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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 00714

MUNICH FOR BECKER

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TEXT  
TAGS: SCUL, PROP, PHUM, PINS, BU  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN BULGARIA: THE PRESS OFFENSIVE  
CONTINUES

REF: (A) SOFIA 685, (B) SOFIA 481,  
(C) 88 SOFIA 5875 (NOTAL)

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. OBVIOUSLY BELIEVING THAT "THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE," THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAS LAUNCHED A PRESS CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND THEIR WESTERN MEDIA SUPPORTERS. ARGUING THAT BULGARIA'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS ARE A DOMESTIC MATTER FOR BULGARIANS RESIDENT IN BULGARIA TO DECIDE, THE OFFICIAL MEDIA HAS CONTINUED AND INTENSIFIED ITS ATTACKS ON MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY AS FASCISTS, AND HAS BROADENED THE SCOPE OF THE OFFENSIVE TO INCLUDE THE GROUP'S SUPPORTERS IN THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE FOREIGN MEDIA. RADIO FREE EUROPE'S BULGARIAN BROADCASTERS ARE TARRED WITH THE SAME BRUSH, WHILE

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DUTCH, BRITISH, AND FRENCH JOURNALISTS ARE DEPICTED AS UNWITTING TOOLS OF THOSE WHO MASQUERADE AS HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS. THE PRESS ATTACKS ARE JUXTAPOSED, AS THEY WERE IN LATE 1988, WITH AN OFFICIAL PROMOTION OF KONSTANTIN TELLALOV'S ALLEGEDLY "NON-GOVERNMENTAL" HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE AND THE OFFICIAL MEDIA'S BRAND OF "RESPONSIBLE" GLASNOST. END SUMMARY.

3. IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT'S (GOB) REFUSAL, DURING MOST OF 1988, TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE OFFICIAL MEDIA LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN IN JANUARY OF 1989 TO PUBLICLY DISCREDIT THE GROUP'S MEMBERS AND GOALS. THE UNPRECEDENTED PRESS ATTACKS FOLLOWED THE ARREST, ON JANUARY 11, OF THE GROUP'S MOST PROMINENT MEMBERS AND COINCIDED WITH THE VISIT OF FRENCH PRESIDENT MITTERAND AND HIS BREAKFAST WITH MEMBERS OF THE INTELLECTUAL "CLUB FOR GLASNOST." BOTH THE INTELLECTUALS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY RECEIVED BROAD COVERAGE BY THE FRENCH PRESS. CORRESPONDING TO CONTINUED WESTERN MEDIA BROADCASTS ON THE GOB'S HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND THE CESSATION, IN LATE DECEMBER 1988, OF GOB JAMMING OF RFE BROADCASTS, THE BULGARIAN MEDIA OFFENSIVE HAS INTENSIFIED IN TONE AND BROADENED IN SCOPE. WHILE "LITERATUREN FRONT" ATTACKS WRITER BLAGA DIMITROVA AND HER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SECRETARY OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY PETUR MANOLOV, "POGLED" AND "OTECHESTVEN FRONT" TAKE AIM AT CHAIRMAN ILIYA MINEV, RFE BROADCASTERS, AND FRENCH JOURNALISTS. PARTY DAILY "RABOTNICHESKO DELO," MEANWHILE, TAKES THE "HIGH GROUND" AND INTERVIEWS KOSTANTIN TELLALOV, CHAIRMAN OF THE GOB'S ALLEGEDLY INDEPENDENT "COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS," IN ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROPER USE OF GLASNOST AND DOMESTIC HANDLING OF PURELY "INTERNAL" AFFAIRS.

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XENOPHOBIA UBER ALLES  
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4. THE FEBRUARY 9 EDITION OF "LITERATUREN FRONT" (LF) CARRIES AN ARTICLE ATTACKING THE WRITER BLAGA DIMITROVA FOR HER SUPPORT OF POET PETUR MANOLOV, SECRETARY OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY. THE MAIN THRUST OF THE ARTICLE IS THAT, ALTHOUGH TO EXPRESS SUCH SUPPORT IS NOT WRONG IN PRINCIPLE, AND MERELY MISGUIDED, RFE BROADCASTS ARE NOT THE PROPER FORA IN WHICH TO RAISE THE ISSUE. THE LF EDITORIAL REFERS TO A LETTER DIMITROVA REPORTEDLY SENT TO THE PAPER CONCERNING MANOLOV'S CASE (AND WHICH REMAINS UNPUBLISHED), AND ASKS RHETORICALLY WHY DIMITROVA CHOSE TO CONTACT RFE AND NOT THE PAPER ITSELF TO "CLARIFY" THE ISSUE. THE EDITORIAL NOTES THAT WRITER RADOI RALIN (LIKE DIMITROVA, A MEMBER OF THE "CLUB FOR GLASNOST") ALSO EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR MANOLOV, BUT DIRECTED HIS COMMENTS TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BULGARIAN WRITER'S UNION. DIMITROVA IS ACCUSED OF SEEKING NOT HELP FOR MANOLOV, BUT FAME FOR HERSELF; IN AN IRONIC PERVERSION

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OF "GLASNOST" THE PAPER WRAPS ITSELF IN THE FLAG OF REFORM BY REFERRING TO RUSSIAN POETESS ANNA AKHMATOVA. SHE, THE PAPER DECLARES, WOULD NOT HAVE DREAMED OF CARRYING HER STRUGGLE OUTSIDE OF HER HOMELAND.

5. THE TONE OF THE "LITERATUREN FRONT" EDITORIAL IS THAT OF AN AGGRIEVED PARENT, WOUNDED BY A WAYWARD  
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CHILD. NOTING THAT LF HAS PUBLISHED SOME OF DIMITROVA'S POEMS (AND INDEED PUBLISHED SOME IN THE SAME EDITION), THE ARTICLE DECLARES "WE SHOULD SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS BY OUR OWN EFFORTS. THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF RE-STRUCTURING." RFE IS TERMED A "HOSTILE" RADIO STATION WHICH "SLANDERS" BULGARIA; ITS BROADCASTS ARE LABELLED "ATTEMPTS FOR REMOTE CONTROL FROM MUNICH OF OUR (BULGARIAN) CREATIVE INTELLIGENTSIA." LF ADMITS IT HAS NOT BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF RESTRUCTURING AND REFERS TO STORIES (PRESUMABLY BROADCAST BY RFE) ABOUT SESSIONS OF THE PAPER'S EDITORIAL STAFF, CALLING THEM "LIES" AND PRETEXTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH DIMITROVA. IMPLYING THAT DIMITROVA IS NOT A "TRUE" POET, LF WONDERES AT HER LACK OF A POET'S "PRIDE . . . TO LIVE WITH THE PAINS, SUFFERINGS, AND HOPES OF HER COUNTRY."

6. DIMITROVA, WHO WAS INTERVIEWED BY "LE MONDE" PRIOR TO HER BREAKFAST WITH MITTERAND, SPOKE WITH JOE HARRISS OF "READER'S DIGEST" ON JANUARY 17 AND DUTCH COUNSELOR WILLEM SMEETS ON FEBRUARY 9 (STRICTLY PROTECT). SHE INSISTED THAT SHE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CLUB WERE NOT SEEKING CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES, AND CONSIDERED THEIR ACTIVITIES "LEGAL." ALTHOUGH SHE DISPLAYED NO HESITANCY IN MEETING WITH HARRISS, AS A JOURNALIST, SHE SEEMED NERVOUS AT MEETING WITH A MEMBER OF SOFIA'S DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY AND WAS RATHER VAGUE AS TO THE CLUB'S SPECIFIC GOALS AND PROGRAM. SHE DENIED, TO SMEETS, ANY "PERSONAL" CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE "INDEPENDENT SOCIETY" BUT DID NOT DISPLAY AN UNWILLINGNESS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GROUP'S EXISTENCE OR THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE COOPERATION. SHE IMPLICITLY DISPARAGED THE USEFULNESS OF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MITTERAND, SAYING HE MERELY DECLARED HE HAD COME "TO LISTEN" AND MADE NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.

MINEV: THE "BUTCHER OF PAZARDZHIK?"  
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7. A LENGTHY ARTICLE IN "OTECHESTVEN FRONT" (OF) ON FEBRUARY 10 REITERATES EARLIER ATTACKS ON CHAIRMAN

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OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY ILIYA MINEV, LABELLING HIM A FASCIST AND AN ANTI-SEMITES. THE ARTICLE ALLEGES MINEV'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE BEATING, IN 1933, OF A STUDENT YANKO YANKOV, AND REPRINTS PART OF AN ARTICLE FROM THE PAPER "POBEDA" IN 1933, CLAIMING YANKOV RECENTLY SENT THE CLIPPING TO OF IN OUTRAGE AT READING OF MINEV'S CURRENT ROLE AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST. (COMMENT. THE "POBEDA" CLIPPING DOES NOT/ NOT MENTION MINEV.) THE OF ARTICLE CITES, BUT DOES NOT PRINT, AN ARTICLE FROM "STUDENTSKO ZNAME" IN APRIL 1933 WHICH ALLEGEDLY LISTS MINEV'S NAME IN CONNECTION WITH THE REPRESSION OF STUDENTS. IVAN DOCHEV, THE CHAIRMAN OF BULGARIA'S "LEGION," REPORT-EDLY APPOINTED MINEV CHIEF OF THE GROUP'S FOREIGN POLITICAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT. MINEV IS REPORTED TO HAVE ATTENDED THE LEGION'S SUPREME COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER 1933, AND IS ACCUSED FO HAVING KNOWN PERSONALLY THE GERMAN MILITARY ATTACHE IN SOFIA. ALL OF THIS INFORMATION SUPPOSEDLY COMES FROM "FORMER LEGIONNAIRES," BUT THERE ARE NO NAMES OR QUOTES OR DIRECT ATTRIBUTION.

8. THE CHARGES AGAINST MINEV GET SPECIFIC ONLY WHEN REFERRING TO HIS CONVICTION FOR "ANTI-COMMUNIST" ACTIVITIES. HE WAS ARRESTED IN 1946, AND CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE ILLEGAL ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME. EIGHT HUNDRED CITIZENS OF SEPTEMVRI REPORTEDLY SENT A LETTER, IN 1946, TO THE SOFIA CITY COURT CLAIMING MINEV ORGANIZED "BLOODY REPRESSION" AGAINST THE JEWS. HE WAS FOUND GUILTY OF ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES AND SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

9. ALTHOUGH OF HAS THE GRACE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT IS SHEER COINCIDENCE THAT MINEV'S ALLEGED FASCIST ACTIVITIES ACCURRED AT THE SAME TIME AS **KLAUS BARBIE'S** INVOLVEMENT IN THESE ACTIONS IN 1933, THE PAPER STILL HOLDS UP THE "BUTCHER OF LYON" AS A PARALLEL TO ILIYA MINEV. HOW, WONDERS WRITER NASKO MITEV, WOULD THE FRENCH HAVE FELT IF "FOREIGNERS" HAD WRITTEN IN SUPPORT OF BARBIE DURING HIS TRIAL IN 1982? MITEV CLAIMS TO  
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HAVE SEARCHED THE 1982 ISSUES OF THE FRENCH PAPER "LIBERATION" AND FOUND NO ARTICLES BY JOURNALIST ALAIN CHEVALIER ATTACKING BARBIE, USING THIS AS A PRETEXT TO DISPARAGE CHEVALIER'S SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. (COMMENT. CHEVALIER WROTE AN ARTICLE IN JANUARY 1989 ABOUT BLAGOI TOPUZLIEV, WHICH WAS

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PUBLISHED IN "LE MONDE." THE BULGARIAN PRESS RESPONDED WITH CHARGES THAT TOPUZLIEV, AN ORTHODOX PRIEST AND MEMBER OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY, MOLESTED YOUNG GIRLS.)

RFE: A NEST OF MISFITS, OR SPIES?  
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10. MITEV, THE AUTHOR OF "OTECHESTVEN FRONT'S" ARTICLE, DISCUSSES CHEVALIER IN CONNECTION WITH VILICHKO PEYCHEV OF RFE, WHO REPORTEDLY CITED HIM AS HIS SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY. MITEV CLAIMS TO HAVE MET PEYCHEV IN ITALY IN 1979, WHERE THE RFE BROADCASTER TRAVELLED SOLELY TO SEE SOME BULGARIAN FOLK DANCERS. ALL BULGARIAN EMIGRES, MITEV IMPLIES, REGRET THEIR DECISION TO HAVE LEFT THEIR HOMELAND AND SO FLOCK TO SUCH EVENTS. THE EMIGRES ARE ALSO "UNDESIRABLES," ACCORDING TO MITEV, WHO LISTS A FORMER BULGARIAN BOXER AS ANOTHER OLD "LEGIONNAIRE." PEYCHEV IS DESCRIBED AS THE SOURCE OF "ANTI-BULGARIAN SLANDER" AND A REINFORCER OF WESTERN PROPOGANDA AND STEREOTYPES. MITEV ALLEGES THAT PEYCHEV WAS IN THE PAY OF THE CIA, AND BROADCAST ACCUSATIONS ABOUT BULGARIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN HE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II FOR THAT REASON. CHANGING WITH THE TIMES, PEYCHEV THEN REPORTEDLY SWITCHED TO THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. OTHER WESTERNERS EQUALLY GUILTY OF SUCH INTEREST, WITHOUT A CORRESPONDING INTEREST IN THE ACITVISTS' QUESTIONABLE PASTS, ACCORDING TO MITEV, ARE DUTCH TELEVISION BROADCASTER DICK FERKAYK AND MIRA MARTIN OF THE BBC.

11. THE THEME OF THE RFE BROADCASTER AS A FAILURE AT HOME WHO THEN WENT ABROAD TO ATTACK HIS OR HER COUNTRY WAS ALSO TAKEN UP BY "POGLED" ON FEBRUARY 6. RUMYANA UZUNOVA IS LABELLED A FAILED LITERARY CRITIC WHO TOADIED TO THE BOSSES WHILE SHE WAS IN BULGARIA, AND NOW BROADCASTS "INSINUATIONS, LIES, AND ... SUBJECTIVE STATEMENTS" FROM ABROAD. THE OFFICIAL PRESS AGAIN REFERS POSITIVELY TO RADOI RALIN, NOTING HE DOES NOT HAVE, NOR WISH TO HAVE A TELEPHONE, AND HAS NO DESIRE TO SPEAK TO RFE BROADCASTERS. (COMMENT. THE PHONES OF "CLUB" MEMBERS HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN CUT.) THE "POGLED" ARTICLE, LIKE THE "LITERATUREN FRONT" ARTICLE, CLAIMS THAT THOSE ABROAD HAVE NO RIGHT TO CRITICIZE DEVELOPMENTS OR PROBLEMS IN BULGARIA WHEN THEY ARE DETACHED FROM THEM. ONLY THOSE WHO "LIVE AMIDST" THE PROBLEMS, AND WHO "HURT," HAVE THE RIGHT. ALSO ECHOING "LITERATUREN FRONT," THE "POGLED" ARTICLE REFERS TO A SOVIET WRITER IN APPROBATION. JOSEPH BRODSKY IS MENTIONED AS HAVING BEEN UNJUSTLY ACCUSED AT HOME, HAVING GONE ABROAD, BUT HAVING PROVED HIS WORTH AS A POET WITHOUT RESORTING TO WORKING FOR RADIO

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LIBERTY.

THE LAST REFUGE OF A SCOUNDREL

12. PARTY DAILY "RABOTNICHESKO DELO," WHICH LED THE PACK WITH A FEBRUARY 7 ARTICLE ATTACKING THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY, REMAINS ABOVE THE FRAY THIS TIME AND CARRIES INSTEAD ON FEBRUARY 10 AN INTERVIEW WITH KONSTANTIN TELLALOV. TELLALOV IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE "COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS," AN OSTENSIBLY INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN MID-1988 TO COUNTERACT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY. THE ARTICLE DISCUSSES THE COMMITTEE'S GOALS (IF IT HAD THE FUNDS), PROGRAM, AND LEGITIMATE SPHERE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

IT NOTES THIS "INDEPENDENT" GROUP'S SUPPORT FOR THE VIENNA CSCE ACCORDS, AND DISCUSSES THE INTERNATIONAL CHARTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH IS ALLEGEDLY AVAILABLE IN SOFIA BOOKSTORES AND LIBRARIES. (COMMENT. A TRANSLATION OF THE CHARTER WAS AMONG THE DOCUMENTS CONFISCATED FROM PETUR MANOLOV ON JANUARY 11, AND C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 SOFIA 00714

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LATER RETURNED. AN EMBASSY FSN TOLD POLOFF SHE HAS "NEVER" SEEN THE CHARTER IN ANY BOOKSTORE.)

13. COMMENT. THE BULGARIAN MEDIA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, BY ITS VERY VIRULENCE AND CONTINUITY, SUGGESTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS RATHER CONCERNED BY THE ATTENTION THE GROUP HAS GARNERED BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. UP TIL NOW, GOB POLICY HAS SEEMED TO BE TO ISOLATE THOSE INVOLVED IN DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES, AS EVIDENCED BY THE LIMITATIONS ON GENERAL MEETINGS OF BOTH THE INDEPENDENT SOCIETY AND THE CLUB FOR GLASNOST. WITH "RESPECTED" PEOPLE FROM THE INTELLIGENTSIA EXPRESSING THEIR SUPPORT, ON NO-LONGER JAMMED WESTERN RADIO STATIONS, FOR INDEPENDENT SOCIETY MEMBER PETUR MANOLOV, THE POWERS THAT BE HAVE OBVIOUSLY DECIDED ON STRONGER MEDICINE.

MINEV IS TO BE DISMISSED AS A FASCIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC; TOPUZLIEV AS A CHILD-MOLESTER; MANOLOV AS A PORNOGRAPHER; PEYCHEV AS A CIA SPY; AND DIMITROVA DOES NOT ACCEPT THE "SUFFERING" WHICH IS A TRUE POET'S LOT. THE CAMPAIGN MAY ALSO BE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR TRIALS, WHICH WE HAVE HEARD ARE IN THE WORKS FOR AT LEAST MANOLOV, IF NOT OTHERS. MANOLOV SEEMS SURE HE WILL BE EXPELLED; SOCIETY

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MEMBER DIMITUR TOMOV PHONED POLOFF ON FEBRUARY 9  
TO SAY THAT HE HAD HEARD MANY ACTIVISTS WERE TO BE  
EXPELLED, BUT COULD NOT SAY WHOM. BY WHATEVER  
MEANS, THE GOB SEEMS DETERMIEND TO RID ITSELF OF  
ITS SURPRISINGLY RESILIENT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.  
END COMMENT.  
POLANSKY

ADMIN  
END OF MESSAGE

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