economic and Political Chaos

Secondly, after stealing what they could, these privileged managers "withdrew from" or simply abandoned the plundered distribution networks, thus plunging the nation into economic and political chaos. Dire shortages resulted as wealthy elite either left the bankrupted country or await (manufacture) an opportunity to regain power under privatization. The dissidents turned political leaders inherited an untenable situation. Therefore, the democrats appeared incompetent while the Communists were exposed as "mafiosi"—partially discredited by investigative reports published in the Union of Democratic Forces newspaper *Demokratiya* and

other outlets. Consequently, a normative vacuum settled like a smog over the country. Some have "gotten religion" (the "cult invasion") while others have actively sought the return of the "strong man" monarchy in the form of exiled Tsar Simeon II, "King of the Bulgarians," who lives in Spain.⁴ Meanwhile, many but certainly not all, older journalists have had something of a crisis of identity. They have attempted to divorce themselves from previous norms of professional conduct. Many of these writers are unemployed while others are exploring styles of reporting that were previously considered taboo, including independent investigation.

Understanding Byzantine Journalism

Investigative journalism is what most people are thinking of when they talk about mass media being the "fourth" (print) and "fifth" (electronic) branches of representative government. As a check on the reliability and validity of public statements issuing from other powerful institutions as well as influencing voters and policy makers, investigative journalism plays a vital role in the two most important forms of public discourse as defined from classical times by Aristotle in *Art of Rhetoric*. They are the "deliberative" and "forensic" modes of communication. Each mode of inquiry assumes a free and fair field for logical disputation about the status of facts and the coherence of reasoning about the facts. This conviction was reiterated by the United States Supreme Court in 1974. "Under the First Amendment there is no such thing as a false idea. However pernicious an opinion may seem, we depend for its correction not on the conscience of judges and juries, but on the competition of other ideas."⁵

Following Plato's initial discussions of public discourse in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* dialogues, Aristotle

delimits three general types of public communication as follows: 1) Deliberative, which deals with messages of political import and policy decisions about the future direction of society; 2) Forensic communication which characterizes legal disputation over past acts; and 3) Epideictic discourse which generally manifests ceremony and entertainment rather than past acts or future policy issues.

The classical paradigm of investigation was exemplified by the Socratic penchant for rigorous, analytical, and *public* questioning towards the truth. Even statistical (probabilistic) methods assume that as claims approach one hundred percent they are "nearer the truth." The Socratic method is essentially dialogical (dialectical) as opposed to monologically dogmatic. One must be prepared to be proven wrong and to learn. The character of the interlocutors is central to the great faith in the marketplace of ideas.

The "Good Man"

Thus all major writers of the classical period from Corax to Quintilian, put forth and stressed a doctrine of the "good (meaning self-effacing and incorruptible) man" as central to investigation and disputation. The "good man" assumed individualism in the form of independence of thought. The quality of moral judgment is the central issue behind "unprotected speech" such as defamation, obscenity, plagiarism, and invasion of privacy. According to these standards, the moral distinction between appropriate and inappropriate communications is rarely made in Bulgaria. In fact the trespassing of these standards is often perceived as really good, meaning tough, investigative reporting because the cause of Byzantine journalism is to win, not to expose a truth.

Aristotle developed the criteria for proof to the level of a science. The "pagan" Socratic attitude, had a synergistic relationship with democratic government. Free speech and democratic governance are not merely coincidental but co-dependent. This classical communication paradigm, which bares little resemblance to the Greek-speaking, Byzantine world that followed, was adopted by the Romans and reached its Latin apex with Cicero.

Free Expression

Free, and therefore *responsible* expression, including broadcasting and vote-casting, presumes disputation about evidence and the quality of argumentation concerning public matters. Free expression is *the* essential characteristic of democratic behavior. They are synonymous. The decline of free expression/democratic behavior in the ancient world is marked by the fall of republican Rome which occurred when Antony ordered the assassinations of Caesar in 44 B.C. and Cicero a year later. Antony initiated a line of dictators and political instability which finally brought the Empire down in 410 B.C. In the post-Ciceronian environment:

Orators ran the risk of crossing the Emperor in every speech they gave; the dynamic issues of the past were, for the most part, absent; the power of the monarchy steadily encroached on the self-governing bodies. The problem of reconciling the organizational requirements of empire and self-government based on free interchange of ideas proved too difficult for Rome. The result was a general loss of those habits of self-government that had been nurtured in the earlier city-states.⁶

The Roman Senate degenerated into an acquiescent body where debates about law and politics became nearly nonexistent. "Secret police infiltrated the general

population, eager to stamp out 'sedition' even in the private sector. Serious deliberative discussion of the sort taught by Isocrates and practiced by Cicero became virtually impossible."⁷

Decline in Serious Discourse

During the First Century A.D. both Seneca and Tacitus observed the decline in serious (nonepideictic) discourse and attributed it to immoral judgement, inadequate education, and the disappearance of democratic government.⁸ But as I have argued, the disappearance of democratic government is the same thing as the disappearance of free political disputation. Obviously, the merits of assassinating Caesar and Cicero and the ascension of Antony to King of the Roman Empire, were never publicly reported and debated before the fact. Government by prior consent presumes free communication. Most scholars agree that the concurrent decline in the quality of education and the imposition of political repression were not isolated occurrences. Even in the governing bodies, rumor replaced reliable information about current events. With the aid of Constantine, the Christian clergy became politically powerful, acting as the divine legitimators of the feudal system. Since Christian truth was not "probabilistic" but infallible, defensible by any means, critical "pagan" reflection about methods of inquiry and the mediation of truth (which are both based on communicative competence) disappeared for nearly 1500 years. The "Dark Ages" or "Second Sophistic" descended upon Europe.

The classical ideal of critical reflection based on broad education, honesty (the "good man doctrine") evidence, and sound reasoning (not faith) was rediscovered in the Arabic versions of Aristotle left behind when the Moors (Arabicized Berbers) were driven back across

the straits of Gibraltar from Spain in a series of defeats culminating with their retreat from Grenada in 1492. This was a catalyst for the already-begun Renaissance (literally meaning "rebirth" of the analytical way of thinking). Meanwhile, the lands east of Vienna had been isolated and repeatedly terrorized by invaders from the steppes of Eurasia.

Profound Obstacles to Modernity

The Mongol Huns swept into the region of Eastern Europe from central Asia, exacting tribute from Rome during the last third of the fourth century and remained until the death of Attila in 453 A.D.⁹ Again in 681, the tribes of Slavic peoples who had settled in what is today Bulgaria were set upon and conquered by another nomadic people from central Asia (a "Turkic people") the Bulgars, who formed the First Bulgarian Kingdom.¹⁰ Although they were the aggressors, the Bulgars, from whom the word "Bulgarian" comes, made up only ten percent of the population of Bulgaria. Later they were absorbed by the majority Slavs. In 1014 the Byzantine emperor Basil II defeated the Bulgarian army. Basil II was also known as "Bulgaroktonus" ("Bulgar Slayer") for blinding 14,000 Bulgarians after their defeat. Later during the Thirteenth Century, Caucasoid Volga Bulgars mingled with Finns, producing the Tatars (sometimes corrupted to "Tartar") whose name in Greek means "hell," belying the "mongol" ruthlessness that continued to characterize life and war in this part of the world.¹¹ Once more, in the Thirteenth Century yet another horde of Mongols suddenly appeared laying waste to the "civilized" world under the leadership of Genghis Khan. Even Latin Christianity turned against Greek Christianity when Constantinople was sacked in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. In 1393, the Islamic

Ottoman Turks seized the royal Bulgarian capital, Turnovo. This was the onset of five centuries of subjugation for the Bulgarians. It was not until 1493, one year after the Moors had left Spain, that Constantinople fell to the Muslim Ottoman forces. The Eastern Roman Empire, which had never been democratic, continually suffered the same sorts of unrest as Rome after it had abandoned democratic ways.¹²

Constantine's dream of transforming Byzantium into a second Rome had been realized but not the way he had imagined. Anarchy, rebellions and plague ruled the capital just as in Rome. Between 602 and 1374, four emperors were beheaded, four poisoned, eight blinded, three emperors stabbed to death, one was quartered, one mutilated, one beaten to death in his bath and one emperor was strangled. The church was also suffering from altercations.¹³

Isolated From the Rebirth

The Ottoman armies advanced as far west as Vienna, laying siege to the city in 1529, and again in 1683. Their presence effectively terminated overland trade with the Far East, thus motivating Western powers to sponsor expeditions like Columbus' to find sea routes. While Western Europe circumnavigated the Ottoman Empire, Eastern Europe was effectively isolated from the rebirth that flourished in the cultural centers of Mainz, Prague, Rotterdam, Florence, Pisa, Venice, Paris, Oxford, Rome, and elsewhere west of a line from Prague through Budapest to Vienna.

There are those who argue that the most fundamental differences observed today between Eastern and Western Europe are traceable to the "great schism" that divided the Greek (language) Orthodox church from the Latin (language) Roman church culminating in 1054

when Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius excommunicated each other (the "mutual anathemas").¹⁴ However, this is not an adequate explanation for the failure of the Renaissance attitude to spread eastward. The rise of the neo-Aristotelian investigative attitude challenged the Church of Rome itself, as well as all other claims based on blind faith. The separation of Eastern from Western Europe is in large measure a demarcation consisting of the geopolitical and cultural boundary that marks the eastward dissemination of the rebirth of classical demands for publicly tested evidence and logical argumentation.

Hallmarks of an Open Society

To be sure, the Ottoman Empire had a complex culture represented by great building projects like those conceived by the master architect Atik Sinan. But scientific inquiry for example, which presumes that a veritable "nobody" patent clerk (Einstein) could challenge such an exalted thinker as Newton on the merit of ideas alone, was wholly alien. These behaviors are the hallmarks of an open society. In the East, power and allegiance remained solely a matter of pedigree and conquest, not informed reason. Generally lacking commitment to these ideas, the world that counted Byzantium (later called Constantinople and Istanbul) as its center was fundamentally different because the military might of the Ottoman Empire constituted a powerful barrier not only to Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy but *more importantly* to the critical attitude that is openly suspicious of unsubstantiated claims.

It is important to remind our Western readers that the ascendance of the Libertarian theory of communication was neither simple nor quick in the West and has been continually threatened by various irrationalisms

like the romantic movement which, not surprisingly, originated in the East.¹⁵ As Wilbur Schramm points out, the libertarian Enlightenment philosophy was "fore-shadowed in the Sixteenth Century, envisioned in the Seventeenth, fought for in the Eighteenth, and finally brought into widespread use [in the West] in the Nineteenth."¹⁶

Essential Definitions

In order to understand the status of investigative journalism in Bulgaria today it is essential to appreciate what I call the "Byzantine mentality." The meaning of this phrase encompasses the semantic fields expressed by "oriental mentality" and "Balkanization." It is important to understand that these phrases are neither racial nor geographical designations but rather cultural descriptions. I agree with Jean Gebser that these attitudes exist among all people everywhere, but to differing degrees, which is why cultures are discernible. Western cultural formations such as journalism, Marx's systematics, and industrialization have been adapted by the Byzantine mentality in its own unique (highly centralized and hierarchical) style. Adaptation is an important concept because it indicates; 1) that the socio-cultural phenomenon at issue is not an indigenous product and, 2) that what is newly integrated is fundamentally changed to fit the foreign circumstance. For instance, Soviet Communism can be clearly distinguished from the Chinese or French varieties. For the same reason, one can expect the form of capitalism that may emerge in Eastern Europe to be as different from either the American or Japanese styles as they are from each other.

The historical/cultural foundation of the Balkans including Bulgaria has resulted in an attitude best understood by contrasting it with the Socratic mentality

from which originates the kind of perspective Western investigators presume. It is not uncommon for (eastern and western) scholars to refer to culture east of Budapest as "oriental."¹⁷ For instance, Russian scholars, in way of explanation for recent and current "deficiencies," have blamed the conquest of Moscow by Genghis Khan's Golden Horde for isolating that capital from the cultural influences of the Renaissance. Likewise, intellectuals throughout the Balkans consistently blame the current state of cultural and economic affairs on isolation from Western Europe, imposed by five hundred years under the "Turkish yoke." They often equate "oriental" with "not normal," where "normal" means to be rational. These historical factors are not mere excuses. They are facts to them and perhaps even justifications for subsequent tyranny.

Individualistic Cultures

However, the phrase "oriental mentality," merely begs the question. There are two closely related continua of cultural variability that can help articulate what "oriental" means. They are spectra of individualism-collectivism, and low-to high-context communication patterns.¹⁸ Different cultures exhibit either individualistic or collectivistic tendencies along a continuum from one extreme to the other.¹⁹ In cultures that tend to be more individualistic than collectivistic, such as the United States and Western Europe, the desires of the individual are apt to take precedence over those of the group. In such a culture, "self-realization" is considered one of the most important goals to which a person can devote his or her life.²⁰ Edward T. Hall, demonstrates that individualistic cultures tend to use "low-context" communication patterns. Low-context communication is characterized by very explicit, (meaning frank, candid, blunt,

forthright, verbose, or "clear") messages whereby a person "says what they mean."²¹ While low-context communicators judge explicit messages to be articulate and honest, high-context communicators often judge such messages (and messengers) to be rude and audacious. In low-context communiques less is implied than in high-context communiques which rely more on assumed understandings. Low-context messages presume little information from the context so that most of the information is contained in the communique itself.

Collectivistic Cultures

By contrast, the prevalence of collectivistic attitudes, which predominate in Eastern Europe, ascribes a secondary value to uniqueness. "Group activities are dominant, responsibility is shared and accountability is collective."²² Harmony and cooperation are valued over individual initiative and responsibility. According to Hofstede and Bond, people in collectivistic cultures have a "we" identity which is more important than an "I" identity.²³ In such cultures, "people belong to in-groups or collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty."²⁴ According to Triandis, group membership for persons with an individualistic attitude have very specific spheres of influence, while group membership in a collectivistic culture affects all aspects of a person's life.²⁵ In collectivistic cultures the social norms of the in-group are more important than the pleasure or satisfaction of the individual. Cooperation and group beliefs are stressed over the pursuit of individual achievement and convictions. For example, Japanese individuals are sometimes misunderstood as having no personal convictions (principles or values) simply because they are not emphasized as much as the principles of the group with which

they identify. As a predominantly collectivistic culture (although as they "Westernize"/"modernize" generational conflict is increasing along with individualism) Japanese communication is more ritualistic and less unpredictable ("open") than individualistic cultures.

Communication Patterns

According to Hall, collectivistic cultures tend to exhibit high-context communication patterns.²⁶ High-context messages are ones in which, "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message."²⁷ For instance, journalism in Bulgaria, especially since it has been less influenced by Western models than some other high-context cultures like Japan or Taiwan, presumes a great deal of historical, ethnic, religious, and political tradition that makes their writing seem cryptic, almost personal to a "Westerner." What I would label editorializing they think is sound investigative reporting. Information that is assumed and which Bulgarians take to be very important to the understanding of a reported event is often not included in the report, or is tangentially included as the name of an ancient battle, treaty, personality, etc. Such writing lends itself to political commentary which Bulgarian journalists accept as appropriate because, as many of them told me, all the world is thoroughly political, including journalism.

There are code words and phrases that push "emotional buttons" in news consumers. Some examples are: "Macedonia," the "regeneration process" and "exodus" (both official euphemisms for the forced name-change campaign and mass expulsion of Bulgarian Turks in the 1980's), "Markov" (the name of the dissident killed in London in the infamous umbrella murder case), "blue,"

"red," etc. Of course, buzzwords are used in all reporting to imply vast amounts of information efficiently like "...gate," "liberal," "conservative," and "progressive." Buzzwords and phrases are incessantly exploited in Bulgaria in order to emotionally manipulate the news consumer who is expected to understand the implicit, often multifaceted message. Such buzzwords have ritualistic status so that to use them saves a great deal of time and effort. The difference between high-context and low-context reporting is in the frequency of buzzwords used and the presumed ability of and expectation that the audience will "read between the lines."

The quality of news writing/commentary in Bulgaria is judged on how much can be implied. The more the better. This is a direct result of the Byzantine mentality which has several connotations including to be needlessly complex, and to be highly politicized. To do reporting in Bulgaria is to do investigative and usually political reporting. Byzantine journalism tends to be intricate, enigmatic, recondite, and very often paradoxical. Furthermore, blatant lies and fabrications often pass as front page news. Bulgarian intellectuals, including journalists, seem to take pride in the process of complication rather than simplification, which in the West is judged "elegant" or "parsimonious" writing.

Rumor Elevated to Truth

While the West is more results-oriented, Bulgarians are more process-oriented. Hence, really good news writing, by these standards is very lengthy and cryptic. For the informed consumer it may in fact tell a much broader story, implying many more interrelationships than so called "straight" reporting does. As one colleague of mine told me "Everyone knows exactly what you mean." Unfortunately, much innuendo and

implication remains unsubstantiated. It may be good for getting across subtle opinion, but it does not help clarify the facts of the matter. The neo-Aristotelian sense of analysis which presumes classical standards of evidence and logical consistency, are rather foreign. Very often, rumor and opinion are elevated to truth as status is conferred upon them by the process of being mass mediated.

Byzantine Power Relationships

After reviewing several cross-cultural studies about power relationships, Hofstede concluded that cultures can also be compared along a continuum of high to low "power distance."²⁸ Power distance is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally."²⁹ This cultural distinction involves differing attitudes about power. In collectivistic cultures overt hierarchy as a structural aspect of the collective is strongly evident. High power distance tends to correlate with high-context communication patterns and collectivistic social organization. Individuals from high power distance cultures are more accepting of power inequality than those from low power distance cultures. In high power distance cultures coercive power is stressed while by contrast, low power distance cultures exhibit a conviction that power should be used only when it is persuasive, not coercive. Persuasion involves rational dialogue, and demonstrable expertise — reasons. Powerful persons in high power distance cultures value obedience, conformity, and display authoritarian attitudes more than powerful persons in low power distance cultures.

For instance, all the talk of proletarian equality and "peasant leaders" aside, rich and powerful Bulgarians

are very ostentatious about their station. There is no mistake about who has power and that they are very willing to wield it to protect themselves from even the most inadvertent threat to their personal privilege (ala pre-, post-, and Communist purges).

Given the cultural proclivity in Bulgaria for high power distance, it is no surprise that to be a "boss" in a media operation today denotes the same sort of fear, respect, and aloofness that a party secretary enjoyed before.³⁰ One of the great paradoxes of this part of the world is that the idea of communism was adapted in such a way that to be invited to be a member of the Communist Party was a *privilege* that led to more privileges. Such an incongruity makes perfect sense if one understands the Byzantine mentality. But even in such an "oriental" world, public opinion cannot be totally disregarded. As Thomas Jefferson understood, the ultimate basis of any government is "the opinion of the people."³¹ A common lament in Bulgaria today is that they deserve the government they have. It is Henry David Thoreau who noted that, "even the Bedouins in the desert find it impossible to resist public opinion."³² Hence, in Bulgaria (including the Communist days) a system of bribery worked well to command allegiance.

Resisting Change

When a small unaccountable elite controls exchange of virtually all resources including travel, employment, education, housing, freedom of expression, cultural development, et cetera, then loyalty and therefore support for such a system of inequality can be generated by giving only small favors (benefits). Like feudal pre-Communist Bulgaria, Communist Bulgaria was controlled by conservatives who did everything possible to resist change because change is hard to predict

and control (including Gorbachev's initiatives of *glasnost* and *peristroyka*).³³ Hence, social conservatism works in a spiral fashion so that the control of change leads to more control. Uncertainty leads to anxiety and uncertainty about their power base and privilege was clearly what the East European "mandarins" wanted to avoid even when it meant cultivating vast networks of informants, exercising a covert internal police force, and unleashing armored divisions for "pacification."³⁴ For instance, traditional forms and subjects of artistic expression were promoted according to this ideological catechism while innovation was either strongly discouraged or thoroughly controlled.³⁵

Altered Lyrics

Even the traditional folk music was manipulated. Lyrics that alluded to or made "sensitive topics" their central themes such as God, religion, or Turkish oppression, were altered. Artists who resisted were neither recorded nor granted access to the mass media. Instead, countless new songs about the glorious achievements of the proletariat and the Communist Party (like the construction of the shoddy and dangerous Chernobyl style Kozlodou nuclear plant) were commissioned, recorded and given wide exposure on the two major state run monopoly radio services, Christo Botev and Radio Horizon. I was told that when people, especially older ones, wrote in to complain about the altered lyrics they were ignored.³⁶

Likewise, certain "artists," such as a prominent pianist, the wife of a general, were endlessly promoted regardless of their talent, or lack thereof.³⁷ Poetry that flattered the Central Committee and Todor Zhivkov was commissioned, widely disseminated, and celebrated (even performed in sessions of the Party Congress)

along with the authors who often became close acquaintances with Party leaders. Every text book had to have an introduction acknowledging the ideas of Todor Zhivkov and the most recent "progressive" ideas of the Communist Congress. Mikail Minkov, a former head of Bulgarian State Radio and the current chairman of the Radio and Television Department at Sofia University, told me that once he wrote a textbook that was recalled from the printers because a new Party Congress had been held after he submitted the manuscript for production. He was compelled to rewrite the introduction acknowledging the "inspirational guidance" of the most recent Party Congress.³⁸

Information Control

One of the most successful tactics for resisting change (maintaining control) that was exploited by the former Soviet system including Bulgaria, was the implementation of nation-wide systems of public lectures. Information control was structured into a three-tiered system with multiple channels of feedback (surveillance) that were used to gather information for the perpetuation of the closed social structure. The overarching priority of the system was to maintain itself within preordained and restrictive parameters. The three part structure of totalitarian supervision consisted of the Central Communist Party apparatus where central planning occurred, the organization of public lectures, and the mass media. Each interacted with the others to control political attitudes.³⁹ It was a perfect example of Shannon and Weaver's conception of "communication" (which I prefer to call self-monitoring) demonstrating the basic fascistic result of a closed system "communicating" with itself.⁴⁰ Concretely this amounted to a status quo constantly monitoring its own

system and internal environment. In the interest of self-preservation, the system intercepted all genuine information ("contamination") originating from outside.

Respondent information was generated via feedback mechanisms that were created and encouraged by the central plan. Feedback, like audience letters to broadcast facilities and audience reactions to lecture topics initiated from the Central Committee, was useful to those interested in conserving and preserving the social structure in three ways. Such information gave the illusion of democratic audience participation, it also acted as an inoculation against dissenting views which were sometimes introduced from internal dissent and from outside the information system (like BBC and VOA), and it was used to formulate the national mass media agenda.

Reinforcing the Agenda

The public lecture component of the information system was organized by the National Council for Public Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge. Lectures were also broadcast regularly on the radio program *Znanie*, but the publicly attended live lectures facilitated better feedback, allowing the Central Committee to test the reactions of the public and measure their opinions. For instance, in Bulgaria in 1987, approximately 263,000 lectures were delivered by 37,556 academics and low-to medium-level party officials.⁴¹ Lectures were used to help formulate and reinforce the agenda for the mass media. They were staged in factories, schools, theaters, cinema houses, and other public places. They served to inform, educate, and justify conditions. But other functions of the lectures were perhaps more important to the maintenance of the status quo. For instance, these lectures generated feed-

back that was monitored by surveyors from the Sociological Information Center at the Central Committee, secret police in the audience, and the lecturers themselves who wrote reports about who reacted and what was said during the question-and-answer periods. This information was then used to help formulate "appropriate" mass-mediated versions of issues that seemed most portentous. In this way public opinion was supervised so that desired opinion could be promoted and undesirable attitudes and opinions contradicted, discredited, and eliminated.

Also, invitations to special political lectures as either speaker or audience member was perceived as a coveted privilege of party membership. The creation of opinion leaders through such a system of exclusive invitation assured that their attitudes and opinions would reinforce those of the Central Committee. It also enhanced the high power distance of these opinion leaders who could brag (to their less well positioned acquaintances) about being invited to a meeting where a V.I.P. personally lectured. Having privileged access to "the inside truth" gave party members automatic credibility as opinion leaders, a status most appreciated (relished is more appropriate) in this cultural context. Likewise, lecturers such as academics, military elite, factory managers, and other party officials were unlikely to challenge the hand that stroked them.

Managed Deprivation

The former Communist and feudal (Byzantine) systems, like all high distance power structures, were not held together by sheer terror. The force of small privileges, both material and status bribes, in a world of managed deprivation is enormous. Agitation and cooptation are demonstrably more effective at main-

taining a closed system than coercion alone. Pavlov's reflexology lessons about rewards, no matter how meager they may seem to an outsider, proved in this context to be extremely effective. What this amounted to was the creation of a nomenklatura as a sort of mandarin caste.

Silencing Inappropriate Interpretations

Of course if bribery did not work to coopt or diffuse a threat to powerful persons, as in the case of the Bulgarian national hero Alexandre Levski, and other stubborn dissidents (of Communist and non-Communist Bulgaria), more persuasive means to silence "inappropriate interpretations" were imminent. In journalism this reality led to widespread "self-censorship" which continues. Alienated intellectuals including journalists often refer to themselves as "internal exiles." It remains treacherous territory for investigative journalists. The essential qualities of high power distance, collectivism, and high-context communication patterns that characterize the Byzantine mentality pervade all aspects of life in Bulgaria. Because they partially constitute what it is to be Bulgarian, they predated communism, indeed set the parameters for its adaptation, and have endured its demise.

However, despite the dangers and cultural predilections, there is some courageous investigative journalism being attempted. One of the best is Maria Mihmeva who even traveled to Vienna for the television show *Conflict* in an effort to trace the laundering of vast amounts of stolen Bulgarian state funds. Her reports did not go unnoticed. In November, 1992, she began writing newspaper accounts of threats against her life. *Conflict* has also aired some very powerful and revealing interviews with past political prisoners that had

been detained in the estimated thirty-five *gulags* that used to exist around the Bulgarian countryside.

As an aside, these prisons manifested a powerful form of political communication in their own right for their "mere" presence was an effective deterrent to potential dissent. Some of the camps were quite visible, and many Bulgarians told me that as children they remember seeing prison laborers working in the fenced-in detention areas as they rode by in buses or cars. All those I asked about the prisons told me that their parents would not answer their innocent (child's) questions about the places and people in them. However, the fear that their parents expressed by their reluctance to talk about the prisons and by their nonverbal anxiety was taken on by the children as part of their indoctrination/socialization.⁴² Some of their earliest memories were about their parents' strict demands that they never speak to anyone about such places.

Courageous Investigative Journalism

Another important Bulgarian investigative journalist is Tzvetana Paskaleva. After studying documentary film and TV directing in Moscow, she was the only journalist to penetrate Southern Osetia and cover that hot spot of ethnic "cleansing." She produced several documentaries and news reports which exposed the true extent of the war in Nagorno Karabakh which the former Soviet mass media had attempted to trivialize as a "voluntary" deportation of Armenians and/or "sporadic ethnic clashes." Her documentaries include: "Southern Osetia—The Pain of Two Peoples," (1990); "The Summit of Hope" (1991); "Is There a Tomorrow for Karabakh" (1991); and "My Dear, Living and Dead" (1992). As a consequence of her investigations and documentation of the war in Nagorno Karabakh she has

won several international awards and was sentenced to death by the Azers. Though wounded she managed to escape.

Balkanmedia Association

Another very important yet uniquely Balkan attempt at investigative journalism is the irregularly published magazine *Balkan Media*. On December 28, 1990, a group of intellectuals and media professionals from all the Balkan nations gathered in Sofia to establish the Balkanmedia Association. The purpose of the association was to facilitate the free exchange of information and ideas about the Balkans to "insiders" and "outsiders," and to form a cooperative and supportive network of Balkan journalists and media professionals. Media representatives from Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Romania, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia attended. Initially, the Association organized seminars, research, and international meetings about media problems as they developed. Soon it became clear that the Association needed its own organ. On the holiday that commemorates the Cyrillic alphabet, May 24, 1991, the General Assembly of the Association announced the creation of *Balkan Media* magazine. The English language magazine, headquartered, edited, and printed in Sofia has developed a strong reporting infrastructure throughout the Balkans including, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia. This magazine is one of the few outlets for stories of the metamorphosis and sometimes repression of investigative journalism in this part of the world. For instance they have covered the deaths of ten journalists during 1992 alone in Turkey, the story of censorship of "grotesque dimensions" in Serbia and Croatia, and the attempt of ruling political powers in Romania and Bulgaria to re-establish dictatorial control over television journalism.

Ex-Communists Attack Magazine

Because they presume pluralism and democracy as essential to journalism, this magazine (like everything in the former Soviet camp) has been attacked for being politically biased by "ex"-Communist "Socialist" conservatives. *Balkan Media* is now in its third year but because it has always had financial difficulties, due to the fact that it has remained independent of all political, national, and private foundational monies, it has not been able to maintain a consistent and predictable publication schedule. Nevertheless, it is one of the best sources of investigative journalism in the Balkans, covering many subjects, including journalism itself, which is very much worthy of media attention.⁴³

Having noted its great value, even this breath of fresh air is unmistakably Byzantine. For instance, the first issue, which contained fascinating reports about film, radio, the arts, television, and journalism throughout the Balkans, also included an article by Keiko Sei, (a researcher in "European techno-culture," "theoretician and critic") from Tokyo/Prague that seriously proclaimed Bulgaria to be "the country of the 21st century since it is the country of E.S.P. . . . It has been a known fact among specialists that Bulgaria is one of the world's most powerful E.S.P. centers."⁴⁴ The reader is told that because of its international advantage in "extra sense," Bulgarian arts and sciences (especially computer development) will lead the world in the next century. Other articles that have appeared in its regular section "Phenomena of Human Communication" have continued reporting on extrasensory and telepathic communication including "Those Who Can Read the Future," by Vasile Andru (Spring 1992:49-51), and "Astral Painting—a Phenomenon," by Ema Ioncheva (who "interviewed

herself" for this article) (4, 1992: 34,35). Belief in supernatural influences completely saturates the Byzantine world including journalism. It is an easy sell and a common topic of investigative journalism. Many intellectuals including journalists openly profess belief in such supernatural powers.

As the new form of investigative journalism continues to be integrated into Bulgarian society (by its own criteria), journalists are finding themselves less privileged and more persecuted. In December, 1992, the Union of Bulgarian Journalists published a list of over seventy journalists who had been threatened and harassed by "forces" in the Bulgarian political environment during that year. As a response, the first television awards program ever organized and telecast was held on March 1, 1993. This program focused mostly on the efforts of television journalists and shows that practice political satire such as "Ku Ku." It was a public show of solidarity and defiance in the face of oppressive forces that continued to struggle to control the national television system specifically and the national agenda generally.⁴⁵

Given the uneven advance into a belated neo-Aristotelian Renaissance, investigation including journalism is still very much in transition. For instance, one of the most popular investigative reporters in Bulgaria, Ivan Garelkova, who hosts the most popular television news program *Panorama*, is widely believed to be an "ex"-agent of the Bulgarian secret police. Nothing is what it seems.

Belated Renaissance: Beginning Again

In large measure, this "oriental" mentality persists in Bulgaria but the flood of Western influence is evident. Obviously to change fundamental attitudes is a formidable challenge. One obvious effect of the introduction of "the West" was the mass exodus/emigration of over

half-a-million (in a country of a about eight-and-a-half million) persons as soon as the door opened.⁴⁶ According to 1992 National Census figures, "Experts believe that the drop in population is almost entirely due to emigration since 1986 [which included some of the forcibly expelled Bulgarians of Turkish descent]."⁴⁷ This amounted to a greater percentage loss of population than occurred in any of Bulgaria's previous military disasters.⁴⁸ Thus far however, the system has been open only a short time and those of privilege are not so motivated to leave. Outside of Bulgaria they would have to rely on something other than connections, which is why most who have left are those who may not have powerful political contacts but who possess marketable skills. Bulgaria is facing a brain-drain problem which is affecting journalism.

Deprofessionalization of Journalism

Media owners and managers such as editors of the new private media supervise their reporters like children because increasingly they only hire very young persons aspiring to be "stars." Such employees are quick to be arrogant with their "peers" and to adulate their superiors. The people who control the "red capital" (most of which was embezzled from the former "Communist" system) and that are funding nearly all of the larger media operations are keen to control the messages they propagate. Hence they are promoting "deprofessionalization" of journalism.⁴⁹ Since the previous type of professionalism has been totally discredited, the normative vacuum lends itself to manipulation by the current owners and executive editors of the new private media. New private media owners are encouraging deprofessionalization by refusing to hire more experienced journalists, under the pretense that they are

tainted by their complicity within the old Communist system. In actuality, many older journalists have demonstrated their willingness and ability to promote independence of thought. Many on the front line of democratic reform in the early 1990's were "established" mature journalists who recognized the need for radical society-wide change. Despite, or perhaps because of this proclivity to be independent minded displayed by seasoned journalists, media managers are actively seeking out inexperienced young people, under the correlative pretense that the young are untainted by old sins. The greater likelihood however seems to be that the former Communist elite turned capitalist elite want a malleable work force (like they had before) that can be easily manipulated by the promise of a first "real," and glamorous job. Many newspapers are used to launder red money that has been kept abroad in mostly Viennese banks. Given the very limited advertising base, the high inflation on news print, and the need to keep unit prices very low, many newspapers have failed. The ones that have not are operating at huge losses. Why? How?

Propaganda Vehicles

The most widely circulated newspapers are used primarily as propaganda vehicles in the old practice of agitation and disinformation. The money comes from the deep pockets of political parties, trade unions, and foreign governments. In this media environment, nearly no authentic investigative journalism is happening. Young apprentice journalists, many of whom are being hired while still freshman and sophomore college students (including many of my journalism students at Sofia University), are very much more naive about the political realities of journalism in Bulgaria than are the more experienced but mostly unemployed journalists.⁵⁰

Pressure to Close the Journalism Program

When I asked Todor Petev, the Dean of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University, if it is accurate to say that Bulgaria is a nation increasingly reading the words of children, he grimly agreed and complained that so many students are now working that they do not attend classes as regularly as before. He also complained that even though the university is moving quickly to "decommunize" the faculty and rehabilitate the journalism curriculum (for instance one of the classes I taught had only two semesters earlier still been titled "Marxist Leninist Media Theory") the fundamental professional socialization of these aspiring journalists was taking place on-the-job rather than in the classroom. Indeed, the journalism program was under severe pressure from forces outside of the university (mostly from Socialists in the Parliament) to be closed all together. The rationale for closing the department and firing all the faculty was ostensibly because journalism had been one of the cradles of evil Communist propagandists. This was a weak argument, however, in part because it was coming from so called "ex-Communist" politicians and media moguls and also because the journalism department was leading the university in radicalizing its curriculum.

In organized activities involving high power distance, close supervision, fear of conflict with authority figures, and lack of trust among coworkers is marked. Summarizing Hofstede's findings:

... members of low power distance cultures see respect for the individual and equality as antecedents to freedom, while members of high power distance cultures view tact, servitude, and money as antecedents to freedom. Antecedents to wealth

in low power distance cultures include happiness, knowledge, and love. Inheritance, ancestral property, stinginess, deceit, and theft, in contrast, are viewed as antecedents to wealth in high power distance cultures.⁵¹

This describes the general attitude and the working relationship between superordinates and subordinates in Bulgaria generally including the mass media.

Facts and Justifications

To be "Byzantine" is in part to say one thing but think another. Another very important aspect is the pervasive influence of "immanent history."⁵² The living presence of history manifests itself as a sense that with one's birth one joins a conversation, albeit argument, that has been raging for centuries. It also implies a form of predeterminism. According to this interpretation "Balkanization," is a consequence of this mentality. In an article published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (24 August, 1992) the philosopher-turned-President of Bulgaria, Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev, defined Balkanization as:

1. Instability, uncontrollability of conflicts, pregnancy with violence;
2. A present heavily encumbered with the past;
3. Impossibility of a durable and civilized settlement.⁵³

Thus, "Balkanization" is the predominant result of the Byzantine way of redressing perceived injustice. A common medium/method (really two faces of the same epistemic process) to use in the fight for justice is standard news reporting. According to widespread belief, the essence of the "problem of the Balkans" is a perennial conflict between two basic forces. Balkanization is the result of a clash between the geopolitical interests of

"great Western powers" and the "small peoples' desperate attempt to become architects of their own history . . . national self-determination."⁵⁴ However, as has been demonstrated, great Eastern powers have had their influence, too, and the Byzantine mentality predates the existence of the "great Western powers" by centuries. In the Balkans only select histories constitute destiny. Consequently, to say or write anything in the Byzantine context is to be always already ethnically and politically oriented and to seek outside causes for internal failings. Not only is this why Eastern Europe has been a receptive and fertile ground for the Marxian teleology of historical materialism that progresses with "iron necessity," but any pretense to doing objective journalism, meaning an attempt to bracket history, value judgements, and political commentary, seems at least naive if not absurd by Byzantine standards.

Blind Allegiance

For instance, the ethnic cleansing occurring in the neighboring ex-Yugoslavia is often explained as being a form of historical determinism issuing from blind allegiance to some real or fantasized "tradition." "Traditional identities," "traditional enemies," and other such phrases betray a genre of justification that operates without rigorous reflection.

While teaching at Sofia University I gave a series of lectures to fifth-year journalism students, nearly all of whom were already working full-time, some in very high-profile positions. I also spoke to a group from the Union of Bulgarian journalists who found the following very interesting. In an attempt to give practical suggestions I included part of the following scenario for a hypothetical news conference. Although the content of the hypothesis was all too near to reality, the logical

form of inquiry was meant as a guide to all kinds of investigative questioning. The point was to illustrate the important difference between a fact and a justification.

First, when a correspondent covers a process like a war, or some other major conflict, he or she often finds him/herself in a press conference or interview situation confronting an "authority" figure. A typical question is, "Why are you bombing such and such city?" or "Why are you besieging or blockading such and such city or country (group)?" Often the answer involves an explanation about ethnic differences, ancient territorial rights, conflict over borders, etc. I suggest that the follow-up question should be something like, "What does 'ancient' ethnic or religious difference have to do with blockading a population today?" This follow-up will usually prod the authority figure into answering, perhaps with some emotion, with a reiteration of what was just said to which the journalist should continue, "So, are you saying that ethnic differences *justify* the attack on such and such civilian population?"

Distinguishing Facts From Justifications

The point of this question is to not allow the interviewee to confuse the issue with an array of historical or religious or economic (etc.) facts or falsehoods, as the case may be, but rather to establish whether or not such facts constitute *justifications* for war. The journalist must distinguish the important difference between a fact and a justification. The point of the story, the real question is "Why are you bombing or starving so and so into oblivion?" The journalist must ask point-blank, "Do you believe, or are you saying, that the facts you have relayed to me constitute justification for your actions?" This, after all is the point of talking to the

authority in the first place. Historical facts such as those about ethnic traditions can be gleaned from many sources such as books and history professors. But what the journalist needs to establish with the person who makes decisions is what his or her justifications are.

The point of this line of questioning is to not allow the authority to avoid his/her responsibility. For example, if s/he answers, "So and so have attempted to establish an autonomous state and change the legal system," this may all be very true (and you may well already know this), but this does not answer the question clearly, "Why have you attacked so and so?" The journalist must pursue the point by asking the vital question, "So is it true that, in *your judgement* (since the leader has the power to command troops), the attempt to achieve autonomy by these people justifies and legitimizes deadly use of force to stop them?" Such a line of questioning may help to do at least two things.

Holding the Authority Accountable

First, it clarifies the very important difference between a fact and a justification. Second, it holds the authority accountable by making it clear to the audience that this is the *leader's judgement*.

The second issue in turn does two things for the audience. First it short circuits any attempt by the leadership to duck its responsibility by appealing to determinism. The leadership exercises free choice in its judgement about the facts and this responsibility must not be lost sight of. And second, when it is made clear to the audience that this justification is in fact a matter of judgement and not simple determinism, then the audience members are in a position to assess the quality of the leader's judgement. This last point has the effect of enfranchising the audience into the debate, in fact by

making it debatable and not a predetermined (blind) course of action. This is vital to a democracy. The electorate must always be included in the process of judgment and not simply informed about "the facts" as though it is beyond question as to what "the facts" *mean*.

Assessing the Quality of Reasoning

Now, if the authority answers, "Yes, the facts justify the use of deadly force," then the journalist must continue by asking, "In what way do the facts justify military action?" This helps to elucidate the line of reasoning exercised by the leadership. This also helps the audience make an assessment about the quality of this reasoning. It can help focus the issue so that it is not lost in a blizzard of confounding and possibly irrelevant facts. In the case of such a serious decision as initiating the deadly use of force, the audience (who may kill and die) have every right to expect the leadership to clearly state what exactly is the *relevancy* of these facts to military action. If the connection between the facts and military action is cogent (relevant) then the leadership should be able to clearly articulate this connection (relevancy). Simply put in more general terms, if someone wants to be a leader, then they have certain responsibilities and it is the duty of a free press to not lose sight of this or to allow an appeal to determinism in order to avoid (stop) dialogue and debate. Rarely does a state leader "have no choice."

Such questioning must be pursued as vigorously and as soon as possible, for once lives are lost then emotion overwhelms reason. Once people begin to kill each other on a massive scale then a spiral of emotion (vengeance and revenge) makes reasoned dialogue nearly impossible. It also can create an environment of hate and suspicion that can last for generations. This is

the creation of *traditional* enemies—determinism. Once this state of affairs is reached the press *and its audience* (which it *creates* with its messages), no longer play a responsible role in the drama. They are disenfranchised from the process of decision making. When a state is in the grip of war, a critical press, except in only the most democratic nations where enfranchisement is very strong (and I am thinking here of the United States' Viet Nam experience and the British Falklands war), is not well received. Under such conditions critical communication becomes very difficult, and the messenger (the press) may be seen as a traitor. The conservative charge in the United States that "the press lost the Viet Nam war" is a classic case in point.

Summary

To understand anything well, including investigative journalism in Bulgaria, it is essential to be informed about what has been called the "Byzantine mentality" which incorporates the "oriental attitude." It is important to note that this is not a racial, but cultural distinction. There are those who are Byzantine in their attitude in the United States just as there are in the Balkans. The difference is one of breadth and depth. What is "normal" in Bulgaria is different from "normal" in more "perspectival" media environments, as so defined by Jean Gebser. Bulgaria is in the midst of a transformation in world-view. This transformation or metamorphosis is affecting all civilizational expressions, all of life including what counts as truth, reliability, validity, and adequate evidence. But the transformation which is tending toward modernization\Westernization is not yet the norm. Hence curious ambiguities, apparent and real paradoxes, confusions, as well as frustrations are rampant. Courageous and "new world" forms of ex-

pression are emerging with startling vitality and velocity, smashing old normative structures and challenging the very significance of old power hierarchies and history itself. Freedom from . . . is frightening, uncertain, and exhilarating. It exposes previously unseen conservative elements everywhere. Individuals who thought they were liberal, find some of the changes disturbing. Hence in the face of change conservatives are rising in defensive postures. Investigative journalism in Bulgaria has been confused with unbalanced and imprudent anger and emotionally charged missionary zeal that is manifested as violent and too often unsubstantiated attacks flying in all political directions. Everyone is "reactionary." However, a nascent clarity of vision is being born in pockets of hard digging but controlled investigation. Such efforts are demonstrating the distinction between being a "watch dog" and an "attack dog." Journalism is very slowly moving from being the tool of ulterior motivations to an independent end in itself serving only truth. Given the political and economic realities however, this tendency will take many years before it can be assumed as the standard modus operandi.

Endnotes

1 I would prefer to use the term "perspectival" rather than "Western," or "modern." When I use the term "modern" or "Western" I mean *post-Renaissance* West or Westernized and modernized cultural expressions. Likewise I would prefer to use "pre-perspectival" and "unperspectival" instead of "Eastern," "oriental," or "Byzantine." "Perspectival," "pre-perspectival," and "unperspectival" are terms used by Jean Gebser to designate different "consciousness structures" without regard to place, time, or race (Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, Trans. Noel Barstadt and Algis Mickunas, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press: 1985). These terms are preferable to "Western," "modern," "oriental," or "Byzantine" because they lack the geographical/spatial, and racial connotations the later group of terms carry with them. When discussing Europe prior to the Renaissance, it is not justifiable to speak of "Western" as opposed to "Eastern" cultures even though it is justifiable to speak of an Eastern and a Western church. The schism in the Holy Roman Empire was not a schism in more fundamental cultural dispositions or realities. It was not until the Renaissance that the West became predominantly (but not exclusively) perspectival, while the East remained predominantly pre- and unperspectival. However, Gebser's profound theories of perspectivity and "plus-mutation" are not well known and space does not allow an adequate introduction of them. Therefore, in this context, I have decided to use the more familiar terms of "oriental," "Byzantine," and "Western." These terms present enough ambiguity as it is. It is important to note however, that as I use "Byzantine," "oriental," and "Western" I do so in an attempt to distinguish one kind of mentality from another in the assumption that without clear comparison and contrast,

claims about only one reality in isolation from others are meaningless. It is assumed that meaning and identity comes from difference.

2 I am advocating an "emic" as opposed to "etic" research perspective for understanding investigative journalism in Bulgaria. These terms were introduced by Kenneth Pike in his oft-quoted article, "Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behavior" (in A. Smith, ed., *Communication and Culture*, 1966). The "etic" perspective manifests, "an attempt to understand behavior objectively by comparing it to other examples with an a priori category of interest to be applied across the samples" (Introduction by Kramer & Mickunas, in *Consciousness and Culture*, Ed. by Eric Kramer, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992:xxxi). The emic approach to investigation which is being applied in this study of investigative journalism in Bulgaria is one whereby the researcher attempts to understand behavior from the actor's point of view by participating (which I did for nine months) in the activities described.

3 At first the bank's policy was to replace only about thirty-five U.S. dollars worth of rubles per person. Within forty eight hours of the initiation of the policy, President Yeltsin reacted to the politically explosive citizens' outcries and raised the limit to about one hundred U.S. dollars and extended the exchange period from two weeks to a month.

4 See "Trapped in Spiritual Limbo" by Nikolai Palashev in *Debati*, June 16, 1992, and "Sects Invade Rhodopes," by Stanko Mitkov, *Podkrepa*, July 15, 1992.

5 (US 1974b, p. 339).

6 Meador, Prentice A. Jr. (1972). "Quintilian and the Institutio Oratoria," in James Murphy, ed., *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*. New York: Random House, p. 152.

7 Harper, N. (1979). *Human Communication Theory: The History of a Paradigm*. Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, p. 65.

8 See Tacitus, *Dialogues on Oratory: The Complete Works of Tacitus*, translated by A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb (New York: The Modern Library, 1942, and Seneca the Elder, *Suasoira*, translated by W. A. Edward (Cambridge: The University Press, 1928.

9 See Manchen-Helfen, J. Otto, (1973) *The World of the Huns: Studies in Their History and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

10 See Runciman, S. (1930). *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*. London: G. Bell & Son Ltd.; Katz, Z., et al., (1975). *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*. New York: Free Press.

11 See Edward H. Parker. (1969). *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*, 2d ed., reprinted in 1969. New York: A. A. Knopf.

12 See D. M. Nicole, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (1972); also Rice, T. (1987). *Everyday Life in Byzantium*. New York: Praeger; Mango, C. (1980). *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*. New York: Scribner; Jenkins, R. *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries A. D. 610-1071*. New York: Random House; Runciman, S. (1933) *Byzantine Civilization*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.; Runciman, S. (1975). *Byzantine Style and Civilization*. Baltimore: Penguin; Runciman, S. (1977). *The Byzantine Theocracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Runciman, S. (1965). *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press; Runciman, S. (1970). *The Last Byzantine Renaissance*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

13 Gumus, Dogan (1992). *Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul*. Istanbul: Do-Gu Yayinlari:

22.

14 See Christopher H. Dawson, *The dividing of Christiandom* (1971); Dvornik, F. (1950). *Le Schisme de Photiusi Histoire et Legende*. Paris: Editions du Cerf; Duvornik, F. (1970). *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs: SS. Constantine—Cyril and Methodius*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; Smith, J. H. (1970). *The Great Schism: 1378*. New York: Weybright and Talley; Runciman, S. (1955). *The Eastern Schism*; Ullmann, W. (1972). *The Origins of the Great Schism: A Study in Fourteenth-Century Ecclesiastical History*. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books.

15 Cases like *Red Lion* (US, 1969) and K TTL in Dodge City, Kansas (FCCR, 1985a) demonstrate the need to be constantly vigilant about the balance between freedom and responsibility. They also serve to remind democracies not to become arrogant.

16 Schramm, W. (1957). *Responsibility in Mass Communication*. New York: Harper & Row, p. 72.

17 See Gebser, J. (1949/1985). *Ursprung und Gegenwart*, translated by Noel Bardstadt and Algis Mickunas as *The Ever-Present Origin*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

18 Gudykunst, W., & Kim, Y. (1992). *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

19 See: Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin* and, Parsons, T. (1951). *The Social System*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

20 Waterman, A. (1984). *The Psychology of Individualism*. New York: Praeger.

21 Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York: Doubleday.

22 Saleh, S., & Gufwoli, P. (1982). The transfer of management techniques and practices. In R. Rath, H.

Aschana, D. Sinha, & J. Sinha (Eds.), *Diversity and Unity in Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Lisse, Netherlands: Swets and Zeitlinger, p. 326.

23 Hofstede, G., & Bond, M., (1984). Hofstede's culture dimensions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 15, p. 419.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 419.

25 Triandis, H. C. (1988). Collectivism vs. individualism. In G. Verma & C. Bagley (Eds.), *Cross-Cultural Studies of Personality, Attitudes, and Cognition*. London: Macmillan.

26 Hall, *Beyond Culture*.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

28 Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

29 Hofstede & Bond. Hofstede's culture dimensions, p. 419.

30 It must be understood that nearly every organization, even small ones like academic departments, had a party secretary assigned to it. Furthermore, when an academic department had a meeting it typically had two. First there would be the normal department meeting in which all the faculty members and staff would attend and could participate, and then there would be an equally normal second meeting of only the party members. Everyone else would have to leave the room.

31 Jefferson quoted in Agee, W., Ault, P., & Emery, E. (1979). *Introduction to Mass Communication*, 6th Ed. New York: Harper & Row, p. 31.

32 Thoreau quoted in Noelle-Nuemann, E. (1984). *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion—Our Social Skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 184.

33 Although it is common for intellectuals in Bulgaria to say that *peristroyka* and *glasnost* were initiated in Bulgaria (just as Bulgarians supposedly invented the

computer, the airplane, the telephone, etc.) the fact is that large propaganda campaigns against Gorbachev were launched and that Bulgaria was one of the last Eastern Bloc allies to "embrace reform." But even said "reform" was, and continues to be controlled by the same Communist elites that are supposedly being reformed. For instance, during the chaos in Romania when President Nicolae Ceausescu fell, the Romanian secret police ran the television cameras that documented the entire spectacle, not radical democrats. Several Romanian intellectuals have told me that in Romania like Bulgaria, the leader (C. in Romania and Zhivkov in Bulgaria) was sacrificed by the Communist establishment in order to *remain in power*. While Romania was in the throes of violent but controlled turmoil, Bulgarians remained strangely silent about their leadership. Why? Several Bulgarian intellectuals told me that the Bulgarian Communist establishment allowed the television signal sent from the Romanian Communists to be shown on the Bulgarian national network 24 hours a day. Only Bulgaria had such saturation coverage of the Romanian "crisis," and the images served to keep Bulgarians in their homes watching instead of rioting in their own streets.

34 It is somewhat unfair for Bulgarian Democrats to blame themselves for the forty-year dictatorship in their nation. After all, much of the Bulgarian population at the time of the take over was comprised of rural farmers, gypsies, and exhausted soldiers. Furthermore, as first revealed by the Russian journalist Aledksei Medvedev, Soviet troops re-entered Bulgaria in October, 1949, two years after they had withdrawn under the Paris Peace Treaty. The intent of Stalin's secret occupation was probably to prevent the Bulgarian Communist elite from taking an independent foreign policy line

after the example of Yugoslavia. The occupation was secret because Stalin did not want to appear to be in violation of the Paris Treaty. Hence, Roussi Hristozov, Minister of Internal Affairs in Bulgaria from August, 1948, to January, 1951, "... learned about the operation on the 'hot line' only after the intruders had got off the train at the Pioneer Railway Station, an out-of-the-way freight depot near Sofia. From there they were taken in trucks to the State Security Training Centre in the Sofia suburb of Simeonovo where their host was Colonel Atanas Arabadjiev" ("The Secret Occupation in 1949: The Confessions of Ex-Interior Minister Roussi Hristozov," by Vladimir Dvoretzky, *Sofijske Vesti*, December 21, 1990: 1). Furthermore, the Russian KGB practically ran the country from the home of the top KGB official in central Sofia near the "Eagle Bridge" and the American Ambassador's residence. Furthermore, it was no accident what happened to uprisings in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other East Bloc countries. But the relatively more Byzantine (high power distance) Bulgarians are more conformist, viewing "tact, servitude, and money as antecedents to freedom" (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992:46,47 summarizing Hofstede's findings). Thus they preferred to stage a more "implied" revolt in 1989 than in other East Bloc nations. The more low-context, explicit revolts to the west however, probably caused the final failure of Soviet domination because their public protests were unavoidably embarrassing to the power elite in those countries that relied on Russian military support rather than domestic sentiment in order to remain in power. The best highways and the most extravagantly engineered tunnels in Bulgaria lead north from Sofia. Such expenditures insured efficient troop movements into the country from the north if necessary. Otherwise the

most expensive highway in Bulgaria leads south from Sofia for about forty kilometers to an insignificant village and stops. In keeping with the Byzantine tradition of the cult of leadership this village (now once again irrelevant) during Communist times, was a busy tourist attraction for Bulgarians. Several expensive hotels and tourist complexes were constructed (now in pathetic disrepair) to house the bus loads of visitors. It is the birthplace of the former Communist dictator for over 30 years, Todor Zhivkov, now under house arrest in his daughter's mansion in a Sofia suburb.

35 The conservatism that extended to control all aspects of life thus retarding development is why many Western Europeans and persons from other Western cultures feel as though they have "gone back in time" when they visit Eastern Europe. Likewise, when filmmakers want to portray the physical appearance of Mozart's Vienna or some other nostalgic image they go to Budapest or Prague. This feeling is caused more from the frozen state of cultural development manifested in the architecture and central city planning than poverty as such. Of course throughout the Eastern Bloc the "new socialist man" was stacked up in poorly conceived and constructed high rise proletarian tenements which can only be described as urban blight. A good example is the vast development called Mladost 1, 2, 3, etc. in Western Sofia.

36 Based on interviews with Krisemira Stefanova, the long time director of folk music recording at Bulgarian National Radio on May 6, 1993, and the former Head of Bulgarian Radio Mikail Minkov on May 5, 1993.

37 Several musicians who play for various orchestras in Sofia and who teach at the Institute of Music complained that sometimes truly gifted students were not properly attended to because "official stars" took

the resources and spotlight.

38 Recorded interview with Mikail Minkov, May 5, 1993.

39 Petev, T., & Kramer, E. (forthcoming). "Mass media in Bulgaria: Parallel Worlds."

40 Shannon, C., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

41 Donev, R., Petev, T., Mateeva, S., Raikov, Z., & Vasilitcheva, G., (1989). *Za Effectivna i Deistvena Lektziona Propaganda* [On the efficient and operative propaganda lecture]. Sofia, Bulgaria: Society for the Distribution of Scientific Knowledge, p. 7.

42 Based on several informal conversations and a formal interview on February 28, 1993 with Dr. George Kamen the former head of Sofia University Medical School and the first person to introduce psychoanalytic techniques to Bulgaria. He defected in 1974, at the "peak" of his career because it became evident that like other transferred Western methods and ideas psychoanalysis was being adopted as a means to declare dissidents "crazy" and to "correct their thinking." In other words, like communism, psychoanalysis became so distorted as to become a tool of totalitarian oppression rather than a tool of liberation. The exact same thing could be said for journalism.

43 Based on an interview with *Balkan Media* editors Valentin Stamov and Svetlana Lazarova, and correspondence with the Editor-in-chief Rossen Milev.

44 Keiko Sei. (1991). Extra sense and computer in Bulgaria. *Balkan Media*, 1, p. 48.

45 See Kramer, "Reversal of Fortunes: Rehabilitations and Counter-Purges in Bulgaria," *Creating a Free Press in Eastern Europe*, Al Hester and Kristina White, (Eds.). The James M. Cox, Jr., Center for International

Mass Communication Training and Research, 1993, pp. 161-191.

46 This is a 5.3 percent drop since 1985, as reported in the 1992 census.

47 *The Insider*, February 1993, No.2, p. 37.

48 A telling but tragic example is that of the child violin prodigy Mila Georgieva. She left Bulgaria as soon as the door opened to study at New York's Juilliard School. Her new violin was a present from rich Europeans. On her first visit back to Europe on a concert tour in Germany, she told the newspaper *Svoboden Narod* that she "might fly in to Sofia to see her mum, but will not play this country" (September 3, 1991:7) Why? because, "At 16, Miss Georgieva knows that Bulgarian musicians do not have a future in Bulgaria" (reported by Eliana Mitova, *Svoboden Narod*, September 3, 1991:7).

49 Petev, T. & Kramer, E. *Mass Media in Bulgaria: Parallel Worlds*. Unpublished manuscript, 1993.

50 A very bright but also very young seventeen-year-old daughter of a colonel in the Bulgarian secret police is a case in point. She had moved to Sofia to attend university only two weeks before I had arrived there. Before that, she had lived in East Germany and several cities around Bulgaria but never in the capital. She was a very enthusiastic student and ardent lover of Western rock'n'roll (perhaps the most powerful propaganda tool the West has). Her greatest wish was to move to California (the closer to Hollywood the better) to attend university. To my amazement, especially since so many mature journalists were unemployed, she was recruited and hired by one of Bulgaria's major newspaper editors. She was very proud of this "accomplishment." Her first assignment was to cover a meeting of one of the two most powerful labor union confederations in Bulgaria. Afterwards she came to me in tears and told me that she

had gone to the meeting and dutifully and very carefully reported every detail. When she returned to the office, her editor sat down and went over her story with her. As he read the text he used a pencil to change it saying that so-and-so was not there, as he crossed out their name, and so-and-so was there, as he added that name. He also changed around what had been said at the meeting. She was shocked and embarrassed. Other freshmen students of mine had similar experiences, but many were not at all concerned about it. Their editors would "explain" to them the "truth" about whatever it was that they thought they had heard or seen, and the need to follow the newspaper's political orientation in the service of democracy—diversity. Most of them bought it. When I talked with my academic colleagues and older journalists about this they were not surprised. An oft-heard phrase used as explanation was "everything has changed and nothing has changed."

51 Gudykunst & Kim, 1992, pp.46-47.

52 For a greater explanation of the hermeneutic context of "immanent history" see Wilhelm Dilthey, *Meaning in History: Dilthey's Thought on History and Society*, translated and edited by H. P. Rickman, 1962, and Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, translated by David Carr, 1970.

53 Zhelev, Z. (1992). The Balkans and European space. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. August, p. 17.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

CREATING A FREE PRESS IN EASTERN EUROPE

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& Kristina White,
Eds.**

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for International Mass Communication
Training & Research*

*The Henry W. Grady College
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Athens, Georgia, U.S.A.*

*The Cover Picture. . .
This statue of Albanian national hero,
Skanderbeg, who heroically battled the
invading Turks, is located in down-
town Tirana, Albania. In the back-
ground are the Tirana Mosque and
Clocktower, famous landmarks in Al-
bania. Skanderbeg's statue symbol-
izes Albania's fierce determination to
be a free nation.*

—Photo by Al Hester

ERRATUM

In Chapter 1, p. 1, the 2nd sentence should read:
"Many partisans of the free press believed that with
guidance and instruction from the West, a new soci-
ety could be constructed . . ."



The University of Georgia

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