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## TELEVISION AND RADIO IN UKRAINE: THE INTERSECTION OF HISTORY AND PRESENT TIME

**Abstract:** The article attempts to find and concretize the international context of the history of TV and radio broadcasting in Ukraine. The electronic mass media in Ukraine were under strong influence of external cultures and traditions. However, they had managed to preserve their identity and even offered an original TV format produce – games-simulations on TV.

**Key words:** Ukrainian television and radio, S.Aisenshtein (Aizenshtein), games-simulation on TV, L.Ivanenko.

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**Introduction.** Development of radio and television broadcasting in Ukraine is an interesting and to a certain extent scarcely studied area of the history of engineering and the history of journalism – due to the fact that TV and radio of Ukraine were in the shadow of more global developments and trends taking place in the countries part of which Ukraine was. These are Russia (USSR), Austria-Hungary, and Poland. Some authors write about the history of radio in Ukraine in this wider context, while others experience the psychological effect of alienation from them as from something extraneous. Also, there are entrenched informal ideas among journalists, according to which broadcasting practices in Ukraine are “secondhand”. However, unbiased opinion reveals a lot of interesting, worthy of study and attention pages of history. A number of names can be mentioned among the historians studying the mass-media in Ukraine – I. Maschenko, A.Zyrin, I.Penchuk, Yu.Usenko, T.Scherbatyuk, O.Antonova, O.Kulinich, V.Goyan [1;7;9;10].

**Main presentation.** The experimental stage of the development of radio on the territory of modern Ukraine is associated with the name of the radio pioneer Semyon Aisenshtein (1884–1965), graduate of Polytechnic University in Charlottenburg. Born in Kiev, he established radio communication in his native city in 1901. In the same year, he made acquaintance with the radio pioneer A.Popov, who

worked in St. Petersburg. In 1901, at A.Popov’s initiative, a radio link was established between the cities of Kherson and Golaya Pristan’; radio communication was also introduced in Sevastopol in the Black Sea Fleet. In 1904, S. Aisenshtein organized Kiev Radio Laboratory (he had patents), built a powerful city radio station in 1906–1907 and telegraphed from Kiev to Zhmerinka (where a station also was built by him), Odessa, and Sevastopol. Aisenshtein’s laboratory was expanded into “Russian Society of Wireless Telephone & Telegraph” (R.O.B.T.i T), a leading radio enterprise in the Russian Empire. The Marconi Company became a shareholder of the enterprise, and S.Aisenshtein made acquaintance with G.Markoni. After the Great Russian Revolution in 1917, the company R.O.B.T.i T. was nationalized and S. Aisenshtein was forced to emigrate. Until the end of his life he worked in the Marconi Corporation in the UK. He made a lot for development of the radio industry in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Further S.Aisenshtein’s works were dedicated to microelectronics. Since 1946, he headed the company “English Electric Valve Co. Ltd” working in this area [4; 6, p.13-16].

Development of wide radio broadcasting in Ukraine until 1939 was taking place within two traditions: Soviet and Polish. Radio stations always belonged to the state. In the Soviet Ukraine, first-ever broadcasting started from Kharkov by the



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initiative of the Communist authorities (G.Petrovsky, V. Chubar) on November 15, 1924 [8]. A concert and a propaganda program were presented. In Poland, radio broadcasting operates since 1925; a radio center was established in Lviv in 1930. There were programs in Ukrainian language such as religious services and entertainments. The Polish programs contained a lot of music, educational issues, news and discussions. On the contrary, propaganda and agitation dominated in the Soviet radio programs featuring, in particular, continuous reading of newspapers. The main used format included verbal radio newspaper ("Proletarian Radio," "Working newspaper" in 1925–1931). Cable broadcasting started development since 1929 in Ukraine as well as in the all Soviet Union. There is much talk now about this great project as an additional mechanism for censorship, but we must not forget that for a long time, the population in the Soviet Union simply could not buy radio sets because of general poverty. Stage of conservative radio development lasted from 1931 to 1965. Radio transmissions from Moscow, Kiev and local studios were sent on one output frequency. In 1931, current and short news program "Ostanni Visti" ("Breaking News", Kiev) appeared. Live field reports became possible thanks to mobile transmitters (so called "radio bridges", "radio roll-calls", "radio courts" – broadcasts of the live trials over "enemies of the people", enemies of the Soviet regime). Censorship reigned on the radio, the slightest defects and blunders on air could have as a result court proceedings and even a death sentence. The criminal proceeding "The case of Ukrainian Radio Committee" is one example: not only the leaders of the committee but also its editors were executed by shooting or imprisoned in the Gulag labor camps. Fear filled editor offices, journalists prettified reality, and much information was cushioned. At the outbreak of the war between the USSR and Germany, the radio stations were evacuated to Russia. From there, such stations were working as Shevchenko radio, "Soviet Ukraine" and others. The radio station of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists "Aphrodite" operated on the occupied territory. In their turn, the Nazis launched about 150 radio stations [1,p.20–22; 9].

"Radio Kyiv" – Ukrainian international service – started to work in 1950. After 1953, with Nikita Khrushchev coming to power, some liberalization came: in the early 1960s, the Ukrainian republican radio centre established its own correspondent network, as previously only messages of news agencies had been broadcasted. In 1965, the second information-music radio channel "Promin" ("Ray") was launched. "Promin" for the first time aired discussions, live broadcasts, contemporary music, but of course, vigilant censorship watched over all its translations.

Radio broadcasting had moved to innovative stage in 1965–1991. In 1980, there were 10.7 million radio sets and 17.6 million cable radio outlets in Ukraine. In 1985, during democratization of the USSR, censorship at radio stations was eased (for example, the "Blitz" program). The first commercial stations operating within the Western format appeared on FM-band in 1992. The modern stage of radio broadcasting development has come. The National radio now broadcasted through four channels: UR–1, UR–2 (Promin), UR–3 (Culture). The international Ukrainian Radio (UR–4) was also working [9].

Boris Grabovskiy is regarded as a founding father of television in Ukraine and Uzbekistan. He is a son of exiled Ukrainian poet-revolutionary P. Grabovskiy. B.Grabovskiy worked far away from Ukraine – in the Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In Tashkent, he created an electronic television system, a prototype TV set, being ahead of time [2].

After the partition of Poland (1939) between the USSR and Germany, another TV theorist – Janusz Groshkovsky – emerged in Ukraine. He was a founder of the Institute of Communications in Warsaw, one of the founders of TV broadcasting in Poland, and then he became the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He worked in Lviv at the Department of Radio Engineering.

The first public television broadcast in Ukraine was in Kiev, on February 1, 1939. It was based on the optical-mechanical principle. After World War II, the state authorities decided to revive the Kiev TV center, but this time as an electronic one. However, the first electronic television center in Ukraine was opened in Kharkov. It was created by public activists under the leadership of V.Vovchenko, who managed to unite radio amateurs, local authorities and specialized plants. Such explosion of initiatives was very amazing for the USSR. It was the third electronic TV centre after Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Moscow, ahead of the start of the public TV broadcasting in Kiev [6, p.54–56]. The centre started operating in November 1951. Kharkov experience was successfully applied across the Soviet Union to create small (training) TV centers in cities where there was not enough state funding for their opening. In 1965, the independent Ukrainian television channel (UT) began working. For the first time in the USSR, in 1969, the Kiev TV center broadcasted in color (SECAM–3). By the end of 1971, the initial stage of television broadcast development in Ukraine had been completed [5; 7].

On March 6, 1972, two-channel TV broadcasting was introduced on all territory of the Ukrainian Republic: programs of Central TV Centre (Moscow) and UT (Kiev) were broadcasted on two different frequency channels. Central TV covered 80% of the Ukrainian population, and the UT did

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60%. In Kiev, the third program started broadcasting in 1976. In 1973, a unique television tower with the height of 380 meters was put into operation in Kiev (its photos and history can be found in Wikipedia: Kiev TV Tower). The tower has had office premises owned by TV and radio services [6, p.65-68]. By the end of the 70s, the TV center in the heart of the capital – Kiev (Kyiv), Khreshchatyk str. 26 – had 5 studios, and the cinema and TV studio "Ukrtefilm" possessed two film studios covering 600 square meters. The Ukrainian Studio of Documentaries "Ukrkinohronika" and the Kiev Studio of Popular-Science Films also prepared filmed materials for UT. TV movies were shot at the such studios as Dovzhenko Film Studio in Kiev and Odessa Film Studio. There were film departments at Donetsk, Lviv, Zaporizhia, and Odessa regional TV studios. Ukrainian film studios made many well-known Soviet films for television and a lot of entertainment movies (musical comedies, concerts, documentaries and fiction films, theatrical performances for TV, etc.). Around 700 films a year were being shot and released. This is an evidence of the scale of the Ukraine Republic's television industry. TV production was organized on the regional basis: local UT branches in regions not only were allocated time slots for their programs, but also participated in joint TV production.

Program policies. The UT was under strong ideological pressure of the communist authorities. The policy at the UT was even more stringent than at the Moscow TV. The UT produced a wide range of programs: informational ("Actual Camera"), socio-political, musical, children's programs, a talent search program ("Solar clarinets"), intellectual shows ("Five minutes for reflection" with Z.Zhuravleva). Let us note, in particular, the practice of educational television broadcasts (1959–1999) for schoolchildren and university students. Also, sports editorial office was established. During the Moscow Olympics (1980), the "picture" caught by Ukrainian TV teams was broadcast all around the world. The television center in Kiev was modernized. By the Olympics–80, a television center in Uzhhorod was also equipped and launched; nowadays, the multilingual satellite TV channel "Tisa" is broadcasting from there all over Ukraine. Earlier, a satellite communication station was opened near Lviv in Zolochev.

UT original formats. An original format of business television games was developed by an IT-specialist L.N.Ivanenko. L.Ivanenko proposed a new format – a simulation game involving viewers. The game "Cybernetic phytotron" (seasons 1980, 1984–1986) was based on a computer simulation model of crop cultivation that took into account agronomic, environmental, and economic factors of agricultural production. Viewers and experts were engaged in decision making. Then, their findings were compared with the solution provided by the model. The "Urban

planning" game (seasons 1982–83) was based on an open response model represented by a group of experts. During the game, players-TV viewers made acquaintance with urban planning issues and the basics of life organization in large settlements. More specifically: elements of the general plan of Kiev development were being worked out [3].

Television as well as the whole society was stirred up by the Chernobyl disaster on April 26, 1986. The theme of the nuclear accident became a central one. Television raised funds for the victims. TV film "Chernobyl: two colors of time" came out in 1986–88.

In times of "perestroika", UT programs started to criticize the authorities, they began to discuss more widely culture, language and national identity ("Hart", "Pleiades"). There were televised question and answer sessions similar by their format to the shows of Phil Donahue and Vladimir Pozner. Grigory Kazakov, a newscaster of UT's evening news began to speak more freely on the air. He was a true "anchor" of evening news broadcasting. G.Kazakov was an author of many reports from fields: "Chernobyl seen by journalist" (1986), "Bridge across the ocean," "Road through the desert" (1995). This tradition was continued by other "anchors" of the new Ukrainian TV, such as Z.Kulik (the author of the longest interviews with Mikhail Gorbachev) and V.Lapikura (program "Accents" in 1990s). At the beginning of the 1990s, large TV center – a tall building near the TV tower – was put into operation in Kiev. Though being a bit smaller facility than Ostankino center in Moscow, it was designed as a reserve facility in the Soviet Union. Above, we mentioned that it was too large for Ukraine. The center has the bunker-studio constructed with the view to use it in case of war as well as the similar facility in Moscow [10].

It should be noted that during the years of independence a decline in the program quality happened: TV screens were filled with political debates, discussions – just kitschy politicized forms of broadcasting.

In the late 1980s, private channels emerged on the air. For example, in December 1991, the American corporation Storyfirst Communications and the State Broadcast Television Station created the International Commercial Television (ICTV) company. A part of the Storyfirst's shares belonged to the Universal Company. Due to this circumstance, good western movies made it on the TV screens. In 1993, the regional channel "Ukraine" was launched in Donetsk [7].

While in 1991 Ukraine became independent from the Soviet Union, a large number of TV programs from Moscow were still broadcasted on its territory. The UT opened a second channel UT-2, but there were not enough resources for its full development. For example, there was not a foreign

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correspondent network because the UT was traditionally aimed at the coverage of domestic events. It was clear that Russian TV still reached a larger audience. Hoping to attract the audience to UT-1 (having now the "Pershiy" logo) and UT-2 channels, the Ukrainian state reestablished in 1995 TV frequency channels across all the country so that Ukrainian media could get the most powerful ones ("struggle for the air"). Russian TV broadcasting could not be received in some regions since that. It stimulated development of cable TV networks (and later – individual satellite reception; now 25% of households use such technologies) that receive Russian and foreign channels via satellites.

The most far-seeing TV managers understood that the delivery of TV content to viewer would soon get beyond the usual dozen air channels, and moreover, it became necessary to improve radically the quality of television produce and create the advertising market. UT-2 together with Central European Media Enterprises (CME), R. Lauder (USA), TV managers A. Rodnyansky and B. Fuksman created the "1 + 1" channel on equal terms. Entrepreneurs I.Pluzhnikov and A.Zinchenko, together with Channel One of Russia created the "Inter" TV channel. It is on the air since October 20, 1996. This channel is a mixture of popular Russian programs and programs of own production. Later, international versions of "1 + 1 Int." and "Inter +" started to be broadcasted via satellites. In 1997–98, two new private television channel were organized – "STB" (1997, it belongs to a businessman V.Sivkovich) and "Noviy." An opposition journalist Georgy Gongadze worked on the "STB", he was later killed because of reasons that have not ever been adequately explained. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the genre of political talk-shows was developed on "1 + 1" with V.Pihovshek's program "Epicenter" as a fledgling. News on "1 + 1" was presented by A.Mazur and L.Dobrovolskaya. International television channel – UTR – started in 2002. The state educational television channel "Culture" was also organized. Later, three channels – ICTV, STB, and Noviy – went under command of businessman V. Pinchuk (StarLightMedia). The channel "Ukraine" controlled by R. Akhmetov (SCM) started national-wide broadcasting in 2004. After I.Pluzhnikov's death in 2005, the channel "Inter" fell under the control of V.Horshkovskiy and then – D.Firtash. The organized company "U.A. Inter Media Group Ltd." controls not only "Inter" channel per se, but also consolidated channels K1, K2, Enter, and Enter-film. In 2007, the majority owner of the CME channel – R. Lauder – bought shares of A.Rodnyanskiy and B.Fuksman. Over time, "1 + 1"

channel came into possession of the Ukrainian CME co-owner – a businessman I. Kolomoisky. In 2003, two channels – Kiev "Express-Inform" ("Zagrava") and Western Ukrainian television network "NBM" (1995), having its headquarters in the city of Chernivtsi, – created an information powerhouse "Channel 5". The channel got popularity during the Orange Revolution (2004). It is considered to be an asset of Petro Poroshenko. New channels are being organized even now, for example, socio-political channels: TVi, "Gromadske"; informational channels: "24", "112". Since 2012, UT-1 has been producing an international version of "Pershiy Ukraine". In 2014, CME launched the "Ukraine Today" information channel.

Current program policy of Ukrainian TV channels is based on international formats. Until recently, many Russian serials and TV shows were broadcasted. They are often produced in cooperation with the Ukrainian filmmakers. Also, there are a lot of talent search shows with dancing and singing. Politicization of consciousness is a distinctive feature of modern Ukraine. In the second half of the 2000s, political shows became popular on the national TV: "Freedom of speech" on ICTV (A.Kulikov), "Shuster Live" on different channels (S.Shuster), "Big Politics" on "Inter" (E.Kiseliov). The "1 + 1" channel presented known political shows such as "I think so" (A.Bezulik), "Without taboos", "I'm coming after you" (O.Gerasimyuk). A talk show on everyday situations "Ukraine says!" led by A.Suhanov on the "Ukraine" channel is also popular. The non-state TV channel "Tonis", existing from 1989, has filmed many documentary movies and also rebroadcasts informative programs of other sources.

**Conclusions.** Ukrainian television and radio broadcasting, in spite of its difficult history, has not lost its face. Well-developed industrial base of media production still exists in the country. Ukrainian TV created the original format – TV simulation games (to create something original in the transmission format is worth it). At present, the electronic media in Ukraine are mostly private. State radio and TV channels are moving towards the European model of public broadcasting. The state TV and radio channels have many problems – not enough frequencies or low power of transmitters, so they often come to rural viewers via satellites. Real development of television broadcasting for foreign countries was hindered for a long time. Now, there are difficulties in establishment of the DVB-T2 digital broadcasting network. There were attempts to code it totally. Nevertheless, we are still looking forward to positive developments in the field of electronic mass media in Ukraine in the future.

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