

## The “Sound Revolution” in Bulgaria. The advent of sound in Sofia cinemas. Technical and cultural aspects\*

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**Abstract.** The introduction of sound cinema in Bulgaria was not significantly delayed but reflected the cautious strategies of local cinema entrepreneurs, who acted decisively once sound film production intensified in Germany and Hollywood. This study explores the competitive dynamics among Sofia’s leading cinemas – *Moderen Teatar*, *Pachev*, *Gloria Palace*, and *Odeon* – to introduce sound film screenings. It examines the technical conversion of cinemas, early sound film repertoires, and advertising strategies aimed at attracting audiences. The rivalry among cinemas was closely linked to competition between foreign suppliers of sound systems and rapid technological developments, notably the transition from disc-based to optical sound. These processes soon extended beyond Sofia, reshaping cinema programming, fostering new sound-based film genres, and encouraging the emergence of local services such as subtitling and sound recording. The study also highlights the design and production of original Bulgarian sound equipment and the creation of the first Bulgarian sound films.

**Keywords:** sound revolution, Sofia cinemas, sound film technology, optical sound equipment, Bulgarian sound films

*But blessed are your eyes, for they see,  
and your ears, for they hear.  
Matthew 13:16*

Although the Holy Scripture is not very explicit on the matter, it is clear from the very first lines of the Bible that along with the creation of the visible world, God “voices” it. Sight and sound are natural (physical) characteristics and mark every step along the spiritual path of human civilization, provoking the

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emergence and inspiring the development of diverse human arts. The seventh is no exception.

The concept of synchronizing moving images and sound dates back to the birth of cinema in the 1890s. Dozens are the names of the technologies, systems, sound gadgets, devices and appliances that have been invented over the years to make the silent screen speak – on 6 October 1927, when *The Jazz Singer*, a “part-talkie musical drama”, considered the first talking yet musical feature film in the history of cinema, premiered at the Warner Brothers Theatre on New York’s Broadway Avenue.

Produced by Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., directed by Alan Crosland, using the Vitaphone system, a leading technology at the time that allowed the film’s soundtrack to be recorded on a metal disc and played back through a massive phonograph, *The Jazz Singer* tells the sentimental story of Jakie Rabinowitz, a young American of Jewish descent who sings in blackface in music halls. The role was successfully played by vaudevillian singer Al Jolson, whose performances quickly became world-famous hits. The most impressive thing about the Lithuanian-born actor’s performance as Asa Yoelson is the utterance of a few ordinary phrases that echo around the planet. Thanks to them, the film became a sensation and its financial success was enormous – revenues of 2.6 million dollars exceeded six times the budget of 422,000 (in five months alone in New York it was seen by 2.5 million viewers) (Produktsiyata... 1929, 6) (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Two stills from *The Jazz Singer* (1927) with Al Jolson and one ticket for the film

Thus, alongside an ordinary jazz performer, the cinema not only sang but also – like a small but grasping child – started to speak. The Silent Film Era, which dominated the celluloid business until then, was finally coming to an end. The outbreak of the “Sound Revolution”, one of the major events in the history of seventh art in the “roaring twenties”, invaded the cinemas, swept the silent from the screens, and took over the film studios. By the 1930s, almost every American fiction production was already “talking”. Eventually, the sonic hurricane reached Bulgaria...

## ***Moderen Teatar* was the beginning**

On 12 March 1930, the *Sofia Mir* (Peace) newspaper, kindly providing its pages for the announcement of the programmes of all Sofia cinemas, published the following advertisement:

*The management of the Moderen Teatar<sup>1</sup> considers it a special honour to inform the esteemed audience that with immense efforts it has acquired the first in Bulgaria most sophisticated installation for sound and talking pictures [talkies] – without rivals in the whole world – of the most powerful American electricity trust with a two-million-dollar endowment, and will present the very recent colossal 100% sound film “Atlantic” with Bulgarian explanatory text at the Moderen Teatar. Get ready for a spectacular event in Sofia (Mir, XXXVI, 8905, 12.03.1930, 2).*

Two days later, the newspaper turns to the topic again, offering readers some curious details:

*Engineers Krach and Hausers have arrived in Sofia, representatives of Western Electric<sup>2</sup>, America’s most powerful house for transmission installations of sound and talking pictures, to study local conditions for the introduction of talking machines after the successful deal with the Moderen Teatar. The same gentlemen await the arrival of the engineering specialist Kudryavchev, who will begin the installation of the arrived Western Electric apparatus – the first and only for Bulgaria tested apparatus, the last word in technology! Preparatory work at the theatre itself is in full swing, so the recent sensational showcase is a matter of days away. The representatives of W. E. are proud that to their apparatus, perfect, absolutely precise, and perfectly transmitting with all the nuances of human speech, singing, music, etc., etc. falls the honour of presenting to the Bulgarian society in true light and the most refined form the latest cultural acquisition of technology and the most popular art. Our 12,000 units, says Eng. Hausers, collaborate with the world’s film production, which has switched to making exclusively sound and talking pictures [...]. We congratulate the management of the Moderen Teatar for its gesture to buy our apparatus, too expensive for local conditions, ignoring a number of other extremely expendable offers, and for the excellent choice of the first sound and talking picture in the face of the giant “Atlantic”, which currently rules the screen of Europe and most convincingly agitates for the final victory of the already spiritualized – live – magical white canvas (Mir, XXXVI, 8907, 14.03.1930, 2).*

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<sup>1</sup> The first permanent cinema in Bulgaria, the *Moderen Teatar* (Modern Theatre) (1908–late 1990s) was opened on 4 December 1908 at 34 Maria Luisa Str. It was founded and owned by Austro-Hungarian citizens Aladar Ottay-Osterreicher and Sigmund Szilagy. From 1948 to 1989, the cinema was renamed “Tsanko Tserkovski”. Although the building still stands today, it has fallen into disrepair.

<sup>2</sup> Western Electric Co., Inc. was an American electrical engineering and manufacturing company that operated from 1869 to 1996.

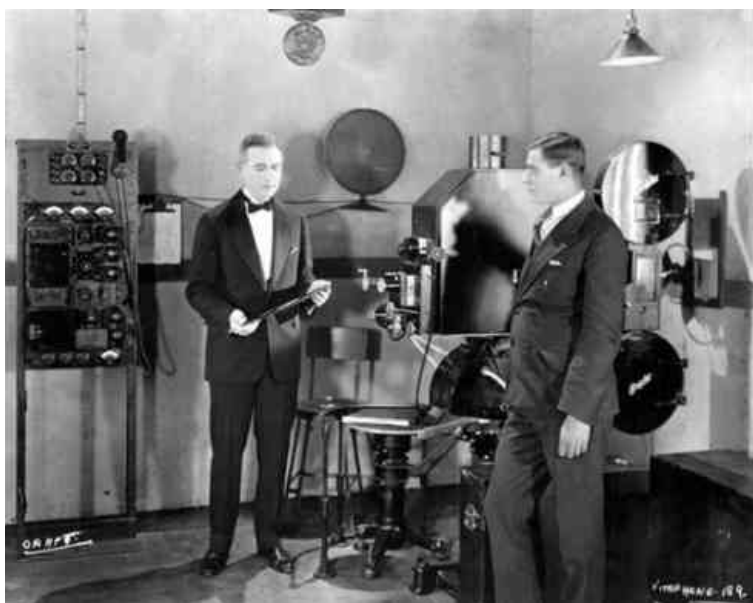
On 15 March, the next issue of *Kino* (Cinema) magazine (1927–1936) was published, edited by Anton Marinovich. This special issue was dedicated to a historic event, the name of which was printed in bright red letters at the top of the front cover – *The Sound Film Has Arrived in Bulgaria*. Consequently, following the first two pages of advertisements appears the article “The Sound Film Fever is Already in Bulgaria” by Marinovich, who managed to capture and masterfully recreate the breathless rhythm of the times, whose spirit is felt in every line. The text begins:

*Of all Europe, only Albania and Bulgaria do not yet have sound film projection machines installed. Like every new manifestation of progress, like every achievement of technology, nothing was able to stop the development and spreading of sound film. The sound film fever bacillus has already entered our country. Among the circles of film suppliers and cinema owners, the actuarial issue is that of the introduction of sound film in Bulgaria. The tension is great. The sound film will inevitably come to our country. Not even the acute economic crisis, which affects the people of the cinema industry as much as all traders, will deter him. Taking the example of all Western countries, we can say for sure that the tone film will not come but will break out in our country. The decisive step, to spend millions to supply the apparatus and sound copies, will be taken suddenly by a local company. Even people who have never been to the cinema will go to the sound film screening. The competition won't be hesitant anymore. Machines will be installed immediately in Sofia, and then in the larger provincial centres. And... the era of the sound film in Bulgaria will begin [...]. The sound film is on the border of Bulgaria. The fever for it is common and strong. The effect of this new miracle in our country is a matter of days. We only have to wait (Marinovich 1930a, 4).*

Prophetic words, which, however, do not come from the mouth of an oracle in a trance, but from the pen of a professional well acquainted with the cinematic realities in Bulgaria.

Issue No. 53 of *Kino* magazine is also unique in that it contains a four-page supplement dated 16 March, numbered 53a and titled *Extraordinary Sound Film Edition*. On its third page, within a box proclaiming that *Sofia will very soon hear and see SOUND FILM!* an announcement is published stating that *Moderen Teatar Has Delivered the Most Advanced Sound Equipment* (Fig. 2):

*The regular issue of Kino magazine, No. 52, was already in print when the official announcement came out that the Moderen Teatar had already bought sound film equipment for its auditorium. From the hastily gathered information, we found out the following. The deal with the representative of the world-famous company Western Electric was concluded last week. On Wednesday, M. T. ordered the equipment by telegraph, which was immediately dispatched with great speed from Trieste, where the Western equipment was in stock. According to insiders on the time required for installation, Mod(eren) Teatar will begin screening the first sound film at 24–26 this month. The purchased equipment is model “3” for the largest auditoriums and costs 2,000,000 BGN. The Western Electric units are the most reputable, the most advanced and the most used (Moderen Teatar... 1930, 3).*



**Fig. 2.** Eng. E. B. Kraft, of Western Electric, holds the metal disk containing the soundtrack of a film recorded by using the Vitaphone system, a demonstration of which is about to take place. The phonograph playing the sound is seen between the inventor and the projection machine, placed on a massive tripod. The year is 1926

### **The competition strikes back**

The news, which probably provoked the editor of *Kino* magazine to launch the “extraordinary issue” (the supplement), indeed arrived one after another and with lightning speed. The proof is a short but sensational announcement: *When the magazine was ready for printing, we unexpectedly received the information that Moderen Teatar and Pachev Theatre<sup>3</sup> are already the owners of sound film equipment, which will start operating in the next two weeks* (Kino 1930, 4).

Other, more detailed and curious information has come to light thanks to the *Mir* newspaper, which published the article “The Revolution in the Art of Cinema” on the same day. Its author, who signed himself at the end of the text as “Eng. D. P.” stated at the beginning:

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<sup>3</sup> *Pachev Movie Theatre* (1926–1944) opened its doors on 30.12.1926 and soon became one of the most popular cinemas in Sofia. Perhaps because of its location – 18 Knyaz Alexander Dondukov Blvd. (the corner of the boulevard and Targovska Str. – the busiest city district then). It bore the name of its owner, Ivan Pachev, who rented it out. Initially, it had 826 seats. In 1929, it was “re-rented” by “the famous capital film house Bulgaria-Film”, renovated “in the style of the great theatres”, and equipped “with all the innovations of cinematographic technology” (*Teatralna novost* 1929, 4). By the will of

*For the past two years, the world has been enriched with a new great invention – the soulless cinematographic screen and the mute shadows that move on it have been given soul and speech. Because of the enormous financial resources required to bring this invention to our cinemas, our audiences have hitherto been denied the pleasure of seeing and hearing this new brainchild of human genius. But this could not last long. The management of the Pachev Cinema, wishing to be the first in our country in this respect and not stop in front of the material suffering extraordinary for Bulgaria, sent a special delegation to Europe to do basic research on the matter. As a result of this investigation, the theatre obtained one of the latest models of the most sophisticated American sound cinema equipment. A specialist American engineer has already installed the device and begun test screenings with it. At the same time, as we are informed, the theatre has also delivered several of the most modern and artistic sound films made in the 1930s and will begin screening them in the coming week at the latest. We congratulate Pachev Theatre on this timely initiative and wish it every success in the undertaking at such great expense (Eng. D. P. 1930, 2).*

### **The hectic race between *Moderen Teatar* and *Pachev Cinema***

It turned out that not only *Moderen Teatar* had taken the initiative to acquire the new “great invention”, but that the battle for its “application” in Bulgarian cinemas had only just begun, and the champion had yet to be determined. *Moderen Teatar*’s response shines through in the very next issue of *Mir* in a front-page advertisement, the text of which reads:

*Loud words do not hide the truth! The WESTERN ELECTRIC sound and talking pictures installations are the only ones that convey speech – singing and music – perfectly clear and without any mechanics! It’s not about the heavily advertised mechanical music combined with FILM. Only the *Moderen Teatar*, which has invested a capital of 3,000,000 BGN in its installation, will soon surprise and fully satisfy the Sofia audience with the great drama “Atlantic” by E. A. Dupont. Beware of disappointments so that your expectations come true! (Mir, XXXVI, 8909, 17.03.1930, 1).*

*Sound Cinema Pachev* counterattacked on page two – also with an advertising box: *Coming up now, the premiere of the first ever 100% talking and musical film. Smiling Irish Eyes [released in Bulgaria under the title *My Love Never Dies*]. The whole of Europe today is under the hypnosis of this extraordinary creation of human genius. Advance ticket sales have begun (Mir, XXXVI, 8909, 17.03.1930, 2).*

The next day *Pachev* offered more information:

*After a round-the-clock strenuous installation of the precise and very elaborate sound-film equipment, representing the latest technical innovation and the most*

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fate and its then “director”, Dimitar Azmanov *Pachev* became the cinema whose screen was the first in Bulgaria to speak and sing – on 20 March 1930. It existed until 1944 when it was destroyed by bombing during World War II.

perfect type on the Land of Gold (fairy-tale America). The management of Sound Cinema PACHEV, to its great pleasure, for the benefit of all – women and men, young and old, poor and rich, informs that it has been given the high honour, first in Bulgaria, to give a new direction to filmmaking in the country with the forthcoming gala premiere of the hyped and spectacularly conceived 100% talking, sound and music film “Smiling Irish Eyes”, created with a huge offer of material on the system of the world-famous German brand: “TOBIS” (Mir, XXXVI, 8910, 18.03.1930, 1).



Fig. 3. *Atlantic* (1929) and *Smiling Irish Eyes* (1929) – the first two sound films screened in Bulgaria, side by side, and on the pages of specialized magazines

Thus, the two titles involved in the race became known – *Atlantic* (1929) and *Smiling Irish Eyes* (1929) (Fig. 3). Depicting the wreck of the legendary ocean liner RMS Titanic, *Atlantic* is a British feature film shot by German director Ewald André Dupont in one silent (specially edited) and three sound versions – English, German, and French. *Smiling Irish Eyes* is a production of the American company First National Pictures, Inc., voiced by Vitaphone and distributed by Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Although the film was black and white, it contained several colour scenes made using the Technicolour system. It also had a silent version. Today it is considered lost, but the disks on which its sound was recorded have survived. It is therefore odd to see his title next to the name of *Tobis*, a German film production and distribution company founded in the late 1920s.

While the titles of the films had been announced, their release dates had not yet been set. Regarding the first screening, both *Moderen Teatar* and *Pachev Cinema* were content with vague phrases such as “the sensational screening is a matter of days”, “very soon”, and “expect it already” (only the information of the *Kino* magazine is more specific: “24–26 this month”, 24–26 March)... Which means that during this time, in both cinemas the “preparatory work” was “in full swing”; feverish labour was underway; foreign engineers and technicians were installing the devices that had arrived from afar for “transmission” of sound, talking, and musical films; “round-the-clock intensive installation” of the precise, elaborate, and too expensive “for local conditions” sound equipment was being carried out, in preparation for the “test screenings”...

On 19 March, *Pachev* announced for the first time the date of the “grand premiere” of *Smiling Irish Eyes* – 20 March. The theatre did not fail to emphasize that “the world’s best and Bulgaria’s first 100 per cent talking sound and music film” was accompanied by Bulgarian subtitles that “make it accessible to all”.

Located just below this text is *Moderen Teatar*’s advertising box, reading:

*The Pachev Theatre’s playful hasty invitation to the Moderen Teatar echoes the whims of that theatre’s “complicit” and “precise” in its surprises Nameless device, which is secure only in the darkness of fabulous America! Coming out into the light, its “glorious” career in Europe – in Yugoslavia and Romania – could shine! The management of MODEREN TEATAR, of course, cannot do the Nameless One the credit of honouring it with their attention, and they hope that a sufficiently enlightened audience will similarly parry his groundlessness! Stay tuned for the “Atlantic” by the end of the week. This is the most elaborate and impressive production of E. A. Dupont with the perfectly combined new elements: Speech, music, and the elements of nature! Universal Transmit Western Electric! Only at Moderen Teatar (Mir, XXXVI, 8911, 19.03.1930, 2).*

### **The invasion of sound film begins**

On 20 March, the two cinemas did not publish advertisements in *Mir*, but on that very day, the next issue came out (No. 143) of the “magazine for film culture and cinema art” edited by Panteley Mateev Karasimeonov – *Nasheto Kino* (Our Cinema) (1924–1936), whose main theme is written in bright red letters

at the top of the cover: *The Invasion of the Sound Film Begins*. It is therefore not surprising that on its second page, the publication reported:

*On the initiative of the Odeon Theatre – Sofia, a conference of cinema directors from Plovdiv, Varna, Ruse, and Burgas was convened last week to discuss the difficult situation in which the country's cinema industry finds itself today and the direction it should take in the face of the influx of talkies, whose arrival in the country is already imminent. The director of Odeon, Mr Spiro Yankov, who has just returned from a trip abroad, has outlined his impressions of his tour and the possibilities for a group action of the main cinemas in the above-mentioned towns, aimed at a more painless transition to the new conditions of film activity (Novostite na kinoto 1930a, 2).*

The competitors of *Moderen Teatar* and *Pachev* obviously realized the seriousness of the looming “sound” threat and the catastrophic consequences that could result from it and pile on their heads. Therefore, they informed each other, discussed the “difficult situation”, and identified measures to get out of it, but most of all, they came together (“to group”).

Right after these lines from the *Novelties of Cinema* section came the essay by Panteley Karasimeonov, “The Great Silent Walks Away...”, considering cinema “an art form in its own right”, its aspiration to “achieve a synthetic representation of reality”, its “aesthetic category” and “aesthetic determination”, the changes that had occurred as a result of the blowing up of its “muteness” by the dizzying ascension of sound onto the screen, which had succeeded in “breaking the chains of silence”... “But the sound and talking picture is a fact, a victory”, wrote the editor of *Nasheto Kino* (P. M. K. 1930, 2).

Panteley Karasimeonov also contributed his text on page 8, titling it “A Fateful Step”:

*If a history of cinema in Bulgaria will ever be written, at the beginning of the second stage of its development, the two names will be underlined in bold letters: **Moderen Teatar** and **Pachev Theatre** – in Sofia. Considering the situation in which our country finds itself today – suffocated by fatal impoverishment as a result of the unfortunate wars – the historian could not but express his astonishment at the heroism of today's Bulgarian film entrepreneurs – to invest millions in an innovation that can only rely on chance [...]. Only the unfavourable conditions of the economic life in the country probably kept these theatres [Odeon and Gloria Palace] to wait with their reorganization [...]. These cinemas will inevitably have to revamp themselves if they don't want to relive the tragedy of the silent film, whose sunset today is creating more than one disaster. Therefore, alongside the excitement at the introduction of the sound film in our country, we cannot but emphasize the significance of the step made by the theatres: **The Moderen and Pachev** with the opening of the era of the sound film. And let us give a well-deserved share of gratitude to the enterprise of the Bulgarian cinematographers, such as Mr. Marin Dikov (*Moderen Teatar*), Dimitar Azmanov and Lukovich (*Pachev Theatre*), who gave the initial impetus to a work which sooner or later had to be taken up in our country (P. M. Kar. 1930, 8).*

## The quality of the first sound film screenings

And so, on 20 March 1930 (Thursday) in the Sofia cinema *Pachev* through the screening of *Smiling Irish Eyes*, the first screening in Bulgaria of “talking and musical sound picture” was realized. *Moderen Teatar* was only four days late – the premiere of *Atlantic* was on 24 March (Monday).

Unfortunately, the press of the period (including the specialized one) does not take pains to report on how the two events went, what the atmosphere was like during the premieres, what the quality of the screenings was like... The article “First Impressions of the Sound and Talking Film” by Anton Marinovich, which appeared in the *Kino* magazine on 10 April, was no exception. In it, the author admitted to having attended six screenings, most likely of both films (Marinovich 1930b, 6).

Information (albeit scarce) can still be found in some advertising texts, such as the one that the cinema *Pachev* published on 25 March in *Mir* newspaper: *Yesterday's crash of Moderen Teatar's much-hyped sound system proved the superiority and perfection of sound transmitting equipment of sound film theatre Pachev* (*Mir*, XXXVI, 8916, 25.03.1930, 2). *Moderen Teatar* obviously struck back because the very next day *Pachev* responded “to the new banterers of *Moderen Teatar*”: *There are no competent sound film specialists in Bulgaria, and the audience that booed you at the premiere is the best arbiter in our dispute. We will go to court willingly to expose the techniques of an unfair competition. We are before the supreme arbiter and court of the audience daily with the screening of our wonderful film* (*Mir*, XXXVI, 8917, 26.03.1930, 2).

Then the “banter” stopped, but the screenings continued – until 31 March in the cinema *Pachev* and for an undetermined period in the *Moderen Teatar*, whose management unexpectedly interrupted its advertising in *Mir*. Nevertheless, *Pachev* never ceased firing off extensive cartoons, from which it can be understood that *Smiling Irish Eyes* was being screened on that day (28 March) “simultaneously in Vienna in three first-class theatres, Berlin in 10 first-class theatres, Paris in three first-class theatres, New York in 114 theatres and all the other capitals of the world!” (*Mir*, XXXVI, 8919, 28.03.1930, 2). On the last day of the month, *Pachev* announced that the film’s screening was “continuing for 3 weeks” but “at reduced prices” to “enable a wider audience to see and hear this great achievement of human genius” (*Mir*, XXXVI, 8921, 31.03.1930, 2).

An artistic but realistic description of this short but tumultuous period was offered by the piece “A Sonorous Easter (Instead of Greetings and a Feuilletton)”, published on 20 April in *Kino* magazine. The anonymous author (most likely Anton Marinovich) wrote:

*Before the sound film even started, a fierce polemic broke out between Pachev and the Moderen. For the first few days, even the poor newcomer could neither speak nor sing nor sound like a human – the hissing and roaring of the competitors silenced him. Finally, after gnashing and creaking, His Majesty the “Atlantic” and Her Ladyship Love, who never dies, could calmly display their greatness and charm. From the screens of the Moderen and Pachev began to flow song and speech, noise, and*

music. The public interpreted these sounds differently. Some said it was a miracle, others – nonsense, some – almost theatre and opera, others – almost a phonograph (Zvukov Velikden 1930, 2).

It appears that the premiere of *Atlantic* was not a “disaster” either, that audiences did not “boo” it, and that the “protagonist” of the film, the trans-oceanic liner *Atlantic*, whose prototype was the *Titanic*, did indeed shipwreck and sink, but not the celluloid production of British International Pictures (BIP). The reviewer of *Kino* magazine, remaining hidden behind the initials E. P., wrote:

*The Moderen Teatar could not have chosen a better and more accomplished programme to mark this significant turning point in its activities and the history of the cinema in Bulgaria. Dupont's sonic giant deserved a grand premiere. The sound effects, along with the sensational and dramatic plot, will be unforgettable. "Atlantic" was apparently made exclusively for the sound film. The action is a chain, each link of which carries the accent of an expected and pursued purely acoustic effect. And the result is perfect. "Atlantic" is unthinkable without the roar of the ocean being cut by the mighty breast of the floating giant, without the ominous howl of its sirens, its signal bells, without the despairing S.O.S. from the steamer station, without the rumble of the machinery going silent before the terrible image of inevitable death, without the metallicly rigid commands deciding at the sublime moment the fate of the little world carelessly and comfortably ensconced in the richly lighted hull of the agonizing giant, without the inhuman screams of hundreds who, feeling the nearness of a terrible death, forgetting everything but themselves, run and crowd the lifeboats ... (E. P. 1930, 11).*

The reviewer of *Nasheto Kino* P. Vezh. stated:

*One of the most accomplished European talking films, projected with the most sophisticated sound equipment so far: here is the circumstance that will suddenly decide the victory of the sound film in Bulgaria – "Atlantic" triumphed for three weeks, and had it not been halted during the passion week [14–20 April], we're sure it would have broken the run length record, rounding out its month-long showing at the Moderen Teatar (P. Vezh. 1930, 3).*

### **The sonorous Easter**

On the eve of the Feast of the Resurrection, *Mir* printed two large advertising boxes. The first, “taped” to the head of the newspaper, announces that “from Sunday – 20 April this year (Easter)” at the *Moderen Teatar*, “the first sound film comedy” will be shown – *Why Cry at Parting?* (*Wer wird denn weinen, wenn man auseinandergeht?*, 1929) directed by Richard Eichberg. The dialogue is in German, the subtitles in Bulgarian, and the equipment – *Western Electric*, which guarantees “amazing clarity of speech, music, singing and other effects” (*Mir*, XXXVI, 8935, 17.04.1930, 1).

The advertiser of the other box, placed on the second page, is the management of *Gloria Palace* – which turned out to be the third Sofia cinema “flooded” by the sound wave. *Grand Opening* – reads the final part of the text – *of the most perfect sound equipment, delivered by Western Electric Company – New York for the Gloria Palace on 20 April – the first day of Easter.* The title of the film chosen to be the first to step on the cinema’s threshold was *Troyka* (1930), the popular “Russian Troyka”, the symbol of both “Russia pursuing its destiny” and “Moscow: its pleasure places, gypsy cabarets, songs and dances...” (Mir, XXXVI, 8935, 17.04.1930, 2). *Troyka* is a “majestic and spectacular standard sound production” by the Berlin film companies *Hisa-Film-Vertrieb* and *Usunia Produktion*, hosted dozens of Russian actors and filmmakers who left their homeland after the 1917 revolution and the ensuing civil war. As a result, most of the actors in this otherwise “German drama” were white emigrants (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. The advertisement for the film *Troyka*, which started the sound era in the cinema *Gloria Palace*

At Easter, issue No. 55 of the *Kino* magazine was published, featuring the already mentioned text “A Sonorous Easter” (Fig. 5). The author warned at the beginning:

*This is not the title of a sound film, but a cinematic characterization of the feast that is upon us. For film suppliers, for theatre owners, for cinema orchestras, for movie lovers – it’s all about sound now. And Easter. Indeed, with the sound film,*

we have heard many interesting things [...]. On Easter Day, the screen of Gloria Palace will be enlivened by Russian songs and music of "Тройка". At the same time, the Moderen Teatar will host a jazz band and hilarious jokes from the sound film comedy "Why Cry at Parting?" while the famous Berlin tenor Richard Tauber will sing in the heartwarming film "Never Trust a Woman" ["Ich glaub nie mehr an eine Frau", 1930]. In a word, a sonorous Easter (Zvukov Velikden 1930, 2).

## ЗВУКОВЪ ВЕЛИКДЕНЬ

(Вместо честитки и фейлетонъ)



Христосъ Воскресе!

по подобие на кинематографито, идана въ нова ери: безработица. Звело съ тонфилми, въ парламенти провауча авторитетътъ на българския законодатель и задържаха веригитъ отъ членове и параграфи, които оковаха свободното развитие и популяризиране на кинофилмото у насъ. Чу се плачътъ на стотини 18-годишни „деца“ (ако въобще ги могатъ да плачатъ), които плачеха на невинността си, която издирятъ общественникъ реди да запази отъ „рушителна на моралитъ и нравственн устои“. Въ момента, когато българскиятъ кинолюбитель отвори уста громко да поадрави шумния гостиниш, пригравна и назаде фалшивъ звукъ, като видъ увеличенитъ щери на кината. Започна се оживенъ диалогъ между кинопритежателитъ и представителитъ на звукови апарати и филмови доставчици, който обаче скоро се изчерпа безрезултатно, поради внезапното оживяване на единъ много важенъ факторъ — кредита. Паспортиътъ на филмовитъ представители профучаха къмъ чуждитъ делегации за виза и притежателитъ имъ, омалин отъ звуковетъ на една звучна фраза: търсятъ се звукови филми, отидаха да пиятъ предъ вратитъ на тонофилмовитъ производители... Изобщо всичко прозвуча и звучи.

На връхъ Великденъ ще зазвучи и екранитъ на Глория Паласа, пживитъ отъ руснитъ пѣсни и музика на „Тройка“. Едновременно въ Модеренъ Театъръ ще се чуватъ джаз-бандъ и веселитъ винове отъ тонофилмовата комедия „Кой ще плаче при раздѣлата“, а въ Пачеа ще пѣе известнитъ берлински теноръ Рихардъ Тауберъ въ трогателния филмъ „Пача на сърцето“. Съ една дума звуковъ Великденъ.

Тази година „Кино“ набра малкото Съни-бойче и кравицата Лидианъ Харвей да навиватъ на всички читатели „Христосъ възкресе“. И когато жанбинитъ (безъ всякаква връзка съ звуковия филмъ) зазвучатъ, разнасятъ радостната вѣст на Възкресението, нека, заедно съ всички други честитки, всѣки приятелъ на киното да чуе и единъ звученъ привѣтъ отъ „Кино“ по случай звуковия Великденъ...

Да не ставатъ грешки Това не е заглавие на тонофилми: А кинематографна характеристика на празника, който ни предстои За филмови доставчици, за кинопритежателни, за кинопресити, за кинолюбители — сега всичко е звуково И Великденъ Навистина, съ звуковия филмъ у насъ произвуча и много интересни работи Така, преди още изключително филмъ да зазвучи, гръмна ожесточена полемика между Пачеа и Модерния Първитъ дни даже беднитъ повелюшца не можа нито да проговори, нито да пропѣе, нито да прозвучи като хората — съскането и реваътъ на конкурентитъ го залудих Нав-после, следъ прегриванни, следъ скръдане, Негово Величество Атлантисъ и Нейно Сиятелство Любопытъ, звито не уишра, можаха спокойно и при змиреня нерви да покажатъ величието и чара си Отъ екранитъ на Модерния и Пачеа заочинаха да дозвнѣтъ пѣсенъ и слово, шумъ и музика Обществото различава изтъквува тѣми звити Един казаха, че е чудо, друга — глупостъ, един — почти театъръ и опера, други — почти грамофонъ Само въ една обществена група тѣмъкувинието бѣше единозвучно Музикантитъ отъ кинопресити, чинто глави бѣха зашнѣли отъ 15-дневното предупреждение преди още да зазвучи тонофилмътъ, откриха въ всички акустични сфери на пришеда-конкурентъ дръкво надгробно слово надъ добритъ си заплата и спокойното си съществуване, ностъ,



Вила Фричъ с готовъ да посрещне Великдени

Fig. 5. The article "A Sonorous Easter" in the *Kino* magazine

## The Singing Fool

Meanwhile, life went on. *Pachev Cinema* was showing “the great sound film drama *Never Trust a Woman*” (*Ich glaub nie mehr an eine Frau*, 1930), a Maupassant screen adaptation with the “famous German singer” Richard Tauber (Mir, XXXVI, 8937, 19.04.1930, 3; Plachat na sardtseto 1930, 9).

Also offering German sound films were *Moderen Teatar – Tonight-Eventually* (*Heute Nacht – eventuell*, 1930) (from 30 April) (Mir, XXXVI, 8944, 29.04.1930, 2), and *Gloria Palace – Because I Loved You* (*Dich hab’ ich geliebt*, 1929) (from 5 May), promoted as “the only German-language film bought to America!” (Mir, XXXVI, 8945, 30.04.1930, 2).

Al Jolson himself finally appeared on the Bulgarian screen – at *Moderen Teatar*, from 19 May (Monday), in *The Singing Fool* (1928) – “the second talking giant” (after *Atlantic*) (Mir, XXXVI, 8956, 14.05.1930, 1; 8958, 16.05.1930, 2; 8962, 21.05.1930, 2) (Fig. 6). Al Jolson was described as “the all-conquering, highest-paid baritone” who, “within the dramatic plot and magnificent acting, performed, among other songs, the popular melody *Sonny Boy*”. *Kino* magazine was the first to announce the upcoming event, publishing on 16 March the information “*The Singing Fool on Its Way to Bulgaria*”. After pointing out that *in connection with the installation of the sound equipment in Sofia, the film suppliers had also moved*, the publication gave a concrete example:

**Модеренъ Театаръ - въ следващия 19 тогъ!**

Аль Джолсонъ  
въ  
**„Лудиятъ Пѣвецъ“**

Коронна Америк. Говоряща продукция  
всѣто наложно въ Европа ТЕРИФИЛМА и смечени обществено мнени  
за своето извѣстие! 4373

**САМО**  
**въ МОДЕРЕНЪ ТЕАТЪРЪ**  
**АЛЪ ДЖОЛСОНЪ**

съ пѣсни и думи  
предва трагичния образъ  
НА  
**Лудия**  
**Пѣвецъ**  
най-художествено до сега  
постижението на тон-  
-фильма!  
**АЛЪ ДЖОЛСОНЪ** въ  
**„Съни Бой“**  
въ дни на радостъ, въ дни  
на горестъ, съ гласъ и аз-  
душностъ, които трогатъ  
и услаждатъ!  
**Чуйте и вижете**  
**АЛЪ ДЖОЛСОНА** въ  
**„ЛУДИЯ ПѢВЕЦЪ“!**

Представления:  
са, пд. въ 4:30 и 6:15 часа,  
веч. въ 9 и 10:30 часа.  
Запазете своевременно билети на касата — телефон. № 324.

Fig. 6. Ads for *The Singing Fool* in the *Mir* newspaper (Mir, XXXVI, 8958, 16.05.1930, 2; 8962, 21.05.1930, 2)

So, the acclaimed 100% sound film “The Singing Fool” has been commissioned by Neyko Korolov, and the copy is expected to arrive in Bulgaria in the near future. Fantastic visitor and revenue figures were noted everywhere at its release. The lead role is played by celebrated American singer and entertainer Al Jolson. One of the unforgettable moments of this film, as spectacular as it is dramatic, is the magnificent performance of the wonderful song “Sonny Boy”. The film will be an event (“Ludiyat pevets”... 1930, 3).

Apart from the capital’s newspapers, similar advertising and praise pieces, as well as extensive reviews of *The Singing Fool*, also appeared in the magazines *Nasheto Kino*, *Kino*, *Film* (1930), *Film, Ton i Muzika* (Film, Sound and Music) (1930), and the weekly newspaper *Film i Kritika* (Film and Criticism) (1930–1934). These appeared accompanied by several portraits of Al Jolson as a performer interspersed with his photographs.

*The Jazz Singer*, described as a “100% sound film”, premiered on the *Moderen Teatar* screen on 8 September (nearly three years after its premiere in the United States) (Istoriyata na Al Jolson 1930, 8; Famozniyat peesht... 1930, 8; Al Jolson v “Pevetsat na dzhaza” 1930, 7; “Pevetsat na dzhaza” 1930, 1, 3; A. 1930, 1; M. 1930, 2) (Fig. 7).

**ИСТОРИЯТА НА АЛЪ ДЖОЛСОНЪ**  
РАЗКАЗВАНА СЪ ПРИБИРАТА НА МОЛЯ „ЛЮБИВЕЦА НА ДЖАЗЪ“

Един великолепен пример на чуждестранен артист... (Text continues describing Al Jolson's career and the film 'The Singing Fool').



**Ал Джолсон — Певецът на джаз**

Ал Джолсон е един от най-големите артисти на нашия екран... (Text continues describing his performance).



Един великолепен пример на чуждестранен артист... (Text continues describing his performance).

А. Н. Н.

Fig. 7. Portrait of movie star Al Jolson in the *Kino* magazine (Istoriyata na Al Jolson 1930, 8)

## The followers *Solun* and *Odeon*

On 3 May 1930, *Mir* newspaper announced that cinema *Solun* had already installed the sound equipment of the well-known brand *Philips* and from Monday, 5 May, it would begin to screen the 100% talking, musical and sound film *Smiling Irish Eyes* (Mir, XXXVI, 8948, 3.05.1930, 2). Ten days later, the much-awaited news came – *Sound film at Odeon Theatre* (Fig. 8). This is the title of the extensive text printed in *Mir*, which reads:

*The management of the Odeon Theatre is honoured to announce to the esteemed audience that, after two months of research, the installation of two Western Electric units for talking and sound films has begun. These devices have state-of-the-art designs and are specially adapted to the acoustics of the Odeon Theatre. Their cost is over three and a half million leva. The likely date of the gala screening of the first talking film at the Odeon Theatre will be in early June – between the 8th and 14th. The management of the Odeon Theatre succeeded in purchasing the sound film production of the famous German company UFA with no less financial resources and after long negotiations<sup>4</sup> (Tonfilm v Teatar Odeon 1930, 2).*



Fig. 8. The second “trio” of capital cinemas whose screens started to speak – *Gloria Palace, Solun, and Odeon Theatre*

In a few days, *Nasheto Kino* magazine confirmed the information:

*Finally came the long-awaited news: the last of the major capital cinemas has decided to convert to sound, and as such, promises to present itself to us in twenty*

<sup>4</sup> UFA (Universum Film AG) – a German joint-stock film production company founded in 1917.

days. With the inherent temperament of an enthusiastic activist, the director of the Odeon Theatre – Mr. Yankov, has already started the launching of this news among the capital's audience, which knows from the numerous big posters that the theatre has provided it with a number of first-rate talking and sound productions of the biggest German film house – UFA. These films will be screened in Sofia through prints that have the sounds imprinted on the film itself (Movietone, Lichtton [optical sound]) and not through the Vitaphone system with phonograph records, which, for a number of reasons, has been preferred so far in this country. Movietone<sup>5</sup> undoubtedly has undeniable advantages over the Vitaphone; therefore, it is more expensive (Poslednata pobeda... 1930, 3, 8).

Like every event, this too has its background, which Anton Marinovich traces in the already quoted article “The Sound Film Fever is Already in Bulgaria” from mid-March:

*Two weeks ago, the director of Odeon Theatre JSC Spiro Yankov went to Budapest and Vienna with the sole purpose of attending the presentation of the first four Ufatons [UFA sound films]. Convinced that the invasion of sound film in our country is a matter of days, we visited Mr. Yankov after his return, whose view is as follows. The delay of the sound film in Bulgaria is due both to the severe economic crisis and the innate hesitation of Bulgarians in adopting and introducing such new inventions. An advanced device, such as those of Western Electric and Klang [Tobis Klangfilm], which have been considered so far, costs BGN 1,800,000 for the first and BGN 1,600,000 for the second. Sound prints cost almost twice as much (one metre of silent film is priced at 37 German pfennigs when the sound print costs 45 pfennigs per metre). At least for a year or two in the first time, only the big capital and central provincial cinema theatres will be able to purchase sound equipment. In this way, the delivered print will not be able to rely on a hundred screens, as is the case today with the silent movie, but only on a dozen or so. Despite all doubts, says Mr. Yankov, the sound film will be here. (When?) Many of the capital's enterprises are interested in the sound equipment. But they need a lot of money.*

*Q: What was your impression of the sound films you saw and heard?*

*Excellent, superb, magical! Perfection has been achieved, both in technique and execution – in everything. Europe is crazy about sound film. And it is worth it (Marinovich 1930a, 4).*

“The gala screening of the first talking film at the Odeon Theatre” took place on 8 June (Sunday), when the “100 per cent first sound film operetta” entitled *Waltz of Love* (*Liebeswalzer*, 1930) was screened (Mir, XXXVI, 8975, 7.06.1930, 1). Filmed inside the UFA pavilions in Babelsberg<sup>6</sup> by Austrian

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<sup>5</sup> *Movietone* – one of the first sound recording systems used in motion pictures, referred to as the *Fox Movietone* after 1926, when the rights to it were purchased by the Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

<sup>6</sup> Babelsberg is a district of the city of Potsdam in Germany, where a large film studio was built in 1912 and is still in operation today.

director Wilhelm Thiele, this German film stars Lilian Harvey, Willy Fritsch, and Georg Alexander.

Again, it did not come without “banter”. In an unsigned “hot article” entitled “Around a Controversy,” published in *Nasheto Kino* magazine, the author notes:

*Our readers are, perhaps, aware of the discussion which has sprung up in the press in connection with the advertisement which the Odeon Theatre has given for its new sound equipment, namely, that the Western Electric unit with which the Odeon is being equipped is of the latest and most advanced type of the above brand. Moderen Teatar and Gloria Palace countered this claim by explaining that the Odeon's equipment was the same type as their theatres and, therefore, the Odeon Theatre had no right to place its equipment above theirs in quality. On the occasion of these statements, the director of the Odeon Theatre, Mr. Yankov, gave us the following clarification:*

*– Due to the fact that our theatre is installing its Western Electric a little later, certain improvements and refinements have been inserted into our equipment, especially in the optical sound fixture – which, by virtue of their contracts with the above firm, both the Gloria Palace and the Moderen Teatar will eventually have. At the time of the opening, however, of our sound cinema, we are the only ones who can claim a “more sophisticated” type of Western Electric, which is precisely what gives us the reason to claim our advantages over them (Okolo edin spor 1930, 9).*

In the summer, *Kino* magazine paid special attention to the film programme at the *Odeon*, and in particular to the “commendable initiative” to diversify it by screening “unusually entertaining animation films” and “one-act drawn sound comedies”, “the production of which – the publication assures – has grown and improved unprecedentedly in recent times” (Za programite... 1930, 3).

In mid-November, *Odeon Cinema*, “remaining faithful to its tradition of always being the first to present to the esteemed capital audience all the novelties in the field of sound film”, will take another pioneering step – *from Monday, 17 November this year, for the first time in Bulgaria, it will introduce the sound and talking weekly newsreels. Starting Monday, the 17th, explains the ad in Mir newspaper, the first talking weekly newsreel of UFA – Berlin, will be heard on the screen of the Odeon Theatre (Mir, XXXVI, 9107, 15.11.1930, 2).*

## **Reckoning**

With the advent of sound in Bulgarian cinemas, companies offering sound equipment began to spring up like mushrooms, including: Western Electric, represented by W. Hausers; Philips – by Ton-Film N. Rusev; Telefunken – by the Energiya factory of the limited partnership Kondratenko & Co.; Klangfilm – by the Bulgarian joint-stock company Siemens; Bauer (Stuttgart) – by Balkan Import-Export JSC; Meloton of Nitzsche AG (Leipzig) – by Tsv. M. Kolarov – Archimedes Bureau; Goetz-Movie-Phone – by Balkan Distributing Corporation (Bucharest)... (Balgarski ton-aparati 1930, 7, 9). Some film production companies also opened their representative offices – the mighty Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

established its branch in Sofia (“Metro-Goldwyn”... 1930, 156, 10; 157, 11); a local office was also established for the film company First National Pictures, which, according to the press, “is exclusively focused on making films” (First National Pictures 1930, 8)<sup>7</sup>.

The listed companies began to advertise their products on the pages of specialized publications, the number of which grew rapidly (Fig. 9). It was only in 1930 that the magazines *Film* and *Film, Ton i Muzika*, and the newspaper *Film i Kritika* began to be published in Sofia.

Poster advertising has been growing, flooding the streets of Sofia. So much so that the Sofia Municipality decided “due to fiscal considerations” to increase its revenue from poster advertising for 1931 to BGN 2,400,000. To this purpose, the municipal councillors adopted regulations to ensure the collection of the above amount (P. M. K. 1931, 6).

This act, in turn, rallied cinema owners and film suppliers, whose Association assembled its members at an annual meeting which elected a new governing board (committee), “encouraged by the belief that by perseverance it would succeed in obtaining the relief required” (Kakvo plashtat kinata... 1931, 8).



Fig. 9. With the introduction of sound in Bulgarian cinemas, companies offering sound equipment in the country began to spring up like mushrooms

<sup>7</sup> Apparently, the First National studio, founded in 1917 as a major studio, is still a popular cinema brand, although, by 1929, the company was already part of Warner Brothers.

In addition to the capital, sound films were also conquering the country. At the end of the year, *Nasheto Kino* published the overview “Reckoning”, recalling what happened in the past year. *In just 9 months, the text assures, we have 29 cinemas in the country converted for sound projection. During this period 57 sound and talking films have been imported into the country* (Ravnosmetka 1930, 3).

At the end of its last issue of the year, *Nasheto Kino* published a detailed “List of Cinemas in the Country Converted for Sound Projection by 31 December 1930” – 7 in Sofia and 22 in the country (Fig. 10):

<b>Списъкъ на кинотеатритѣ въ страна- та, преустроени за звукова прожек- ция до 31 декември 1930 г.</b>	
<b>29 звукови кина: 7 въ София и 21 въ про- винцията:</b>	
<b>София</b>	
1.	Модеренъ театъръ (Вестернъ Електрикъ)
2.	Театъръ Одеонъ (Вестернъ Електрикъ).
3.	Глория-Паласъ (Вестернъ Електрикъ).
4.	Театъръ Пачевъ (Биофонъ).
5.	Кино Фениксъ (Парлапановъ).
6.	Центр. Уч.нич. кино (Парлапановъ),
7.	Кино Батембегъ (Парлапановъ).
<b>Провинция</b>	
1.	Варна — Театъръ Ранковъ (Филипсъ).
2.	Варна — Модеренъ Театъръ (Филипсъ)
3.	Пловдивъ — Кино Пикадили (Ниче).
4.	Русе — Модеренъ театъръ (неизвестна система)
5.	Плѣвенъ — Модеренъ театъръ (Ниче).
6.	Плѣвенъ — Читалище Съгласие (Филипсъ).
7.	Плѣвенъ — Кино Електра (Филипсъ).
8.	Шуменъ — Народно кино (Парлапан въ).
9.	Хасково — Модеренъ театъръ (Биофонъ).
10.	Ломъ — Кусидисъ (Кондратенко).
11.	Ямъ — Кино Едисонъ (Филипсъ).
12.	Бургасъ — Модеренъ (Филипсъ).
13.	Ямболъ — Модеренъ театъръ (Кондратенко).
14.	Ст. Загора — Модеренъ театъръ (Кондратенко).
15.	Ст. Загора — Д-во Театъръ (Бауеръ).
16.	Станимака — Кино Фанамти (Филипсъ).
17.	Кюстендилъ — Театъръ Олеснъ (Кондратенко).
18.	Червенъ Брѣгъ — Йото Мариновъ (Кондратенко).
19.	Видинъ — Читал. Цѣлъ (Филипсъ)
20.	Дупница — Модеренъ театъръ (Кондратенко).
21.	Фердинандъ — Читал. Развитие (Кондратенко).
22.	Врѣца — Кино Ботевъ (Ниче).

Fig. 10. The reckoning of a historical year in the magazine *Nasheto Kino*

1. *Moderen Teatar (Western Electric)*
2. *Odeon Theatre (Western Electric)*
3. *Gloria Palace (Western Electric)*
4. *Pachev Theatre (Biophone)*
5. *Phoenix Cinema (Parlapanov)*
6. *Cent. Uchenich. Kino [Central Student Cinema] (Parlapanov)*
7. *Cinema Batemberg (Parlapanov)*

What is striking about this list is the absence of the *Solun Cinema* on it. The following is a listing of sound cinemas in the countryside as well:

1. *Varna – Rankov Theatre (Philips)*
2. *Varna – Moderen Teatar (Philips)*
3. *Plovdiv – Piccadilly Cinema (Nitzsche)*
4. *Ruse – Moderen Teatar (unknown system)*
5. *Pleven – Moderen Teatar (Nitzsche)*
6. *Pleven – Chitalishte [Community centre] Saglasie (Philips)*
7. *Pleven – Elektra Cinema (Philips)*
8. *Shumen – Narodno Kino [People’s Cinema] (Parlapanov)*
9. *Haskovo – Moderen Teatar (Biophone)*
10. *Lom – Kusidis (Kondratenko)*
11. *Lom – Edison Cinema (Philips)*
12. *Burgas – Moderen Teatar (Philips)*
13. *Yambol – Moderen Teatar (Kondratenko)*
14. *St. Zagora – Moderen Teatar (Kondratenko)*
15. *St. Zagora – Society Teatar (Bauer)*
16. *Stanimaka [Asenovgrad] – Fanamet Cinema (Philips)*
17. *Kyustendil – Odeon Theatre (Kondratenko)*
18. *Cherven Bryag – Yoto Marinov (Kondratenko)*
19. *Vidin – Chital. [Community centre] Tsvyat (Philips)*
20. *Dupnitsa – Moderen Teatar (Kondratenko)*
21. *Ferdinand [Montana] – Chital. [Community centre] Razvitie (Kondratenko)*
22. *Vratsa – Botev Cinema (Nitzsche) (Spisak 1930, II).*

The magazine added one more to this list, which contained the titles of sound and talking films “presented in Sofia until 31 December 1930”, but only in four cinemas – *Moderen Teatar*, *Odeon*, *Gloria Palace*, and *Pachev* (Zvukovi i govoryashti filmi... 1930, II).

### **The transformation of cinema by the arrival of sound. The introduction of the first sound equipment in Bulgarian cinemas**

Like any revolution, the sound one was causing radical changes in the celluloid world. The emergence of sound cinema in Bulgaria was late, but its recognition on the country’s screens was rapid. The intensive modernization of

the cinemas began, equipping them with the rapidly entering sound equipment. This gave rise to new processes, contributed to the emergence of crafts and professions not practised before, but also created problems. The first of these was the installation of the new sound equipment...

*Mir* newspaper reported on 14 March 1930 that in Sofia arrived “the engineers Krach and Hausers, representatives of Western Electric”, who, together with “the engineering specialist Kudryavchev”, began the installation of the Western Electric equipment in the *Moderen Teatar* (Pristignali... 1930, 2). The *Pachev Cinema* also welcomed a “special American engineer”, who on 15 March had “already” not only installed the equipment but had also begun “test screenings” with it (Eng. D. P. 1930, 2). After three days, the cinema’s management assured that the installation was carried out “around the clock” and “intensively” (*Mir*, XXXVI, 8910, 18.03.1930, 1).

*The adaptation of the projection booth for the new purposes had begun earlier under the guidance of Westing’s engineers*, noted the *Kino* magazine on 10 April 1930, referring to the installation of “complete equipment” in the “Gloria Palace”, the third cinema in the country, which “opened its doors to the sound film” (*Gloria Palace*... 1930, 6).

From the admittedly scant information provided, it is clear that “preparatory work” in both cinemas was “in full swing”, that hard work was in progress, that foreign engineers and technicians were feverishly installing the devices that had arrived from afar for “transmission” of sound, talking, and musical films... It also became evident that the management of the *Moderen Teatar* and *Pachev*, bracing themselves for the “test screenings” and determined to get at least an hour ahead of their competitor, had accelerated the process by providing conditions for the “round-the-clock intensive installation” of the precise, complicated, and –“for local conditions” – overly expensive sound equipment...

### **The makeover of cinemas**

As if anticipating the changes, but also apparently well informed about what was happening in the world in the field of cinema, the Bulgarian state convened in the early 1930s “a committee of authorities from the Ministry of Public Works and the Metropolitan Police Commandant’s Office”, which, after making an audit of Sofia’s cinemas, found that “almost all cinemas do not meet the conditions that can ensure the safety of spectators and the rapid emptying of the spaces in case of fire”. The Audit Commission, therefore, recommended “a number of measures” requiring “all cinemas” to secure their theatres with wide doors, which “must open outwards” and “must always be unlocked”. To mark all exits with “coloured lamps with independent electricity”. To remove steps and thresholds from corridors and auditoriums that would make it difficult for spectators to exit. Requirements were also claimed for the condition of fire cranes, fire extinguishers, lighting, projection booths; seating arrangements in the auditoriums”...

Based on the “final protocols” submitted by the committee, it was decided “to reduce the audience seats in the individual cinemas”. The draconian measures affected all 12 of the capital’s cinemas. *Moderen Teatar* reduced its seats from 960

to 660, *Odeon* – from 828 to 535, *Pachev* – from 800 to 500, and *Solun* – from 479 to 350... Balconies were not forgotten either. Cinema owners were given until 15 March 1930, to comply with these regulations. After that date, if the commission found any irregularities, the cinemas would be closed” (Namalenie mestata...1930, 2; Za bezopasnostta v kinata 1930, 3).

### Repair works

Therefore, in many cinemas, the renovation of old and deteriorated auditoriums, halls, lobbies, corridors, etc., was carried out alongside the installation of new sound equipment. The outcomes were not delayed. When the new cinema season officially opened in Sofia on 1 September 1932, the press announced that the *Moderen Teatar*, *Pachev* and *Royal* cinemas had been



Fig. 11. The metamorphoses of the *Royal Cinema*



Fig. 12. This part of the city, the liveliest until World War II, had the *Pachev Cinema*, destroyed during bombing in the spring of 1944

“completely renovated” during the “summer vacation” (Noviyat kinosezon... 1932, 4)<sup>8</sup> (Figs. 11, 12).

In 1928, *Moderen Teatar* was already equipped with a “special installation” that “cools the auditorium efficiently with cold air”. The initiative for the installation of these “special machines” was that of the “Management” and was implemented in August “in the face of great heat” (Zora 1928, X, 2724, 3.08.1928, 2, 3). In the summer of 1932, *Pachev Cinema* was “completely renovated” (Otkrivaneto na teatar “Pachev” 1932, 4).

At the same time, the newspaper *Svobodna Rech* (Free Speech) also announced: *The Royal Theatre (opposite the Military Club) reopens its doors after several months of renovation and the installation of the most modern equipment for the projection of talking and musical films* (Otkrivaneto na teatar “Royal” 1932, 4).

Thus, “the Balkan Peninsula’s most beautiful theatre” was “newly opened”.

Some of the aforementioned renovations probably helped improve the acoustics in the cinemas, which had previously been muffled.

### New cinemas, new management

In 1930–1931, 15 new cinemas were opened in Sofia. Two of them, *Hemus* and *Opera*, “will be rebuilt as sound cinemas in the near future” – assured *Nasheto Kino* magazine in its permanent column *Novelties of the Cinema* (Novostite na kinoto 1930b, 10). The “rapid increase” in the number of “the first sound cinemas in the country” was pointed out by Alexander Yanakiev as the most important argument for the adoption on 28 March of the Cinema Law, promulgated on 29 April 1930 in the State Gazette (No. 21) (Yanakiev 2003, 146) (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. It was only in 1930 that three specialized cinema publications began appearing in Sofia

<sup>8</sup> The *Royal Cinema*, built and operated by a nameless joint-stock company headed by the Hungarian Aladar Ottay-Osterreicher, one of the founders of the *Moderen Teatar*

## The sad end of cinema orchestras

The first tangible change brought about by the invasion of sound on the screen was the disappearance of the orchestras beneath it, which until then every self-respecting cinema owned and was proud of for their artistic activity. An indispensable component of cinema performances in Bulgaria since 1908, when the *Moderen Teatar* opened its doors, orchestras suddenly became unnecessary and “cinema musicians” redundant (Fig. 14). Warning of the approaching danger, which had already affected the West and created “whole armies of unemployed musicians”, *Kino* magazine asked as early as February 1930: *Will the sound film replace the orchestras?* The translated article it published also quoted the opinion of Mr. Berthelot, Secretary General of the Syndicate of Artists-Musicians in France, who, after cheerfully declaring that “the public does not like mechanized music at all”, admitted that “defensive measures” had to be taken against this “thorny problem”. Some of the musicians, he suggested, would be hired by production companies to participate in recording the music for films, while others would have to look for new engagements. Berthelot also proposed the creation, by law, of an auxiliary fund into which film producers would pay certain amounts, which would then be distributed as benefits to musicians remaining unemployed (Shte izmesti li... 1930, 14–15).



**Fig. 14.** Having been an indispensable component of cinema screenings for more than 30 years, orchestras in cinemas suddenly found themselves unnecessary and “film musicians” redundant

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*Cinema*, opened its doors in December 1926 at 104 Georgi Rakovski Street. In 1929, the private theatre *P. K. Stoychev* was founded by Petar Konstantinov Stoychev (1879–1945), a theatre actor and director, former head of the National Opera (1926) and the National Theatre (1927–1929). In 1934, on the stage of the cinema theatre (at night, after the regular theatrical performances or film screenings), some of the interior shots for the feature film *The Song of the Balkan* (1934) were realised; it was produced and directed by Petar Stoychev, financially supported by the Theatre Royal JSC, filmed by the Croatian cinematographer Josip Novak and sound-recorded by the Serbian sound recordist Stefan Miskovic. The film’s grand premiere took place at the *Royal Theatre* on 4 December 1934. In 1935, the director Vasil Bakardzhiev and the cameraman Simeon Simeonov projected their weekly cinema reports on the cinema’s screen, whose director (manager) at that time was Ventura. In 1943, the *Royal Theatre* went into forced liquidation. In 1948, the cinema was nationalized. For a short time, it continued its functions under the name *Republic*, and from 1950, it sheltered the newly established *People’s Army Theatre* (today’s *Bulgarian Army Theatre* at 98 Georgi Rakovski Street).

## **New programming – screening of “additional sound attractions”**

The sound invasion also changed the structure of cinema screenings. As early as the summer of 1930, *Odeon* diversified its film programme with animation films and “one-act drawn sound comedies” (Za programite... 1930, 3). In November, it “introduced” for the “first time in Bulgaria the sound and talking weekly newsreels”. An advertisement in the *Mir* newspaper explained:

*These newsreels, which will replace the previous silent ones, will be screened regularly, every week, and will contain, as before, the latest major world events, brought to the screen with speech and sounds. Speaking and sound reviews have become a real necessity for a major cinema today. The management of the Odeon Theatre is flattered by the thought that the esteemed capital audience will appreciate the sacrifices made in this regard (Mir, XXXVI, 9107, 15.11.1930, 2).*

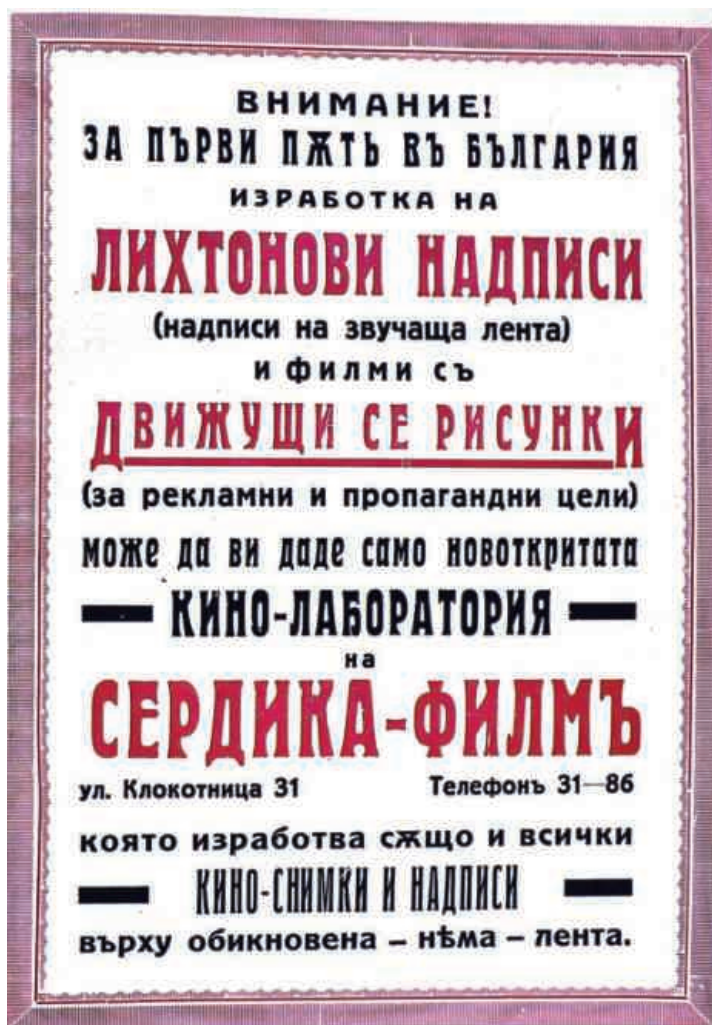
In a similar vein, *Nasheto Kino* magazine noted:

*Knowing with what great interest the audience followed the previous silent actualities, screened regularly with every programme at the Odeon, we imagine the joy this news will arouse among film lovers... UFA's cinema newsreels are some of the most interesting and completely congruent with the rule applied in their making: Today an event – tomorrow a document (Nay-novoto... 1930, 5).*

## **Sound film subtitling**

One of the problems that the introduction of sound in cinema posed was the multilingualism of films. To make them “accessible to all”, they were translated and then subtitled or dubbed. Initially, the films were accompanied by “explanatory captions” in Bulgarian, written on glass and projected below the film image on the screen. Eventually, the glass was replaced by a film strip on which the subtitles were printed.

In the first days of September 1930, *Nasheto Kino* magazine published an advertisement containing the following text: *Attention! For the first time in Bulgaria, the production of LICHTTON CAPTIONS (sound film subtitling) and films with MOVING DRAWINGS (for advertising and propaganda purposes) can be given to you only by the newly opened CINEMA LABORATORY of SERDIKA-FILM (Nasheto Kino, 7, 4.09.1930, 152, 11). Only two people stood behind this label – director Vasil Bakardzhiev and cameraman Simeon Simeonov (Fig. 15). But even they proved sufficient to undertake this venture... The same year, *Film* magazine also announced that the company Serdika Film had a “well equipped” and “modern” laboratory. The advertisement box in the publication reminded the film suppliers that, if they used the services of the laboratory, “they will have Bulgarian subtitles” for the films they delivered “with optical sound” (Film 1930, 11).*



**Fig. 15.** Two of the pioneers of Bulgarian cinema, Vasil Bakardzhiev and Simeon Simeonov, also became pioneers in producing *Lichtton captions* (sound film subtitling)

### When the screen started to sing and speak in Bulgarian

The emergence of sound cinema in Bulgaria was delayed, but its establishment on the country's screens took place at lightning speed. The first sound machines were installed in Sofia cinemas in March 1930 (Mir, XXXVI, 8911, 19.03.1930, 2; Nasheto Kino, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 2), and by the end of the year the number of cinemas in the country converted and adapted for sound projection had risen to 29 (Nasheto Kino, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, 3, 11). Like any revolution, the sound revolution caused radical changes in the world of cinema,

gave rise to new processes, contributed to the emergence of crafts and professions not previously practiced, but also created problems...

### Multilingualism

One of these problems was the multilingualism of films, which in our country was tackled through their translation, subtitling, and dubbing into Bulgarian. As early as the summer of 1930, the prestigious specialized magazine *Nasheto Kino* published the sensational announcement *European Films Are Talking in Bulgarian*, which stated that the Bulgarian distribution company Elektra Film had purchased “several large talking pictures, made with renowned European actors, among whom famous Bulgarian musical and stage players are engaged to act, in Bulgarian”. At the same time, *Film* magazine reported that the opera *Tahir Begovitsa* (Tahir Beg’s wife) was already “being filmed” in Bulgarian in Berlin, and many local companies “have decided to endow the copies of their sound films intended for Bulgaria with songs and arias sung in Bulgarian by prominent Bulgarian and foreign actors. Some of our actors have even signed contracts”.

### Bulgarian opera and operetta singers

Several Bulgarians were indeed taking part in the sound revolution, gradually sweeping the world: first of all, our opera and operetta singers, starring in European musical films: Petar Raychev, Iva Vanya, Dorita Boneva, Aleksandar Kraev, Maria Tsarigradska-Kraeva... Two performances by Petar Raychev are preserved to this day in the Bulgarian National Film Archive (BNFA) – Don Jose’s aria from Georges Bizet’s opera *Carmen* and Lenski’s aria from the opera *Eugene Onegin* by P. I. Tchaikovsky, both filmed by *Tobis Film* in 1929 and 1930 (according to BNFA documentation) (Fig. 16).



Fig. 16. Petar Raychev sings...

## Co-production projects with Bulgarian participation

In comparison to silent films, the making of sound, talking, and music films proved to be not only more technologically sophisticated but also significantly more expensive. This partly explains the emergence of reports concerning numerous international co-productions seeking to combine both the efforts and the capital of producers from different countries. In the summer of 1930, *Nasheto Kino* magazine reported that an adaptation of Stefan L. Kostov's comedy *The Golden Mine* was being prepared in Bucharest, emphasizing that the film would be a talkie in two versions – Bulgarian and Romanian. Also in “two editions” – Bulgarian and Italian – the Roman film company Cines intended to screen “an opera of Bulgarian life”. In the summer of 1930, the news came from Berlin that the opera *Tahir Begovitsa*, which revived “life in Bulgaria during the time of slavery”, was already “being staged” as “sound film” at the Deutsche Klangfilm Company. It was to be sung and performed in front of the camera in three languages: in German for Germany, French for France, and Russian for Russia, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

In the summer of 1933, it was rumoured that the German film star Evelina Holt would star in the Bulgarian film *Nerazdelni* (Inseparable) based on Pencho Slaveykov's epic poem of the same name. Two years later her compatriot Magda Schneider announced that she would accept to act in *The Roses Are Blooming in the Tundzha Valley* if the Varna municipality would cover 10% of the production's approximately 9-million BG leva budget – a condition that apparently remained unmet (Yug 1935, 2).

In 1936 had to begin the filming of the “first Polish-Bulgarian film” entitled *The Shot at the Opera*, produced most probably by the Bulgarian Stancho Kisselkov – “an alert and gifted fellow countryman, who for a number of years in Poland propagated our culture through pen, language and music”, and who was also supposed to play the male lead (Varnenski Novini 1936, 2; Balgarski Narodni Teatar 1936, 4).

## Foreign sound films filmed in Bulgaria

The titles listed above enter the history of cinema in our country only as “projects”, as yet another good intention left unrealized. In contrast, in 1936, foreign feature films not only began to be shot in Bulgaria, but were also successfully completed, and two of these could be described as “super-productions”: *Michael Strogoff* and *Port Arthur*, both of which featured Bulgarians as well – as extras (Tatars, soldiers) and stunt performers (riders).

## Georgi Parlapanov: The apostle of the sound age

In August 1930, *Kino* magazine published the article “Bulgaria produces sound film equipment too”. It turned out that Georgi Parlapanov, who at that time was responsible for the maintenance of the sound-reproducing equipment in cinemas all over the country, had constructed and begun to manufacture in his “workshop” (“cinema-atelier”) a sound-film apparatus – a “perfect likeness

of the best foreign installations”. At the end of the year, *Nasheto Kino* magazine published “a list of cinemas in the country converted for sound projection by 31 December 1930”, four of which turned out to be equipped with the Bulgarian’s installation: the Sofia *Phoenix*, *Battenberg*, and *Central Student Cinema*, and the *People’s Cinema* in Shumen. In this way, Parlapanov satisfied the needs of those cinemas for which imported “installations” proved unaffordable. At that time there were about 120 of them – private, state, school, community, village, army...

There even appeared the brochure *How to Treat the Sound Apparatus and the Soundfilm* by Dimitar Azmanov – “the first manual in Bulgarian, designed to give from the very beginning the correct direction to the manipulator of sound machines and sound films”.

### The first Bulgarian sound movies

The sound, spilling out of the previously silent screens, enthralled viewers, who, delighted by the innovation, refused to watch silent films. Bulgarian filmmakers, however, were unable to offer the audience sound films, the production of which, on the one hand, was considerably more expensive and, on the other, required sound equipment that nobody in our country possessed. But there was no going back to the silence, even though the sound revolution shook local celluloid production to its foundations, no matter how modest it had been until then – in 1929, four local silent feature films appeared on screen in Bulgaria, and a fifth remained unfinished; the situation was exactly the same in



Fig. 17. On 23 June 1933, the magazine *Tempo* devoted five entire pages to the film *The Girl of Nature*

1930; in 1931, two films appeared, and in 1932 – none! One of the two feature films that premiered in 1931 was *The Theft on the Express*, advertised not only as a “synchronized film” but also as “the first Bulgarian sound film” shot “on the RCA [Radio Corporation of America] Photophone sound system” (Svobodna Rech 1932, 4; Tempo 1933, 7).

In the first days of June 1933, *Tempo* magazine reported that *Serdika-Film* began filming “the biggest Bulgarian film” – *Bulgarian Industries*, commissioned by the Union of Bulgarian Industrialists. *The film will be with sound and music*, the publication stressed.

At the end of the month, *Tempo* announced another title, *The Girl of Nature*, described as “the first 100% talking Bulgarian musical sound film made by the French cinema house Minerva Film in Paris” (Fig. 17). It was directed by Johan Rosenblatt (Johan Rosev), and the cinematographer was Hristo Konstantinov. *The Girl of Nature* was a documentary travelogue showcasing the beauty of Bulgaria, in which a simple dramatization was interwoven, giving Nevyana Docheva, an actress from the *Cooperative Theatre*, an opportunity to shine.

### ***The Revolt of the Slaves (1933)***

It was in *Tempo*, alongside the announcement about *Bulgarian Industries*, that the following information appeared: *We are pleased to announce that Vasil Gendov, a well-known film director and film actor in our country, has started shooting the first Bulgarian talking, singing musical sound film. For this purpose, Gendov has*



**Fig. 18.** Footage from the film *The Revolt of the Slaves* (1933) – the first Bulgarian sound feature film

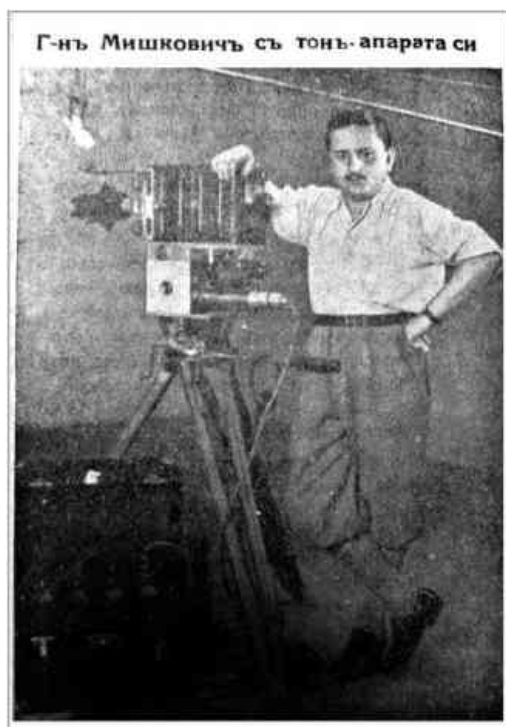
employed a cameraman and a sound engineer from abroad. The film will use the Klang-Film Tobis Lichton system. Thus began the advertising campaign for *The Revolt of the Slaves*, considered the first Bulgarian sound feature film, but still containing 59 intertitles, the presence of which, according to Aleksandar Yanakiev, suggests the “hybrid character” of the work (Fig. 18).

Mostly exterior, the filming of the movie, resurrecting the life of Vasil Levski, began in the summer of 1933 in Karlovo and Sopot. The role of the Apostle of Freedom was played by Vasil Gendov, who was also the producer, director, screenwriter, and one of the sound engineers of the heroic-revolutionary drama. The sound recording was done in a small Viennese cinema – directly onto the film stock. Gendov himself voiced three roles, his wife Zhana Gendova two, and Bulgarian university students studying in the Austrian capital also assisted. The music was recorded from gramophone records containing the songs, *Shumi Maritsa* (Maritsa Rushes), *Gorda Stara Planina* (Proud Stara Planina), and *O, My Mother* (O, Mama). The first test projection was held in Sofia’s *Gloria Palace Cinema* and according to Gendov, “the result was unexpected”. With the help of cinematographer Simeon Simeonov and a small projection apparatus he had brought, *The Revolt of the Slaves* was assembled and “presented for initial censorship at the *Student Cinema*”. It premiered on 2 October 1933 at the capital’s *Moderen Teatar Cinema* (Gendov 2016, 306).

### **Josip Novak and Stefan Miskovic**

For the filming of *The Revolt of the Slaves* Vasil Gendov did not engage “a cameraman and a sound engineer from abroad”, but his colleague Petar Stoychev, who in 1934 came up with a film script for a musical melodrama, was proceeding this way. In order to successfully carry out his project, titled *The Song of the Balkan*, he “began preparations on a very large scale”, including hiring a cinematographer and sound engineer from Yugoslavia. This is how (probably in the summer of 1934) the Croatian Josip Novak and the Serb Stefan Miskovic ended up in Sofia to make their significant contribution to the development of Bulgarian film production in the years to come (Fig. 19).

Soon after the completion of *The Song of the Balkan* (1934) Novak, who stayed in Bulgaria for 20 years – until 1954, was recruited into the newly founded Bulgarian National Film Studio. Its programme was ambitious: regular production of Bulgarian cultural, scientific and feature films; creation of a “film library” (national film archive); construction of a film studio... In early 1936, the Bulgarian National Film Studio released on the country’s screens the first Bulgarian sound newsreel, which, unfortunately, remains the only one; in the same year, the company began filming *Strahil Voyvoda* (1938)...



**Fig. 19.** The Serbian Stefan Miskovic – the sound engineer for the Bulgarian feature films *The Song of the Balkans* (1934) and *Gramada* (1936)

### **The creation of a sound filming apparatus in Bulgaria**

In 1934, Georgi Parlapanov together with the cinema and radio technician Kiril Popov, who came to work with him, started their attempts to create “a sound filming apparatus in Bulgaria” (Vasil Gendov). The first positive results came a year later, when the poem *Mene Me, Mamo, Zmey Lyubi* (A Dragon Loves Me, Mother) performed by Vasil Bakardzhiev was recorded on film in their workshop. The two inventors were constantly improving and refining their apparatus. In 1936, they “recorded with Bulgarian speech” the film *Gramada*, they also began shooting short cultural films using “the new sound system with speaker”, assisted by Radio Sofia presenters. The following year, they dubbed the documentary *Tsar’s Shooting Manoeuvres* (Mir, XLIII, 11151, 23.09.1937, 2, 11152, 24.09.1937, 2, 11161, 5.10.1937, 1), “with the sound being captured on the radio and the recording taking place in the “cinema studio” on Iskar Street” (Gendov 2016, 260–261).

Parlapanov and Popov “film the sound” of *Strahil Voyvoda*, *Nastradin Hodja and Hitar Petar Partners* (1939), *For the Motherland* (1940), *They Won* (1940),

*Bulgarian Eagles* (1941), they restored in 1940 the burnt in fire reportage *Golden Dobrudzha*, which captured the annexation of the region to the territory of Bulgaria... (Fig. 20).

Their recording “wheels” spun on not only in the period up to the nationalization announced on 5 April 1948, providing the sound and circulation of the newsreels of the Balgarsko Delo Foundation (1941–1948), but also crossed over into the so-called socialist era.



**Fig. 20.** Visible evidence of some of the films voiced by Parlapanov-Popov

### **The first artistic dubbing in Bulgarian**

The Parlapanov-Popov duo (Fig. 21) also made the first artistic dubbing in Bulgarian. In the spring of 1937, the Czechoslovak film *Marysa* (1935), directed by Josef Rovenský, was screened at the capital’s *Slavyanska Beseda Cinema*. *Ilyustrovano Kino* (Illustrated Cinema) magazine described it as “the first European production with Bulgarian speech”. It turned out that “the film is in Bulgarian from start to finish”, having been dubbed by the National Theatre actors Zorka Yordanova, Olga Kircheva, Georgi Stamatov, and Asen Kamburov. “The European artists are dubbed by worthy Bulgarian colleagues”, assured *Ilyustrovano Kino*, adding patriotically that the advantage of the work “lies in its Bulgarian speech”. This is why the magazine dared to prophesy that “the screening of *Marysa* will be a real sensation in Sofia”. “This is the new world of sound film art created by Bulgarians that we will see on the screen on Easter [2 May]”, the magazine concluded (*Ilyustrovano Kino* 1937, 5). “Despite the film’s great success, this system of translating foreign films into Bulgarian has



**Fig. 21.** The Parlapanov-Popov tandem – inseparable in work and life

not been repeated in our country”, recalled Vasil Gendov, who qualified the dubbing of *Marysa* as a “Bulgarian version” of a “foreign film”.

Bulgarians have indeed contributed to the creation of the “brave new world” of “sound film art” – a contribution that has yet to be explored, analysed and fairly evaluated.

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- Mir:** Мир (Mir), XXXVI, 8905, 12.03.1930, 8907, 14.03.1930, 8909, 17.03.1930, 8910, 18.03.1930, 8911, 19.03.1930, 8916, 25.03.1930, 26.03.1930, 8919, 28.03.1930, 8921, 31.03.1930, 8935, 17.04.1930, 8937, 19.04.1930, 8944, 29.04.1930, 8945, 30.04.1930, 8948, 3.05.1930, 8956, 14.05.1930, 8958, 16.05.1930, 8962, 21.05.1930, 8975, 7.06.1930, 9107, 15.11.1930, 9107, 15.11.1930; XLIII, III51, 23.09.1937, III52, 24.09.1937, III61, 5.10.1937.
- Moderen Teatar... 1930:** Модерен Театър е доставил най-осъвършенствуван тонапарат. – Кино, 3, 16.03.1930, 53а, 3. (Moderen Teatar e dostavil nay-osavarshenstvuvan tonapararat. – Kino, 3, 16.03.1930, 53а, 3.)
- Namalenie mestata... 1930:** Намаление местата в кинематографите. Решението на ревизионната комисия за столичните кинематографи. – Зора, XI, 3181, 12.02.1930, 2. (Namalenie mestata v kinematografite. Reshenieto na revizionnata komisiya za stolichnite kinematografi. – Zora, XI, 3181, 12.02.1930, 2.)
- Nasheto Kino:** Нашето кино (Nasheto Kino), 6, 20.03.1930, 143; 7, 4.09.1930, 152, 27.12.1930, 158.
- Nay-novoto... 1930:** Най-новото. Звукови и говорещи изгледи. – Нашето кино, 7, 7.11.1930, 155, 5. (Nay-novoto. Zvukovi i govoryashti izgledi. – Nasheto Kino, 7, 7.11.1930, 155, 5.)
- Noviyat kinosezon... 1932:** Новият киносезон в София. Какво ни носи? – Свободна реч, IX, 2542, 30.08.1932, 4. (Noviyat kinosezon v Sofia. Kakvo ni nosi? – Svobodna Rech, IX, 2542, 30.08.1932, 4.)
- Novostite na kinoto 1930a:** Новостите на киното. – Нашето кино, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 2. (Novostite na kinoto. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 2.)
- Novostite na kinoto 1930b:** Новостите на киното. – Нашето кино, 6, 23.04.1930, 146, 10. (Novostite na kinoto. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 23.04.1930, 146, 10.)

- Okolo edin spor 1930:** Okolo edin spor. – Нашето кино, 6, 8.06.1930, 147, 9. (Okolo edin spor. – Nasheto kino, 6, 8.06.1930, 147, 9.)
- Otkrivaneto na teatar “Pachev” 1932:** Откриването на театър „Пачев“. – Свободна реч, IX, 2554, 14.09.1932, 4. (Otkrivaneto na teatar “Pachev”. – Svobodna Rech, IX, 2554, 14.09.1932, 4.)
- Otkrivaneto na teatar “Royal” 1932:** Откриването на театър „Роял“. – Свободна реч, IX, 2548, 7.09.1932, 4. (Otkrivaneto na teatar “Royal”. – Svobodna Rech, IX, 2548, 7.09.1932, 4.)
- “Pevetsat na dzhaza” 1930:** „Певецът на джаза“. – Филм и кримика, 1, 10.08.1930, 1, 1, 3. (“Pevetsat na dzhaza”. – Film i Kritika, 1, 10.08.1930, 1, 1, 3.)
- P. M. K. 1930:** П. М. К. [Пантелей Матеев Карасимеонов]. Великият Ням отхожда... – Нашето кино, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 2–8. (P. M. K. [Panteley Mateev Karasimeonov]. Velikiyat Nyam othozhda. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 2.)
- P. M. K. 1931:** П. М. К. Софийската община действа против своите интереси. – Нашето кино, 7, 5.02.1931, 160, 6. (P. M. K. Sofiyskata obshtina deystvuva protiv svoite interesi. – Nasheto Kino, 7, 5.02.1931, 160, 6.)
- P. M. Kar. 1930:** П. М. Кар. [Пантелей Матеев Карасимеонов]. Събоносна крачка. – Нашето кино, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 8. (P. M. Kar. [Panteley Mateev Karasimeonov]. Sadbonosna krachka. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 20.03.1930, 143, 8.)
- P. Vezh. 1930:** П. Веж. Първите говорещи филми в София. Атлантик. – Нашето кино, 6, 18.04.1930, 144, 3. (P. Vezh. Parvite govoryashti filmi v Sofia. Atlantic. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 18.04.1930, 144, 3.)
- Plachat na sardtseto 1930:** Плачът на сърцето. Новият говорещ, пеещ и музикален филм на кино Пачев – премиера на Великден. – Нашето кино, 6, 18.04.1930, 144, 9. (Plachat na sardtseto. Noviyat govoryasht, peesht i muzikalen film na kino Pachev – premiera na Velikden. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 18.04.1930, 144, 9.)
- Poslednata pobeda... 1930:** Последната победа на говорещия филм в България. Театър Одеон инсталира звуков апарат „Вестерн Електрик“. – Нашето кино, 6, 23.04.1930, 146, 3, 8. (Poslednata pobeda na govoryashtiya film v Bulgaria. Teatar Odeon instalira zvukov aparat “Western Elektrik”. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 23.04.1930, 146, 3, 8.)
- Pristignali... 1930:** Пристигнаха са в София. – Мир, XXXVI, 8907, 14.03.1930, 2. (Pristignali sa v Sofia. – Mir, XXXVI, 8907, 14.03.1930, 2.)
- Produktsiyata... 1929:** Продукцията 1929–30 г. на Фърст Нейшънал – Уорнър Бръдърс е откупена за България. – Нашето кино, 6, 12.12.1929, 138, 6. (Produktsiyata 1929–30 na First National – Warner Brothers e otkupena za Bulgaria. – Nasheto Kino, 6, 12.12.1929, 138, 6.)
- Ravnosmetka 1930:** Равносметка. – Нашето кино, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, 3. (Ravnosmetka. – Nasheto Kino, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, 3.)
- Shte izmesti li... 1930:** Ще измести ли тонфилма оркестрите? – Кино, 3, 22.02.1930, 53, 14–15. (Shte izmesti li tonfilma orkestrite. – (Kino, 3, 22.02.1930, 53, 14–15.)
- Spisak 1930:** Списък на кинотеатрите в страната, преустроени за звукова прожекция до 31 декември 1930 г. – Нашето кино, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, II. (Spisak na kinata, preustroeni za zvukova prozhektsiya do 31 dekemvrii 1930 g. – Nasheto Kino, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, II.)
- Svobodna Rech 1932:** Свободна реч (Svobodna Rech), IX, 2399, 9.03.1932, 4.
- Teatralna novost 1929:** Театрална новост. – Зора, XI, 3062, 16.09.1929, 4. (Teatralna novost. – Zora, XI, 3062, 16.09.1929, 4.)
- Темпо 1933:** Темно (Темпо), 1, 1.06.1933, 2, 7.

- Tonfilm v Teatar Odeon 1930:** Тонфилм в Театър Одеон. – Мир, XXXVI, 8958, 16.05.1930, 2. (Tonfilm v Teatar Odeon. – Mir, XXXVI, 8958, 16.05.1930, 2.)
- Varnenski Novini 1936:** Варненски новини (Varnenski Novini), 24, 5684, 19.06.1936, 2.
- Yanakiev 2003:** А. Янакиев. Синема.bg. София, 2003. (A. Yanakiev. Cinema.bg. Sofia, 2003.)
- Yug 1935:** Юг (Yug), 17, 4834, 24.02.1935, 2.
- Za bezopasnostta v kinata 1930:** За безопасността в кината. Решения на специалната комисия. – Свободна реч, IX, 1778, 12.02.1930, 3. (Za bezopasnostta v kinata. Resheniya na spetsialnata komisiya. – Svobodna Rech, IX, 1778, 12.02.1930, 3.)
- Za programite... 1930:** За програмите в театър „Одеон“. – Кино, 3, 10.08.1930, 58, 3. (Za programite v teatar “Odeon”. – Kino, 3, 10.08.1930, 58, 3.)
- Zora 1928:** Зора (Zora), X, 2724, 3.08.1928, 2, 3.
- Zvukov Velikden 1930:** Звуков Великден (Вместо честитки и феълетон). – Кино, 3, Великден [20.04.] 1930, 55, 2. (Zvukov Velikden (Vместo chestitki i feyleton). – Kino, 3, Easter [20.04.] 1930, 55, 2.)
- Zvukovi i govoryashti filmi... 1930:** Звукови и говорещи филми, представени в София до 31.XII.1930 год. – Нашето кино, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, II. (Zvukovi i govoryashti filmi, predstaveni v Sofia do 31.XII.1930 god. – Nasheto Kino, 7, 27.12.1930, 158, II.)

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