

THE CHALLENGES ON NATIVE LANGUAGE INFORMATION DURING OCCUPATION: METAMORPHOSES OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE MEDIA IN KOSOVO

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ABSTRACT

The history of the media in Kosovo is connected to the destiny of the Kosovar people themselves. The right for information in Albanian language was a right that was gained in coherence with other rights which the Kosovar people gained through its history and the realization of these rights came in a time when Kosovo was a part of ex-Yugoslavia, which starts with the fall of the Ottoman Empire and ends with the Kosovar war of 1999. Ever since the end of WWII, in Kosovo, Albanian language media start functioning, newspapers, radio and later on TV, as government media, same as it was for all the media that functioned in the Eastern system, to which Yugoslavia belonged to. In the last years of existence of the former SFRY the Albanian media became a part of the national Albanian agenda and they mirrored the political requests of Kosovar Albanians for more rights within the ex-Yugoslav state, up to the point of making Kosovo the seventh republic within the federation. This was opposed by the Republic of Serbia which, amongst many other actions that were undertaken to damage the rights and freedoms of native Albanians in Kosovo, also shut down the Albanian Language media, respectively the only daily newspaper “Rilindja” as well as Prishtina Radio and Television (RTP). In a situation of information blackout in Albanian language two magazines, “Zëri i Rinisë”, which was weekly, and “Bujku”, which was a professional agricultural newspaper *went through metamorphosis by turning themselves into newspapers that followed daily actualities* and they started publishing more frequently than usual until “Bujku” which was by then staffed by ex-Rilindja workers turned into a daily newspaper. At the same time the journalists from RTP at first secured a 5 minute slot for transmitting Albanian Language news on “Radio Zagreb”, while later they secured transmission space on “Radio Tirana” as well as on the satellite transmissions of the Albanian Television (TVSH). This article, through interviews made with people who were some of the characters in this story brings the facts of this metamorphosis and speaks of its importance, while bringing to mind a model, in which journalists and media workers reacted to the state of occupation, and have managed to spread the news to the audiences in their native language.

Keywords: Media metamorphosis, newspaper, magazine, television, freedom of information.