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PRESENCE OF SOVIETS IN BULGARIA

Soviet troops are no longer seen in urban or rural areas of Bulgaria. Soviet civilians, however, are very conspicuous. They include about 200,000 former Bulgarians who have arrived from the USSR since 1946, either because they were forced to return to Bulgaria or because they were offered great incentives to return. They constitute the privileged class, and occupy the most responsible and profitable posts in the government. In addition, Soviet industrial and military delegates /advisers/ are present in Bulgaria. Although the latter are not humble, they are more reserved than the former Bulgarians.

Many of the Soviets are observed traveling by train to Dimitrovgrad and Kurdzhali, where the "Rudozen" mines are located.

When Soviet ships anchor in Burgas harbor, the entire harbor authority is taken over by Soviets and the harbor area is closed so that sailors and shore workers cannot go to their posts. When Soviet ships are unloaded, all traffic in the harbor stops. This is one of the few occasions when Soviets appear in uniform.

The concentration points for Soviet pilots are the Krumovo airfield, near Plovdiv, and the Telish airfield, near Pleven, both of which are exclusively Soviet bases. A large air base near Tolbukhin is being developed jointly by the Soviets and Bulgarians.

Each Bulgarian military unit, from a regiment up, has had Soviet "instructors." These are actually Soviet commissars who are reorganizing the Bulgarian Army according to the Soviet pattern. Since the summer of 1952, former Bulgarians who returned from the USSR have been replacing the Soviets in regiments and in divisions, and have been assigned to lower units as well.

Soviet military instructors act as advisers to labor units (trudova povinnost). These labor units consist of soldiers who are not considered worthy of serving in the regular army and who are therefore used in the construction of fortifications at the Yugoslav, Greek, and Turkish borders.

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These units include a large number of Turks and almost all recruited sons of non-Communist old army officers and intellectuals. Bulgaria's hatred of foreigners is evidenced by the fact that two labor companies consist of pro-Cominform Yugoslav refugees and two other companies include Greek Partisans who have fled to Bulgaria.

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