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COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE:
Post-Stalin Developments in the Satellites

CIA/SRS-7

PART II/F BULGARIA - 1956-1958

This is a speculative study which has been discussed with US Government intelligence officers but has not been formally coordinated. It is based on information available to SRS as of 15 June 1959.

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PART II/F

BULGARIA - 1956-1958

The Year 1956

1. Thanks to exceptionally favorable crop weather in 1955, Bulgaria, like Rumania, entered the year 1956 in better economic shape than in any year since the beginning of World War II. The availability of food reserves apparently encouraged the government to intensify the drive, begun in 1955, to hasten the collectivization of agriculture which had stagnated since 1951. By the end of February 1956, about twice as many peasants were reported to have joined collective farms as had joined in the entire preceding year. This success was presumably owing partly to the economic advantages offered new collective farm members - among them, by a decree promulgated in October 1955, the cancellation of certain debts - and partly to pressure. The methods used must have been subtle, for much less was heard about them than during the earlier drive, but they must, nevertheless, have been effective, for the inducements offered could hardly alone explain such a sudden change in peasant psychology.

2. The fact that the Bulgarian budget for 1956 allocated almost as much to agriculture as to heavy industry - 21.4 percent and 23.5 percent respectively - and that under an agreement signed on 3 February 1956, Bulgaria obtained from the USSR a \$92.5 million credit for agricultural machinery, and fertilizer plants, appeared to confirm the opinion voiced in the Economist of 25 February 1956, that Bulgaria was slated for the role of "model of socialized agriculture" in the Balkans. Full collectivization was to be achieved within three years. Whether by coincidence with the Soviet credit or not, the government on 5 February announced reductions in the prices of a large number of foods and textiles.

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3. In view of later developments, it is interesting to note that the Soviet credit to Bulgaria was granted one day after the announcement of a grant to Yugoslavia bringing the total which the latter country received within a month to over \$200 million, and that relations between the two neighbors were once again strained. On 29 January 1956, Chervenkov, the Bulgarian party boss, in a press interview had defended the Cominform, and denied that it was an obstacle to the improvement of Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations. This statement, the Yugoslav newspaper Privredni Pregled¹ retorted, "could not stand up to criticism or analysis," and Chervenkov's views were again attacked by Radio Belgrade on 15 February.

4. The improvement in the situation on the economic front was not matched on the political. Without explanation for the delay, Radio Sofia on 2 February broadcast the text of a speech made by Chervenkov to a meeting of the Writers' Union on 28 December 1955, in which he said that the session had been marked "by concentrated fire opened by some members against the present management" which was tantamount to attacking the Central Committee itself. He specifically scored the writer Gocho Gochev who had written in Issue No. 37 of Literaturen Fronten that industrialization in Bulgaria was being carried out at the expense of the people and that "the people were grumbling against the policy of the Party."

5. Chervenkov was, with Enver Hoxha of Albania, the only satellite boss who had the courage - or the foresight - to ignore the XX Party Congress and Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. He made no public report on the proceedings he had attended, nor did any Party organ even mention the name of Stalin. Rabotnichesko Delo, in a 17 March editorial, merely

¹ Reuters, 7 February 1956.

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scored the "cult of personality" aberration, which was also evident in the Bulgarian Communist Party but would have to be totally eliminated. In the meantime Stalin's pictures in Sofia were as much in evidence as before, and the scheduled visit of a Yugoslav parliamentary delegation was postponed without explanation.

6. On April 6, however, the Bulgarian Central Committee adopted a resolution censuring the Party boss for having fostered a cult of personality centering on himself, to the injury of the Party and state, and replaced him in the premiership with Anton Yugov, the second ranking Bulgarian Communist.

7. Chervenkov's demotion was naturally widely considered to be only the first of a series in Eastern Europe. But as time passed and the other holdovers from the Stalin era retained their jobs, it became obvious that neither extreme ruthlessness nor an earlier anti-Tito attitude was sufficient to make a satellite boss persona non grata in Moscow. What mattered was close adherence to the sinuosities of the Party line. In the majority of cases, verbal and purely token conformity proved satisfactory, but in the case of Chervenkov, Khrushchev's policy of reconciliation with Tito also demanded concrete action which Chervenkov refused to take. This conclusion seems to be justified by the facts that it was not until after the demotion of Chervenkov that the intention to rehabilitate Traicho Kostov, executed in 1949 for Titoism, was announced, and that the planned visit to Sofia of the Yugoslav delegation actually took place.

8. Whatever the charges against Chervenkov, they were obviously not grave enough to compromise him irremediably, for he retained his membership in the Politburo and was appointed to one of the deputy premier ships. His Communist colleagues apparently did not see any incongruity between Cher-

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venkov's membership in the government and the Party leadership and a flow of speeches and newspaper articles in which they belabored him for "brutal administration and ordering about," for "violations of socialist legality," and for "one-man leadership at all levels."¹ These attacks were obviously only intended to provide an alibi in case of changes in Moscow, for nothing was done to reform the system. Neither was anything done to punish those guilty of the judicial murder of Kostov, unless it be that the implied branding of Chervenkov as the man responsible was considered sufficient atonement - by the Party, at any rate. It was considered far from sufficient by the population at large, which nursed the illusion of a far-reaching change in methods as well as men. This disappointment was shared by the Yugoslavs, who gave it outward expression by refusing to grant visas to two members of a Bulgarian delegation which was to have returned the Yugoslav visit in May, an affront which led, as was to be expected, to the cancellation of the return visit.

9. By the middle of May, the Bulgarian Party leaders were in a position to read Moscow's mind more accurately and realized that they were not really expected to let liberalism go very far. On 20 May, the Party organ Rabotnichesko Delo severely rebuked those guilty of "harmful criticism," among others the Fatherland Front organ Otechestven Front, one of the regime's sharpest critics. The effect was, however, not immediate, and Rabotnichesko Delo was obliged to repeat its warnings in a series of editorials on 9, 10 and 11 June, and at the same time to reveal the extent of popular feeling against Stalinist methods. Among those branded as guilty of harmful criticism figured members of the Sofia Party organization who had "wrong political opinions," writers and artists, who demanded an end to ideological control, and the general public, which questioned the regime's economic policy.

¹ Otechestven Front, 18 April 1956.

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10. The regime's defense followed the standard pattern of admitting certain shortcomings, while denying they were as serious as represented, and of claiming that steps to correct the mistakes had already been taken. Rabotnichesko Delo, in its 11 June editorial, admitted that there was "temporary" urban unemployment, that the pay of workers in some important industries such as textiles, food, and tobacco, was well below average, that large families were hard up and pensions too low, but it asserted that real income had been steadily rising¹ and promised further price reductions.

11. These optimistic expectations were presumably based on the fact, announced by Premier Yugov in his maiden speech, that industrialization in Bulgaria would in future be carried out in line with plans for intra-bloc coordination, "on the basis of available raw materials." Yugov at the same time painted a rosy picture of agricultural prospects which had greatly improved as a result of the recent Soviet credit. Between January and April, he said, 282,000 peasant families had joined cooperative farms, so that now 77 percent of the peasants were members as against 55 percent at the beginning of the year. But Yugov certainly exaggerated the effect of the Soviet credits, for Party Secretary Dimitur Ganev, in a speech on Lenin's anniversary, admitted that there had been cases "where the principle of voluntariness had been violated."

12. The Rabotnichesko Delo editorials of 9, 10, and 11 June 1956 - and perhaps other unpublicized arguments - were extraordinarily successful in convincing dissatisfied elements of the population of their errors. On 20 June - presumably after the removal of chief editor Topencherov, a

¹ Rabotnichesko Delo of 30 April had published figures purporting to show that average annual income had increased by 13.5 percent since 1952.

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brother-in-law of Kostov - Otechestven Front published a full recantation of its "wrong and harmful" criticisms, and on 19 July, Literaturen Front, the organ of the Writers' Union, revealed that the Union had, in its 12 July meeting, squelched the writers' revolt. The literary policy laid down by Chervenkov in December 1955 was to remain in force. In the local Party election conferences in July, the rebellious spirit manifest in similar meetings in April was absent. Indeed, outwardly at least, the malcontents had been so successfully cowed that Rabotnichesko Delo found no occasion to revert to the subject of inadmissible criticism. With the renaming of institutions named after Chervenkov, and the reversion of Stalingrad to its old name of Varna, the leadership appeared to consider the matter of de-Stalinization closed.

13. After the Poznan riots, the Party leadership deemed it prudent to take steps to reduce some of the underlying causes of discontent. Rabotnichesko Delo of 7 July admonished local Party leaders to "strengthen their ties with the working people and respond to their needs in time, " for many of them displayed "a soulless attitude toward the people." Industrial ministries and people's councils were ordered to hire many of the unemployed,¹ prices in factory canteens were reduced. By decree of 11 July, obligatory deliveries of products of private plots, except wool, were abolished, while the prices of obligatory deliveries of most products of collective farms, and of some state purchases, were increased by about 20 percent.

14. The decree also declared that full voluntary collectivization was feasible within two or three years. Todor Zhivkov, the First Party Secretary, in his report on the decree

¹
Rabotnichesko Delo, 25 July 1956.

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to the National Assembly, added the information that kulaks could in future be granted membership in collective farms, if they had the "right" mentality.

15. But the latent unrest, even within the Party, was apparently not allayed. On 19 September, the Central Committee issued "decisions," in which it admitted that

alien, casual, and careerist elements have penetrated the ruling Party . . . they yield to hostile influence easily and become the propagators of alien, bourgeois, and petit-bourgeois concepts. The weak ideological and political training of a section of the Party membership is another important reason for the political instability of some Party members.

But, the Committee concluded, "there can be no place for liberalism and conciliation . . .".

16. Apparently as a result of prodding by Moscow, the Party Central Committee further announced that the charges of Titoism against the defendants in the 1949-1950 trials had been found groundless, that the role of Parliament would be enhanced, and that control over the police by the courts, and the powers of people's councils would be increased. But these concessions to liberalism were balanced by a stern warning to "bourgeois elements" to refrain from "machinations and slanders."

17. Three days after the announcement of these alleged proofs of Bulgarian anti-Stalinism, the Parliamentary delegation which was to have visited Yugoslavia in May, arrived in Belgrade, minus the two delegates to whom the Yugoslavs had objected. But the visit did little to effect a genuine improvement in Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations, the Yugoslavs apparently not being convinced of the sincerity of Bulgarian

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anti-Stalinism as long as Chervenkov continued to wield influence in Sofia. The result was a vicious circle: the more antipathy the Yugoslavs showed to Chervenkov, the greater his popularity and influence among Bulgarians, and vice versa.

18. On 9 October, the semi-official Yugopress stated openly that there were basic disagreements between the Bulgarian and Yugoslav Communist parties on "essential questions of social theory and practice," which the ambiguous joint communique of 7 October had not mentioned. On 18 October, Yugopress even expressed open dissatisfaction with Bulgarian de-Stalinization and complained particularly about the lack of information concerning the fate of surviving Titoists. Unfortunately, in Bulgaria, Yugoslav encouragement of Polish and Hungarian revisionism during these critical months of 1956 was, if anything, the kiss of death. Nevertheless, there can hardly be much doubt about the feelings of the majority of Bulgarians at that time, especially since the Polish and Hungarian developments coincided with a bread shortage, part of the blame for which was naturally put on to the excessive speed of collectivization. The authorities themselves betrayed their fear of a revolt by sharply increasing security precautions and by announcing on 31 October that restrictions on the buying of flour would be lifted on 10 November, thanks to "generous" Soviet wheat shipments. The Bulgarians thus became the first of the satellites to be helped out by grain deliveries in 1956. It also happened to be the first time since World War I that Bulgaria imported wheat instead of exporting it. There were numerous - albeit unconfirmed - reports that Soviet generosity went even further, and that assistance to Bulgaria had included Soviet troops, landed in the last ten days of October. The authorities can have had no objection to the spreading of these rumors - or even to launching them.



19. Nevertheless, the regime felt far from reassured. In November and December, a number of unreliable persons, particularly students, were arrested, and massive expulsions of Sofia inhabitants were effected. Some 30,000 people are believed to have been forced to leave the capital for the provinces, with only a few hours' notice at dead of night, and allowed only to take with them as much as they could carry. Opinions differ as to the reasons for this typically Stalinist measure, some observers holding that they were primarily economic, that is to relieve the over-crowding of the capital, to reduce unemployment, and so forth, but while these considerations may have carried weight, the timing alone points to preponderantly political reasons, i. e., punishment and fear.

20. At the same time, the regime, following the standard Bloc practice in such cases, proceeded to alleviate the most crying economic hardships hoping to placate at least one large section of the malcontents. On 27 November, the government announced that cooperative farmers would be entitled to pensions, allowances for children tripled, wages for low paid workers increased and a number of compulsory agricultural deliveries abolished. For May 1957, an industry-wide wage increase was promised.

21. The economic plan for 1957, approved by the National Assembly on 30 December 1956, confirmed that most of the funds for these improvements were to be obtained by the simple expedient of reducing investments by 34 percent below the 1956 plan. Further resources were presumably to be made available by a 30 percent reduction in the State administrative personnel, decided upon by the Central Committee Plenum of 17 January 1957.



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The Year 1957

22. Although no disinterested observer could discern any signs that the Bulgarians, oblivious of the Budapest tragedy, were contemplating an uprising against the regime and its Soviet protectors, the Party leaders gave every indication of continuing nervousness, manifesting itself by appeals for vigilance against the internal enemy, purges among students and a rather unexpected propaganda campaign for deepening Russian-Bulgarian friendship. Zhivkov, on 19 January, countermanded the decision taken in February 1956 to merge the Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship societies with the Fatherland Front and also urged that Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship month should be observed anew, after a three-year lapse. Zhivkov presumably felt that although fear, rather than love, of the Russians was what he should, but could not, stress if he wanted to curb rebelliousness, the next best thing was to make sure the people were constantly reminded of their "close ties" with the USSR. The rest could be safely left to their imaginations.

23. The curtailment of the Fatherland Front by no means signified a demotion of that organization. On the contrary, the proceedings of its Fourth Congress which opened on 11 February revealed that the Party expected great things from that organization, nothing less than to succeed where the uncamouflaged Party had failed.

It is necessary for the FF (said Radio Sofia) to consolidate and develop as the broadest national autonomous political organization, to represent a real unity between the working class, the peasants, and the intelligentsia, to educate the people in a patriotic spirit and be the broadest political mass support for the regime. The FF must con-

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tinue to improve its educational, explanatory, and cultural work for the political education of the people in a patriotic and socialist spirit.

24. On the following day, (13 February 1957) the replacement of Chervenkov as chairman of the FF Executive Board by Demeter Ganev, a Central Committee Secretary, was announced. The change did not mean a further demotion of Chervenkov, for he was at the same time appointed Minister of Culture and Education. Any doubts on the subject were promptly dispelled when Chervenkov, although only a member of the Bulgarian delegation headed by Yugov and Zhivkov, which visited Moscow 15-21 February, was treated by the Russians as the actual leader.

25. The final communique reflected the full agreement of the two governments on the causes of the Hungarian "counterrevolution" and the Soviet "military assistance," on proletarian internationalism, revisionism - the USSR was once again in conflict with Yugoslavia - and similar subjects. The communique also disclosed an economic agreement on trade, which emphasized Bulgaria's role as truck gardener and purveyor of non-ferrous metals for the Bloc, the USSR undertaking to cover Bulgaria's wheat and cotton needs. Bulgaria obtained a 200-million ruble credit for needed plant construction, as well as contracts for building and repairing Soviet ships, and for the production of clothes and shoes from Soviet material, apparently intended to relieve serious Bulgarian unemployment. A secret agreement providing for the employment of 15-20, 000 Bulgarian laborers on the virgin lands in Siberia also appears to have been signed at that time.

26. Presumably knowing their countrymen better than foreign observers who could see no portent of a Bulgarian revolt, the Communist leadership not only continued but intensified their precautions against such an eventuality. Policemen

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continued to be armed with machine guns instead of their regular pistols and public buildings were under armed guard. In March, April and May, there was a new wave of expulsions of "undesirables" - estimated to number between 10 and 20, 000 - from Sofia, the exact reasons for which remained as obscure as before. This coincided with a further purge of "reactionary-oriented" students and of Party members, "large numbers" of whom had "blunted the militancy" of Party organizations by failing to implement Party decisions. (Rabotnichesko Delo, 21 March). Novo Vreme, the Party theoretical organ, explained in its March issue that the purge was needed among other things to sharpen "revolutionary vigilance," the lack of which had lowered Party morale and discipline. On 6 April Papazov, the first secretary of the Sofia organization, confirmed that the Sofia Party Committee had been "unable to ignore the incorrect expressions and activities, and doubts about the correctness of Party policies and the essentials of our unbreakable friendship with the Soviet Union," and that after the Hungarian events, "the question of membership and the unity and militancy of the Party organization was once again placed before us."

27. Papazov, however, made the mistake of demanding that the cleansing of the Party ranks should be carried out "intelligently, peacefully, and in an orderly manner," and that an improvement should be sought primarily by increased indoctrination. Two days after his speech he was demoted to deputy first secretary, for having "failed to analyze facts correctly," (Rabotnichesko Delo, 13 April).

28. The April Congress of the National Agrarian Union was only remarkable for the further proof it gave of the Peasant Party's total subservience to the Communist Party, and the Trade Union Congress which followed, for its implied admission of worker disaffection. Todor Prakhov, the Central Council chairman, according to Rabotnichesko Delo of 17 April, conceded the occurrence of "brutal violations of the labor code,"

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failure to consult workers "on basic problems connected with their production interests, for example in problems dealing with urgent amendments in the norms and payment of labor, " and other shortcomings, which should of course be corrected. In no case, however, by following the Yugoslav model, for Prakhov told his listeners that they must "struggle against attempts to undermine the role of the trade union in the program to draw workers into more active participation in the administration of economic enterprises. "

29. The unusually elaborate and gay decoration of the capital for the 1957 May Day celebration was attributed by foreign observers to the regime's desire to dispel the atmosphere of gloom and terror produced by the nocturnal expulsions of citizens. If that was the purpose, the increase in the number of portraits of Stalin was a mistake, which may explain the apathy of the large crowds watching the parade, noted by foreign observers.

30. If Narodna Mladezh, the organ of the Dimitrov Youth Union, is to be believed, the regime soon found a means to cheer up the Bulgarians. On 6 June it announced that the recently launched campaign to sign up young men and women for three years of work in Russian mines, building projects and state farms, had "brought great joy, because it . . . is the incarnation of their long years of dreaming of their love for the Soviet Union. " Todor Zhikov told a New York Times correspondent on 21 September that 10,000 Bulgarians had gone to work in the USSR, and 4,000 more in Czechoslovakia. As he further stated that 81 percent of the able-bodied population were employed, it followed that 19 percent were unemployed in a socialist country, where unemployment was not supposed to occur.

31. The Bulgarian Communist leaders were the next, after the Rumanians, to follow the Russian example and to get rid of troublesome Party members. On 15 July

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the expulsion of Georgi Chankov from the Politburo and the deputy premiership, and of Labor Minister Dobri Terpeshev and of Yonko Panov from the Central Committee by decision of the 11-12 July Plenum, was announced. The charge against all three of them was "fractionalism," that is, opposition to the leaders, and against Chankov in particular, that he had attempted to build up his own following among "unhealthy elements" in order to "attain the highest post in the Party." However, unlike the victims of the Moscow purge, the Bulgarian victims all belonged to the liberal wing of the party and were credited with "Titoist" sympathies. Moreover, the men who replaced them in the Politburo and the Central Committee, as well as some additional new members, were all known Stalinists, even extreme Stalinists like Dimitur Ganev and Todor Pavlov, chairmen of the Academy of Sciences. But in such matters "national" communism, i. e. a deviation from the Moscow pattern, was apparently practiced with the approval of Moscow, for Zhivkov and Yugov had been - incognito - in the Soviet capital in the beginning of July, and two days after the announcement of the Bulgarian purge, Zhivkov was back again in Moscow, this time as guest at a reception in honor of Albanian and Yugoslav leaders.

32. Chankov, Terpeshev, and Panov were of course not the only black sheep in the BCP. Literaturen Fronten, the organ of the Bulgarian Writers' Union, in its 18 July 1957 issue, conceded that

obviously, the existence of such centrifugal forces in the highest leadership of the Party had its repercussions and gave rise to unhealthy, non-Party manifestations in some organizations and in some Party members.

Members of the Writers' Union had of course not remained immune to the disease which must have been very contagious, for the article claimed no more than the existence within the union of a "healthy nucleus."

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It must be said (the article went on) that a great number of those who showed unhealthy tendencies have influenced by proper criticism lived down their subjective errors or are now in the process of doing so. The Hungarian events helped them to see what harm their wrong behavior can cause to the unity of Communist writers. Some others, however, continue to be the bearers of sickly, alien, and non-Party manifestations, which they disseminate under the guise of combatting dogmatism . . .

It goes without saying that the article ended with an invitation to wage "a merciless and irreconcilable struggle against pernicious petit bourgeois attitudes and dissatisfactions . . . "

33. In its fight against dissatisfaction the regime was providentially supplied with a strong argument by an exceptionally bountiful harvest. This justified the chance it had taken in May when it had decreed a general 10-18 percent wage increase, which for an undisclosed reason was only announced in August. As in the other satellites, the Bulgarian government, pursuant to a Central Committee decision of September 1956, increased by a decree of 12 July 1957, the powers of people's councils over minor industries and over their own budgets, in an attempt to encourage local initiative and efficiency. Further concessions to popular demands were made in November; a law increasing pensions was passed and the Labor Code was amended to augment annual and maternity leaves and overtime pay and to grant survivors' benefits and funeral expenses upon the death of a worker.

34. The opening at long last of a crossing point for motor vehicles on the Bulgarian-Yugoslav frontier, announced by Radio Sofia on 3 October, seemed to mark a definite improvement in relations between the two countries as a result of the Tito-Khrushchev meeting in Bucharest in August. But

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how superficial the reconciliation was, soon became manifest when the October issue of Novo Vreme came out with a polemic article on the subject of divided Macedonia, accusing Yugoslavia of coveting Bulgaria's share. The Yugoslavs naturally retaliated by accusing the Bulgarians of similar designs on Yugoslav Macedonia.

35. Although, outwardly at any rate, perfect calm continued to reign in Bulgaria, the regime's uneasiness was betrayed by such symptoms as the creation of a "workers' militia" composed of the most reliable Party members, which paraded publicly for the first time on 7 November, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, and by a further attack on recalcitrant writers. Literaturen Fronten of 17 October 1957 complained of the "persistent silence" with which writers had met the opportunity to "discuss" the recent restrictive interpretation of the XX Congress decisions on literature. But, the periodical explained, their silence was only in print, for in private, they were loud in their denunciations of that development. A month later, Zhivkov himself, addressing a joint electoral rally of the Party and the Fatherland Front, found it necessary to stress the need for the intelligentsia "to struggle even more actively against bourgeois and petit-bourgeois influences in its ranks." As for the bourgeois themselves, he disclaimed any desire for the intensification of the class struggle and even asserted that he had nothing against their dreaming about their past glories and property, but, plagiarizing Cyrankiewicz after Poznan, he warned that if they dared to raise their hands against the regime, they would be cut off.

36. On the economic front, alluding to the division of labor among socialist countries, Zhivkov claimed that Bulgaria would only develop those branches of industry which were most suitable for her, but that priority would be granted to heavy industry as before. "At the same time" he promised "light industry and food production will be developed to satisfy more completely the needs of the working people," (Rabotnichesko Delo, 26 November 1957).

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37. The promise of a somewhat better life for the Bulgarian people was borne out by the figures given by Russi Khristozov, chairman of the State Planning Commission, to the National Assembly on 8 December. The share of the national income allotted to consumption in 1958 was to be increased over 1957 from 80 to 83 percent, and the share of industrial investments allotted to light and food industries was also to be substantially increased, while investments as a whole would still remain below 1956 levels. Housing credits were to be increased by 20 percent over the 1957 figure, and credits were to be made available to collective farms to facilitate the extension of truck gardening.

38. At the Fifth National Conference of Agricultural Cooperatives, 2-4 December 1957, Zhivkov announced that land collectivization was virtually achieved, 86.5 percent of the arable land being now collectivized. He himself, however, made the voluntariness of the operation seem very questionable by berating some of the collective farm managements for allowing members to expand their private plots at the expense of the collective. The complaint by Deputy Premier Georgi Traikov, that farmers were overdoing specialization in truck gardening, even planting fertile flat fields to grapevines, seems also to betray a preference for the more individualistic forms of farming. Traikov also severely criticized collective farms which did not honor their delivery contracts with the state or sold most of their produce on the free market. Zhivkov added the specific complaint: "We increased wool prices, we increased the number of sheep, and now we must buy wool from the capitalist market for the requirements of our industry!"

39. In spite of - or perhaps thanks to - these un-socialist practices, and certainly as a result of good weather, a marked improvement in living conditions had occurred in 1957. Food was now plentiful and a large variety of consumer

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goods - of very poor quality it is true - were available in the shops. Better still, the Party's good dispositions toward the people showed no signs of abating - far from it. The ratio between expenditure in light and heavy industry which had been 18:85 in 1957, jumped to 27:73 in the budget for 1958.

40. Although the regime's solicitude for the material needs of the population no doubt reduced anti-regime sentiment in the country somewhat, opposition to its policies was by no means extinct. According to the New York Times (25 January 1958), two villages on the outskirts of Sofia "were surrounded by squads of Party stalwarts and policemen armed with machine pistols" and the villagers were forced to join collective farms. They were presumably included in the number of peasants who, according to the Sofia newspapers and radio of January and February 1958, were "applying" to join collectives.

41. The campaign against "revisionist" Bulgarian writers which had been sharply intensified after the publication in August 1957 of Khrushchev's literary directives achieved only limited success. The official position was perhaps most clearly stated in Vecherni Noviny (29 October 1957). The paper denounced the "fallacious notion" of Emil Manov, author of the novel An Unauthentic Case, of Todor Genov, author of the play Fear, and of other writers, that it is sufficient for a writer to proceed from "either Socialist or sincere democratic positions." A writer did not have to be a Communist, the paper stated, but "his position must coincide with the Party position." It was therefore obviously inadmissible to portray people's leaders as evil, as those writers had done.

42. The two lines of defense of the writers were, in the words of Manov, that "sometimes a man is more

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important than the institution,"¹ and in those of Panteley Zarev: "Revisionism would not have occurred if the Leninist norms of Party life had been observed."²

43. In an attempt to reestablish Party discipline, a meeting of the Writers' Union Party organization was held in Sofia from 29 November-1 December 1957, at which its Secretary, Andrei Gulyashki, listed the writers' shortcomings. He named ten who had, "to put it mildly, an attitude of holding reservations about Socialism." This was particularly disturbing, for their attitude found a sympathetic echo among the young.

Some writers and critics (Gulyashki said) particularly of the younger generation, wave in an inspired manner the banner of petty bourgeois liberalism, and flirt with their 'courage' to cast doubt on the method of Socialist realism.

Deplorable was also the passivity of orthodox Communist writers, and the complicity of editorial offices, which, Gulyashki admitted, were overflowing with works arousing "misgivings about Socialism." Among the more specific charges presented by Gulyashki were the approval by some writers of the "Polish-Hungarian experience," and criticism of the Party by others for "following a wrong line on collectivization of farms."

44. Perhaps the most important fact brought out by the Writers' Union meeting was the inability of the Party leadership so far to intimidate the rebellious writers.

¹Literaturen Fronten, 24 October 1957.

²Ibid., 8 January 1958.

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"There are Party members," said Gulyashki, "who declare that they are not going to obey the majority's decisions, which are obligatory under the Party statute." Three secretaries of the Union were criticized at the meeting for their failure to take a stand against the offenders, and Literaturen Fronten, in its report on the proceedings (26 December 1957) complained that the culprits had not only refused to renounce their errors, but had defended their writings. It is true, however, that the sanctions threatened by the official spokesmen were not very terrifying. Gulyashki merely warned that the Party's patience was not limitless and that the leadership of the Union might be reshuffled.

45. It must be admitted that Gulyashki was in a rather embarrassing position, since he was also the chief editor of Plamuk, which had published many of the incriminated works, including Manov's An Unauthentic Case. However, Gulyashki's rather mild speech to the Writers' Union Party organization meeting and an equally mild self-critical editorial in the December issue of the magazine were apparently considered sufficient for his rehabilitation, for he was one of the four editors retained on the board of the magazine. Besides the other six editors of Plamuk, other writers known to have been victims of the campaign were the editor-in-chief of Otechestven Front and a member of his staff, Topencharov, who happened, however, to have been Traicho Kostov's brother-in-law and a violent critic of Chervenkov.

46. There were also some victims in the scientific world. A report to the Party organization of Stalin district in Sofia charged members of the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Political Economy, and a number of agricultural colleges with revisionism, and the entire board of the journal Filosofska Misl with complacency toward bourgeois ideology. The report approved the Party organization in the Academy of Sciences for "expelling pseudo-scientific workers and alien, hostile elements."¹

¹ Rabotnichesko Delo, 16 February 1958.

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47. One of the explanations for the Party's relative forbearance in its conflict with the "revisionist" writers was given by Ivan Martinov who, according to Literaturen Fronten saw the real causes of ideological deviation "in the unsatisfactory situation of the Party organizations and in the frequent and, in most cases, unprincipled struggles, strivings, and personal squabbles."¹ It is safe to assume that the "deviationists" owed their relative immunity, both to disunity in the Party ranks, among whom they undoubtedly had many friends, and to their numerical and qualitative importance.

48. Another problem which the Bulgarian regime shared with other Communist governments was the spread of "hooliganism." On 26 January 1958, it made a determined effort to control the situation by the arrests of two to three thousand suspects, mostly young workers of peasant origin, who had allegedly fallen victim to "rock and roll" and other bourgeois influences. This was followed on 5 February by a law for the repression of hooliganism passed by the National Assembly. Among its provisions was the establishment of a Juvenile Delinquency Commission to direct the campaign against hooliganism, and of "labor educational schools." An attempt to curb the twin evil of drunkenness, a "remnant of capitalism" which refused to wither away despite its lack of justification under socialism, was made by a decree of 18 February 1958, which introduced severe restrictions on the sale of liquor. At the same time, the authorities inaugurated a policy of stricter enforcement of the laws against "economic crimes" against the people, which were multiplying at an alarming rate. Nine executions and many more jail sentences were announced in the first quarter of 1958, as against four in the entire preceding year.

¹ 26 December 1958.

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49. Political-ideological crimes were more difficult to combat in the post-Stalin era, in spite of the growing threat they seemed to represent. "Individual, unhealthy and hesitant elements in the Party have started to develop petty bourgeois concepts of 'freedom' and 'democracy' at meetings, conferences, and in the press," Novo Vreme complained, (issue of February 1958). Otechestven Front deplored the "shortcomings and omissions which have been noted of late in the ideological-political education of the young generation," (13 March 1958), and Rabotnichesko Delo (22 March 1958) pilloried "the bourgeois ideology manifested among student youth." But Otechestven Front could think of nothing more concrete with which to correct the evil than a joint "struggle" against bourgeois influences among the young by all institutions and organizations "directly or indirectly responsible for the education of the young generation," (loc. cit.).

50. The disappointing orientation of the younger generation of intellectuals was confirmed by Todor Zhivkov himself at the annual meeting of the Writers' Union (7-9 April 1958). He deplored the "decadent tendencies" of young writers: "We see young creators in our poetry, literature, cinematographic and pictorial art, music and theater who have lost their way and thus become victims of harmful influences . . . " Obviously, then, the younger generation was proving "tougher" than the older one, for the atmosphere at the April meeting of the Writers' Union was much more subdued than in the preceding November. Some of the rebellious writers, among them Emil Manov, still maintained a dignified silence - and were not re-elected to the Presidium - some even delivered fresh attacks on dogmatism but others, including Todor Genov, apologized for their mistakes. "Gentle persuasion" had apparently been successful. It was soon to score an even more impressive victory when on 17 May Manov himself informed an interviewer from the Bulgarian News Agency that he had seen the light.

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51. The atmosphere for deviationists had indeed become increasingly unhealthy during the weeks which followed the revival of the anti-Yugoslav campaign. In April, there were persistent rumors that some thirty followers of Traicho Kostov - who had been rehabilitated in September, 1956, in a gesture to placate Tito - had once again lost favor and been expelled from the Party. On 11 May Dimitur Ganev, a member of the Politburo, formally accused the Yugoslav leaders of treason against Communism, a theme which was amply developed in a Rabotnicheskio Delo editorial of 15 May 1958. A secondary theme was supplied by the familiar quarrel over Macedonia which was revived for the occasion, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia accusing each other of casting concupiscent glances at the other country's slice of that area.

52. Moscow was presumably not at all displeased by the prospect of envenoming Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations to the utmost, peaceful coexistence notwithstanding. Indeed, the CPSU representative at the Seventh Congress of the BCP, held in Sofia 2-7 June, was Khrushchev himself who delivered the strongest attack yet against Bulgaria's recalcitrant neighbor.

53. Why Khrushchev should have thought it necessary or desirable to go to Bulgaria for that purpose is far from clear, for the Bulgarian declarations of loyalty to the Moscow Party line left nothing to be desired. In his report to the Congress on Party activities since 1954, Todor Zhivkov had claimed for the BCP the merit of having steered the correct middle course between the Scylla of "mechanical imitation" of the USSR and the Charybdis of exaggeration of "national peculiarities." Moreover, Zhivkov affirmed, the BCP subscribed to every word of Mao Tse-tung's statement at the Moscow Conference of November 1957, that the World Communist Movement would be led by the USSR.

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could not develop successfully without a center, a head, that as the result of history the great Soviet Union is the head of the Socialist camp and that the head of the international Communist and Workers' movement is the heroic Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

54. Khrushchev, in the part of his speech dealing with the concept of "many roads to socialism," returned the compliment, citing Bulgaria's success in land collectivization - 90 percent of agricultural land had been collectivized according to Zhivkov - as an example of "creative interpretation" of Marxism-Leninism. Later in the proceedings Chervenkov elaborated on this theme, pointing out, that, unlike the USSR, Bulgaria had not nationalized the land or prohibited private trade in land. The regime had, instead, promoted cooperative farms in which the members theoretically still owned their land. But, Chervenkov concluded, "in practice, the victory of cooperative agriculture means the abolition of private ownership of land in the villages." According to Chervenkov,

the complete victory of labor-production cooperatives in our agriculture is a clear example of creative application of Marxism-Leninism in the solution of the common international task by taking into consideration the historical and national peculiarities of the country.

It would follow that the "creative application" of Marxism-Leninism consisted, in his opinion, in the use of misleading labels and that gullibility was a Bulgarian characteristic.

55. It was, indeed, probably only a coincidence that two days after the end of the Congress, Chervenkov was relieved of his post of Minister of Education and Culture.

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It is true he himself had admitted that it was "unconditionally necessary to improve the work of the Ministry of Education and Culture," but he may have meant to chide the Party for insufficient appreciation of its importance, despite his own efforts. This interpretation is by no means incompatible with the puzzling self-criticism for past failings which Chervenkov belatedly delivered more than two years after his demotion, at a time when Stalinism had long since ceased to be a term of approbrium in the Soviet orbit, except perhaps in Poland.

I consider it my duty (he said), to say to the Congress that I have personally passed the school of severe public self-criticism of our Party at the April 1956 Central Committee Plenum, that in my practical work I have drawn and am trying to draw all necessary conclusions from the decisions of the Plenum . . . and that I am doing this as a faithful soldier of the Communist Party.

56. It should be noted that while Chervenkov was conceding some past shortcomings, he took advantage of the opportunity to give himself good marks for his present attitude, which was more important. At any rate, he retained his deputy premiership and membership in the eleven-man Politburo and many competent observers thought he had been relieved of his ministerial duties merely in order to be free to play a more important political role. The only other change of any importance was the demotion of General Peter Panchevski, who lost his alternate membership in the Politburo and the portfolio of Defense. He was undoubtedly considered responsible for the shortcomings in political work in the Army, of which a former head of the Political Department in the Ministry of Defense and member of the Politburo had complained to the Congress.

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57. Economic data were supplied to the Congress by the First Party Secretary and the Premier. Todor Zhivkov said that industry now accounted for two-thirds of the national product (as against less than one-fifth in 1939) and that agricultural output had increased about 20 percent since 1948 - although livestock numbers had dropped. The number of workers in State industry had grown from 92,000 in 1929 to 386,000 in 1956, while the number of working peasants had decreased from 3,325,000 in 1948 to 2,950,000 in 1957, and the "intelligentsia" had grown from 191,000 in 1946 to 458,000 in 1956. Zhivkov did not mention the problem of urban unemployment, estimated at 14-18 percent of the labor force.

58. The report on the Third Five Year Plan, which was to run from 1958 to 1962, was delivered by Prime Minister Yugov. Its chief characteristic was renewed emphasis on the development of heavy industry, thus reversing the policy followed since the death of Stalin, especially after the Hungarian Revolution.¹ The amounts to be invested in agriculture were surprisingly small, and perhaps even more surprising was the fact that, in spite of practically total collectivization, the increase planned for agricultural production was only 35 percent, as against the 66 percent increase called for by the Second Five Year Plan - which, it is true, had actually only amounted to 25 percent. Equally surprising was the failure of the plan to make any provision for the intensification of truck gardening.

59. In spite of the priority enjoyed by heavy industry, the Bulgarians were assured that the plan would ensure an improvement of living standards, which were admittedly not yet "at the desired level." Real wages were

¹ "Accumulation," that is, investments plus state reserves, during the third Five Year Plan, was estimated to account for 23 percent of national income, as against 18.4 percent during the second.

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expected to rise by 30 percent. Coincidentally, labor productivity in industry was expected to rise by 29 percent, and production costs to drop by 12.5 percent.

60. In the meantime, the Bulgarian regime had to confess that, whether or not the old Bulgarian claim that they, unlike some of their neighbors, were poor but honest, had been justified in the past, it was not justified now. Like other people's democracies, they found it necessary for economic reasons to crack down on thieves, embezzlers and squanderers of state property, and for political reasons to stop flagrant abuses committed even by highly placed Party officials. Rabotnichesko Delo of 4 July accused four deputy ministers, the heads of two national mass organizations, numerous presidents of regional and district committees, and collective farm managers, of "disgraceful violations of state discipline" in the acquisition of automobiles. "A double violation is involved - illegal purchase and the diversion of social funds from their real, intended destination," the paper wrote, adding that the Council of Ministers "had taken the necessary steps to deal with the violations."

61. Extended but unspecified powers to deal with the small fry guilty of the simpler crimes against socialist property were granted to the people's courts by a decree of 11 August 1958. The decree also introduced the novel principle of awarding increased pay to "responsible" - that is, presumably honest - employees and officials. Steps to curb a widespread abuse in another field were announced by Kooperativno Delo of 16 July. It appeared that the executive committees of many cooperative farms, apparently despairing of preventing the peasants from devoting most of their time to their private plots, had simply seized them. The magazine invited the executive committees to restore the plots to their owners, their abolition being illegal as well as uneconomic, for the vegetables, fruit and meat they produced were badly needed. At the same time, the Party press took up with renewed vigor the campaign for the recruitment of youth brigades during the summer holidays to help with

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farm work, which had been revived in 1957 after a lapse of seven years. On the other hand, the cities continued to be plagued by the problem of unemployment, although, when the authorities first admitted its existence (in June 1956) they had asserted that it was only a "temporary" phenomenon due to the influx of some 400,000 peasants into the cities since 1944.

62. Any remaining uncertainty as to the reasons for General Panchevski's dismissal was removed by an article in Narodna Armiya of 23 July 1958, complaining that meetings of Party activists in the armed forces were often nothing more than conferences at which "communists are abused without anyone listening or paying attention to their opinions." After the 2-4 October Plenum of the BCP Central Committee, a number of high-ranking officers, including five generals, were said to have been dismissed for political shortcomings, a rumor which found adequate confirmation in a Narodna Armiya article of 16 October, in which General Mishev, head of the Political Administration in the Defense Ministry, revealed that the Plenum had taken further steps to correct political shortcomings in the Bulgarian army following the dismissal of Marshal Zhukov in October 1957. The Plenum had decided, General Mishev stated, that Party organizations must concern themselves with all aspects of military life, including training, that the number of Party activists in the army must be increased and receive better training, that military commanders must participate in political work, and that ideological indoctrination of new recruits must be intensified. As the Plenum had also decided that military orders and directives must not be criticized at Party meetings, although criticism and self-criticism were commended, it does not seem that the conflict between military and political officers had been satisfactorily resolved.

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63. Bulgarian preoccupation with revisionism was once again confirmed by the communique, issued on 10 October at the end of the visit of East German leaders; this included a pledge to continue the "irreconcilable" struggle against "modern revisionism" which found clear expression in the Yugoslav program and had proved in 1956 to be the harbinger of "counterrevolution."

64. More sensational was the resolution passed by the 2-4 October Plenum that the Third Five Year Plan, adopted only four months earlier, in June 1958, was to be fulfilled one or two years ahead of schedule, in other words, was being scrapped. As a preliminary measure, the collective farms were to be amalgamated into larger units. On 10 November, representatives of fifteen collective farms in the neighborhood of Varna announced that they had decided to merge their farms into one large unit "in the image of the Chinese communes" and to call it "Commune." The next day, Zhivkov gave a Plenum of the Central Committee details of the "great leap forward" which would carry the country to the "threshold of the building of communism," mainly by trebling agricultural production by 1960. This was to be achieved by a thoroughgoing "mobilization" of idle manpower mainly carrying out "do-it-yourself" projects. Peasants were to work on irrigation and drainage projects during the slack winter months, white collar workers were to do manual labor thirty to forty days a year and school children were to form labor brigades. At the same time, the efficiency of the cooperative farms was to be greatly increased by their amalgamation into larger units.

65. Available investment funds were, contrary to standard practice, to benefit light and food industry rather than heavy industry. Light was thrown on the respective positions of the USSR and the CPR by the misadventure of a Rabotnichesko Delo editor, who on 7 December announced that all the collective farms in Botevgrad okolya (district) had been merged into a single unit and that the chairman was at the

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same time okolya party secretary. But the next day, the newspaper issued a denial of the information, adding that the guilty editor had been "punished." This was followed by a Radio Sofia broadcast on 16 December, denying that Chinese methods were being adopted in Bulgaria. Bulgaria, Radio Sofia stated, learned first of all from the Soviet Union, and experience from other Socialist countries would be utilized "in a creative manner and in accordance with our specific conditions."

66. Practical steps to implement the allegedly specifically Bulgarian leap forward were taken without delay. On 16 December a decision of the Council of Ministers introducing continuous workshifts in factories on weekdays was announced. The Congress of People's Youth Unions (27 November-2 December) was informed in a speech by Zhivkov that "polytechnization" of education had not gone far enough and that the programs must be revised to provide for alternate days of classes and practical work. Ostensibly, the aim was, as in other Communist countries, to give youth better practical training, but there were a remarkable number of speeches in which the duty of young people to help fulfill the Five Year Plan ahead of time was heavily stressed.

67. The amalgamation of cooperative farms proceeded with extraordinary rapidity. On 12 December the authorities were able to announce that some 3,300 farms had been merged into 700 larger units.

68. A sweeping economic and administrative reorganization was embodied in a number of theses spelt out by Zhivkov to a Central Committee Plenum which approved them on 17 January 1959. Their main feature was a far-reaching administrative decentralization achieved by the abolition of seven economic ministries as well as of the thirteen existing okrugs (regions) and their 117 subdivisions (okolyas) which were replaced by thirty new "administrative-economic"

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okrugs representing "a unification of the entire political, state, economic and cultural life "within their territories. " As Yugov explained in a subsequent speech, the "basic" unit was to remain the obshtina (the smallest administrative unit, equivalent to a "commune") coinciding with the territory of each amalgamated collective farm, whose executive council was to coordinate its activities with the obshtina people's council.

69. The main purpose of the reform was said to be to reduce red tape by eliminating two administrative units between the lowest, the obshtina, and the highest, the Council of Ministers. At least that was the theory, for the Ministry of Agriculture was retained and a number of economic and social committees were newly created. The Machine Tractor Stations (MTS) were to be abolished and the farm machinery sold to the collective farms. Land rent was to disappear, compulsory deliveries to be abolished, and payment in cash was gradually to replace payment in kind, except for minimum personal needs. The goal was to equalize labor conditions in agriculture and industry, with the ultimate object of eliminating the difference between "national and cooperative ownership. "

70. Zhivkov also called for a revision of work norms in industry, higher wages and, later on, shorter work days. He recognized, however, that a serious obstacle in the way of achieving a uniformly high standard of living was the difference in the number of dependents the wage earner had to support. Zhivkov proposed to eliminate this obstacle by enabling all able-bodied members of a family, chiefly the women, to work. For this it was necessary to provide more jobs - which he expected the "economic leap" to do - and to free women from housework "slavery, " by multiplying public canteens, laundries, and other services, and expanding the number of kindergartens and children's homes. This would

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not only help women to "overcome philistine bourgeois survivals about life and work" but would also "create a new, healthy situation inside the family which will enable the communist education of youth."

71. To round out his picture of the Bulgaria of the future, Zhivkov mentioned the need to "intensify" construction in towns and for "rapid planning" in villages, to "make them like towns through water supplies, electrification, and transportation" while inhabitants of "dispersed small villages" should be relocated. One of the "main ways" to overcome the difference between intellectual and physical labor was, Zhivkov asserted, the polytechnization of education which included "participation in material production." He failed to explain why the fact that a student or white collar worker worked one day a week with his hands would "wipe out the difference between intellectual and physical labor."

72. Industrial production by 1962 was to increase by amounts varying between 50 and 200 percent over the June 1958 directives, depending upon the industries, the "preferential status of branches making means of production" being preserved - or rather, reintroduced.

73. In agriculture, the leap forward was to be still more spectacular. Noting that the earlier directives had envisaged "an average annual increase of about 8 percent," Zhivkov announced that "in 1962, the national income in agriculture must be about 3.5 times higher than that of 1958."

74. Summing up, Zhivkov informed his audience that by 1962,

industrial production will be more than doubled, as against an increase of only 62 percent envisaged in the directives . . . agricultural productions will

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attain 40 to 45 billion leva, or 25 billion more . . . national income will attain 80 or 85 billion or 30 to 35 billion leva more . . . in 1965 national income will total 100 to 110 billion leva . . . Labor productivity is expected to increase 2.4 times as compared with 1957, instead of the 45 percent envisaged in the directives. In 1965 it will be more than three times.

75. Observing that "socialism and science are inseparable," Zhivkov discussed at considerable length "the main shortcomings" of Bulgarian science and listed measures that had to be taken for their correction. In this field, he failed to give any figures indicating even approximately the increases expected by 1962.

76. In his peroration, Zhivkov expressed the customary unbounded devotion of Bulgaria to the Soviet Union and promised to follow as always unswervingly in its wake.

77. The publication on 16 January 1959 of an amendment increasing the number of crimes legally punishable by compulsory resettlement was undoubtedly not a coincidence, including as it did among them the crime of "shunning useful public work." The laws embodying the various administrative reforms, the new state plan, and the budget, were passed by the National Assembly at its Third Session, 9-14 March 1959.

78. Perhaps as a result of Zhivkov's visit to Moscow for the XXI Congress of the CPSU, some changes were made in the original plan. The increase in agricultural production planned for 1959 was reduced from 100 to 74 percent. The number of amalgamated cooperatives was to be increased from 650 to about 1,000, some of them being, according to Zhivkov,¹ too large for direct management by ad-

¹ Report to National Assembly, 10 March 1959.

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ministrative councils. He also stressed that the

trends and expectations in many administrative councils of cooperative farms that after the present National Assembly session almost all labor-production cooperatives in villages and all local industrial enterprises in villages will be turned over to them . . . are neither justified, nor present, nor realistic at the present stage . . . The industrial enterprise which is under the direct leadership of the okrug's people's council is the basic production unit.

79. Presumably in order to lay the ghost of the Chinese Communes once and for all, Rabotnichesko Delo (19 March 1959) found it expedient to stress that "the Bulgarian administrative-economic okrugs" might indeed differ from the Soviet "economic regions" and "the new organizational forms of industrial administration in the GDR and Czechoslovakia," but that there were also "a number of essential differences" between them and the people's communes in China. The latter were being created primarily in the agricultural regions of the country, and "under them," there was a "fusing of the administrative organs with administration of the economy," while in the former, "both the organizational independence of the cooperative farms and the operative independence and peculiarity of the state enterprises and other economic organizations" had been preserved. Moreover, in Bulgaria, the obsh-tinas were the basic administrative unit within the okrugs, whereas the Chinese communes had no smaller administrative components.

80. Zhivkov ended his speech with a restatement of the Moscow Party line, as laid down by Khrushchev at the XXI Congress, on the laws governing the transition from socialism to communism. He ended with full concurrence in

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the principle of the "almost simultaneous" passage to communism of all the countries of the socialist camp.

81. Considerable surprise was caused by Premier Yugov's unusual request - which was naturally granted by the National Assembly - that a minister be relieved of his post because "of his failure to cope with his work." The victim was Boris Taskov, Minister of Trade. On 24 April, Radio Sofia announced that "the work and conduct" of comrade Taskov had been considered by the Central Committee of the BCP which had decided to "release him" from the Politburo and to demote him to candidate membership of the Central Committee. The most important reason for his failure, a Partien Zhivot editorial, broadcast by Radio Sofia on 12 June, explained, was "his lack of conviction in the correctness of our party policy for the rapid development of our country." He was, moreover, believed to have argued that there was no way of balancing the 1959 budget unless Bulgarian exports to the West were increased considerably.

82. The reaction of the Bulgarian people to the ambitious aims of the regime leadership can only be gauged from the intensity of their efforts to perform the necessary work. One can hardly take at face value Zhivkov's assurance to the Pleven Okrug Party aktiv on 28 February 1959, that "prefulfillment of the Five Year Plan . . . has been wholeheartedly approved and supported by the Bulgarian people," especially since he himself proceeded to mention facts difficult to reconcile with that claim.

The fulfillment of the production plan by our industry is 102 percent (he said). However, a number of weaknesses lie behind this success. Certain important enterprises are . . . lagging behind the general upsurge . . . (agricultural) work in the okrugs is moving slowly. It is planned to build new

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irrigation projects for about 230, 000 decares of land (by the end of March?) but so far only 50, 000 can be irrigated. As for the reclamation of a planned 100, 000 decares so far only 50 percent has been reclaimed . . . the insufficient rainfall during the winter and spring may cause additional difficulties.

83. The situation in Pleven county was by no means unusual, for a Kooperativno Selo editorial of 3 February had reported that of the 1.5 million decares of degraded land to be reclaimed by 30 March, less than one-third had actually been reclaimed in the first two-thirds of the allotted period. Radio Sofia on 29 January complained that seed preparation for spring sowing was lagging alarmingly.

84. All this did not bespeak great popular enthusiasm or augur well for the success of the plan, in agriculture at any rate. There must, however, have been a radical change in the popular attitude in March, if one is to believe the Central Statistical Administration announcement on 21 April that "the plan concerning total industrial output during the first quarter of 1959 was fulfilled 101 percent. Compared with the first quarter of 1958, the volume increased 18 percent." In agriculture, too, great progress was claimed over 1958 in the early tilling of land, in irrigation and in fertilizing.

85. Apparently, all that had been needed in order to make the Bulgarians work twice as hard and twice as efficiently was the First Party Secretary's word, a decrease in the size of the okrugs, and an increase in the size of the collective farms. Even more remarkable was the fact that their beneficial effects extended also to the animals: the Statistical Administration announcement reported an increase in livestock productivity during the first quarter on collective and state farms.

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Foreign Relations

86. In the foreign political field the most striking development in 1958 was the sudden dropping in October of the territorial claim on Yugoslav Macedonia, although the campaign against Yugoslav revisionism continued unabated. As late as on 23 September, Rabotnichesko Delo carried a speech by Dimitur Ganev, one of the foremost, if not the foremost Party theoretician and future chief of state, in which he declared:

The wonderful day will come when the (Macedonian) population on the other side of the border will succeed in escaping from the impasse in which it presently finds itself, in order to build a socialist society in Bulgaria . . .

87. But only a few weeks later, Premier Yugov, in a newspaper interview broadcast by Radio Sofia on 10 October 1958, denied the existence of any special anti-Yugoslav campaign in Bulgaria, claiming that the differences with Tito were purely ideological. Since that time, Bulgaria has lived up to the claim and has refrained from mentioning the territorial issue - as distinct from alleged oppression of Yugoslav Macedonians. It does not seem far-fetched to assume that the order came from Moscow. Raising claims to parts of Macedonia on irredentist grounds was bound to alarm the Greeks at a time when the Cyprus issue seemed to offer favorable prospects for a Soviet Bloc-Greek rapprochement. Furthermore, Moscow has very good reasons to discourage irredentism in general. It would, for example, be difficult to prevent Hungarians from taking up the cry, with disastrous results for the Socialist "commonwealth" of nations.¹

¹Cf. SRS-10, The "Socialist Commonwealth of Nations": Pattern for Communist World Organizations, (12 June 1959).

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Standard of Living

88. Observers of the Bulgarian scene agree that as a result of the lowering of industrial investments the standard of living has improved somewhat during these last three or four years,¹ although it is still low and considerably below pre-war levels. Food supplies are still surprisingly limited for an agricultural country, and the improvement in the consumer goods situation is evident much more in the quantity than in the quality and price of the products offered for sale. Wages are very low. The housing situation in Bulgaria is among the worst in the Bloc. Unemployment must still be considerable. Politburo member, Rayko Damianov, in his speech to the January 1959 Plenum, conceded implicitly that even the "great leap forward" may not provide work for all unemployed, and he predicted that "by the end of the year, a total of 140,000 new workers will be employed," whereas competent observers have put the number of unemployed at a minimum of 200,000. Moreover, the number of people seeking employment will be swollen by part at least of the white collar workers slated to be transferred from their desks to "productive work", if the planned 45 percent cut in administrative personnel is carried out - not to mention the annual natural growth of the labor force.

The Party

89. Party membership in Bulgaria is close to the general satellite average. Zhivkov reported to the Seventh Congress in June 1958 a total membership of 485,000 - a gain of 29,000 since the last Congress. Since 1948 the percentage of workers had risen from 26 to 36 percent, of white collar workers from 16 to 22 percent, while that

¹The accumulation: consumption fund ratio was 28:72 in 1953 and 18.5:81.5 in 1957. Kooperativno Selo, 6 February 1959.

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of peasants had dropped from 45 to 36 percent.

90. Although there is no reason to assume that all Party members in Bulgaria agree as to the correct Party line any more than in other communist countries - or that they are even all loyal Communists - during these recent years there has been no outward evidence of the existence of identifiable factions. Differences of opinion have no doubt arisen but the minority seems with few exceptions to have bowed to the decision of the majority, or at any rate of the leaders. If Chankov, Tcherpetchev and Panov were disciplined on account of ideological as distinct from personal differences, all one can say is that they must either have had no followers, or, if they did, they were abandoned by them without much ado.

91. Apparently, "Kostovism" is still rampant in the BCP. But Kostovism is described as a very mild form of national communism which can be easily kept under control.

92. What lends interest to the Party situation in Bulgaria is the Chervenkov enigma. Since his dismissal as Premier in April 1956, on the charge of excessive fostering of the cult of personality, of Stalinism in other words, a charge he implicitly justified in his "self critical" speech to the Seventh Party Congress in June 1958, the opinions of "well informed" observers have been about equally divided. Some claim he is still the power behind the throne, on good terms with its present occupants and former proteges, Zhivkov and Yugov, and presumably in the good graces of Khrushchev, while others claim that he is Zhivkov's and Yugov's disgruntled rival, is unfavorably looked upon by Khrushchev, that his influence is continually declining, and that he owes his continued membership in the Politburo and various temporary official assignments, such as the portfolio of Education and his mission to China in October, 1958, only to his outstanding personality and to his continued influence over a

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considerable number of crypto-Stalinist members of the BCP. Of late, Chervenkov has also been depicted by a number of observers as the prime mover of the "great leap forward" and even as the head of a so-called "Chinese" faction, in alleged opposition to a "Moscow" faction.

93. Since Chervenkov was no worse than other holdovers from the Stalinist era such as Ulbricht, Rakosi, Gheorghiu-Dej, or Enver Hoxha, and since anti-Stalinism was not exceptionally violent in Bulgaria, the reasons for his ouster remain as obscure as ever. Considering the fact that it took Chervenkov over two years to make up his mind to perform the rite of public self-criticism and that there seems little doubt that he adamantly opposed the policy of advances to Tito, it is possible that he had been more outspoken than his colleagues in his private exchanges with Khrushchev on this subject and had thereby aroused the latter's displeasure. That was all that was needed to ensure Chervenkov's demotion by the BCP. On the other hand, he was presumably wiser than Molotov, his Soviet counterpart, and refrained from active opposition to Khrushchev and his policies, as carried out by Zhivkov and Yugov. Chervenkov could be content with the satisfaction of having been proved right by events: the Hungarian Revolution and the second break with Tito. And Khrushchev seems to have been magnanimous enough to forgive him for having been right, but not to the extent of publicly acknowledging the fact by having him reinstated in his former dominant position.

94. Very possibly, Chervenkov is perfectly content with his present position in which he seems to enjoy considerable influence with little responsibility. There is nothing to prevent harmonious collaboration with Zhivkov and Yugov, especially since, short of an unlikely reversion to unbridled police terror, it is difficult to imagine Chervenkov acting very differently from them. As for the "great

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leap forward, " this seems to be one of those cases in which paternity will be impossible to establish. Chervenkov certainly spoke and wrote approvingly of the Chinese developments, but he was always extremely careful to stress their peculiar suitability to Chinese conditions and to avoid the appearance of advocating their adoption in Bulgaria. In general, the teamwork between Chervenkov, Zhivkov, and Yugov seems to have been excellent, although that does of course not preclude differences of approach in initial policy discussions.

95. The selection of Chervenkov to address the official Party meeting in Sofia to celebrate Lenin's birthday anniversary on 21 April, which was attended by the Soviet Ambassador, and his appointment two weeks later to head the State Scientific Council, do not indicate any loss of influence or any hostility toward him either on the part of Moscow or of his official superiors in Sofia. The occasion was seized by Chervenkov to stress his unreserved devotion to pure Leninism. He even went so far as to assert that "the task assigned to our people - to prefulfill the Five Year Plan - is integrally connected with Lenin's teaching." If the attribution to Lenin of responsibility for the assignment of the heavy burdens of the great leap forward seems to contradict official assertions that they had been demanded by the people, this only tends to prove Chervenkov's privileged position. On 11 June, Chervenkov addressed a meeting devoted to Soviet-Bulgarian friendship and peace. The speech, dealing almost exclusively with the former topic, was described as "ardent" by Radio Sofia.

96. There also have been rumors of disagreements between Zhivkov and Yugov, the latter being represented as critical of some of the more radical aspects of Zhivkov's January theses. If so, all one can say is that the official broadcasts of Yugov's speech on the subject gave no inkling of disagreement, rather the opposite.

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97. At any rate, it hardly seems worth while to devote too much time to the solution of the power problem within the Bulgarian Communist Party. For Chervenkov, Zhivkov, Yugov, and their friends and clients, it may or may not be important what position each one of them holds, but it is of little moment for the rest of the world or even for the vast majority of Bulgarians. As far as one can tell, there is today no significant difference between the policies or methods that these men stand for, and none of them shows any indications of being a potential Nagy, Tito, or even Gomulka.

Conclusions and Outlook

98. Although economic plans in the socialist countries, for all their "scientific" foundation, have been revised upwards or downwards more than once throughout their history, the speed with which the Bulgarian Five-Year Plan, adopted in June 1958, was scrapped and the ambitiousness of the new goals were without parallel in the Soviet Bloc. Since economic achievements of Communist countries have more than once confounded the predictions of skeptics, one may hesitate to prophesy the failure of the Bulgarian "great leap forward." There is, however, no need to go to the other extreme and to take for granted that Communists never overrate their capabilities. They have done so quite often in the past and have not become infallible overnight. It seems, therefore, that, while a successful implementation of the stepped-up plan, or at least of parts of the plan, should not be completely ruled out, strong doubts on the subject seem fully justified.

99. To a large extent, these doubts are based upon what Zhivkov himself said or left unsaid. He declared categorically, for instance, at the January 1959 Plenum, that "the reorganization and development of industry and agriculture . . . cannot be accomplished without the all-round development of science . . ." In view of the limited time available, one would have expected Zhivkov to announce that all

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Bulgarian scientists and institutions were ready to go. Just the opposite. Zhivkov bluntly accused Bulgarian science of "seriously lagging behind" and proceeded to enumerate what needed to be done, starting with the necessity to "solve the basic issues in organization, problematics, and the material basis of the individual branches of science." Among the basic issues were a discussion of necessary changes in the "organizational structure, methods, and style of leadership of the Bulgarian Academy of Science," the construction of a well equipped physics institute, "minimum funds necessary for scientific institutes, comfortable premises and up to date equipment" part of which should be made in Bulgaria if it proved "possible and economically advantageous." Another problem still to be solved was the "selection and training of scientific cadres." It was also rather surprising to hear, after the announcement of the planned production figures, that

our economic sciences . . . must analyze and theoretically sum up the experience of our socialist development, bring to light and show the ways and methods . . . for a steady increase in public production, for a sharp rise in labor productivity, for a reduction of costs . . . for a correct development of our trade, our finance and price policy, for a rapid increase in our national income, and for raising our people's material prosperity . . . On the basis of their scientific research work, they must make practical suggestions . . . for the development of our socialist economy.

No wonder the Planning Commission was reported to have asked Zhivkov to give it more time before announcing the target figures, a request which he did not heed.

100. Zhivkov's theses were completely silent on the subject of finances, although a sharp increase in produc-

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tion obviously demanded a corresponding increase in funds.¹

101. Premier Yugov, in his speech to the January Plenum, did say that it would demand "large capital investments," but subsequent references to the possible sources of the necessary money, certainly a matter deserving serious treatment, were almost haphazard. Yugov mentioned the need for economy - a "state-conscious approach to the problem of spending" to stretch the available resources, as he put it. The chairman of the State Planning Commission, Rusi Khristozov, stated over Radio Sofia on 19 February, that the planned increases in the number of workers and in labor productivity were the main factors in the growth of the national income, but that "a certain increase in the relative share of the accumulation fund of our national income is inevitable."

102. As it seems most unlikely that these internal sources of additional capital will prove adequate, one might have expected Bulgaria to be counting on foreign, that is Soviet, credits. But all that has transpired on this subject so far are two rather casual statements by Premier Yugov and First Deputy Premier Damianov. Referring to a 130 million ruble credit, announced on 27 December 1958, for the construction of a thermo-electric station and an oil refinery - to process Soviet crude oil, most of the refined products being shipped back to the USSR, just as Bulgarian plants had been producing clothes out of Soviet textiles for the Russians - Damianov explained in an interview on 19 February that this credit would help Bulgaria to carry out the "great leap forward."

¹In order to attain a 12.3 percent increase in agricultural production, the Czechoslovak Government is increasing the 1959 allotment to agriculture by 12.4 percent. Statement by Minister of Finance, Radio Prague, 19 February 1959.

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103. Yugov, in his address to the January Plenum, spoke about "the large amount of machines that will be imported from the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries" and ended with the statement that "close cooperation with the countries from the socialist camp and especially the aid received from the Soviet Union, will be an important factor in the implementation of these great tasks." On 13 March, he specified that 89.5 percent of the increase in national income in 1959 (31.8 percent) was to be obtained from the increase in labor productivity. Neither Zhivkov nor Khristozov explained whether the promised reduction in working hours and in the work week, and the improved standard of living were to be achieved parallel with the great leap forward in production or only after it had made substantial progress. Assuming the latter to be the case it would appear that Zhivkov relied on the increase in the labor force and a temporarily reduced standard of living to achieve the goal. The increase in productivity can hardly make itself felt for quite some time, for on Zhivkov's own showing much of the indispensable machinery still remains to be built. In agriculture, for example, where he laid great stress on land reclamation and especially on expansion of irrigation, he also said that "it is necessary to master as soon as possible the production of machines for land improvement, irrigation, fertilizing, livestock breeding and so forth." In other words, the Bulgarian factories have still to master the techniques for the production of needed machinery. Moreover, most industries, before they can increase production, need a greatly expanded "raw materials basis" for which in turn many new machines are a prerequisite. It should also be noted that speaking of the second Five Year Plan period, Khristozov claimed no more than a 21.6 percent increase in individual worker output in industry. It will have to be many times larger over the next three or four years. In the meantime, Rabotnichesko Delo reported on 19 March 1959, that "labor production in a considerable number of Sofia enterprises in January 1959 was lower than the 1958 average."

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104. As for additional labor resources, the regime can undoubtedly count on the unemployed, numbering "more than 100, 000," according to Khristozov. How long it will take to organize the canteens, nurseries, laundries and other services needed to free most women from their household duties - provided they agree that factory work is really more pleasant than housework - is difficult to estimate, but there seems little doubt that Zhivkov will be disappointed in his expectations of greatly intensified agricultural work during the winter months. Even the strongest Communist faith cannot keep a man warm or melt the snow or soften the soil in sub-zero weather, nor dry it fast enough to be worked during warmer spells - except perhaps in the southernmost parts of the country. It may also be pertinent to remark that, if after forty years of socialism it was only by plowing up vast expanses of virgin soil that the USSR managed to increase agricultural production to any noticeable extent, and if the Soviet Seven-Year Plan foresees an increase of only 70 percent, it seems unlikely that Bulgaria which has no Kazakhstan can increase agricultural production by 300 percent in four years merely through merging small collective farms.

105. Surprisingly, fruit (except grapes) and vegetables, high priced crops in which Bulgaria was supposed to specialize according to the 1957 CEMA decision, received little attention. It is true that vegetable production was to increase 50 percent, but sugar beets were to increase 91 percent, cotton 80 percent and corn 66 percent. Incidentally, Khristozov, in his exposé of the 1959 economic plan to the National Assembly on 13 March, commented that adequate amounts of fertilizer would not be available. The deficiency was to be made up by stable manure, but for once he failed to specify the prescribed increase in production.

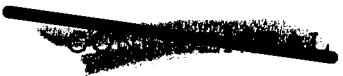
106. Inevitably, the question arises what made the Bulgarian leadership run the risk of damaging its prestige by formally committing itself to such over-ambitious goals?

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Even if theoretically attainable, they would demand a degree of coercion and austerity which already twice before, in 1953 and 1956, had proved extremely dangerous. Would it not have been wiser to set the sights somewhat lower, and eventually to overfulfill the plan?

107. It is indeed impossible to find a rational explanation for the action of the Bulgarian leaders. One can only fall back on the belief of the ancients that man is punished by the gods by fits of megalomania or hybris, which blind him to realities. On the other hand, the inspiration for the wishful thinking which culminated in the targets set for the great leap forward is fairly obvious. It was undoubtedly supplied by the Soviet Seven Year Plan which was accompanied by clear allusions to the desirability of an allround raising of the economic sights. As internal socialist competition is in high favor in the communist world, and as - in the words of the East German Tribune of 18 April 1959 - "every day's preschedule implementation of the plan in the socialist competition [with capitalism] is a gain of time and therefore a success for socialism," the Bulgarian leaders, dizzy with their victory in the race for collectivization, were naturally eager to gain first place in the general rating of socialist states. At the same time that the alleged successes of the Chinese great leap forward were creating a world sensation - that is, everywhere but in the USSR where they were ignored - it is not surprising that the Bulgarian leaders, presumably prodded by Chervenkov, should have been tempted to emulate them. Both countries were industrially backward, but had an excess of manpower largely as a result of over-rapid collectivization and had a generally docile population. If the idea worked in China, why should it not in Bulgaria?

108. What was certainly even more important than production figures themselves was their connection with the problem of the achievement of communism, a matter



which directly affected claims to leadership in the Communist orbit. The Bulgarian leaders had some justification in considering their country the most advanced on the road to communism, excepting the USSR, of course. Having very little industry to socialize, and only a small urban population to feed, they had been able to concentrate on agriculture, and could rightfully boast that they were the first to have socialized both industry and agriculture.

109. The resolution of the Seventh Party Congress in June 1958 boasted that "socialism is the completely dominating and only commanding force in the entire national economy. In our country the socialist construction of our economy has already been achieved." But significantly, Khrushchev, while full of praise for Bulgarian successes in collectivization, did not echo the BCP's boast. B. Ponomarev, writing in the October 1958 issue of Kommunist, endorsed the claim that socialism had conquered in Bulgaria, but omitted any mention of the claim that the construction of socialism had already been achieved.

110. One can well imagine that the Bulgarian leaders were eager to proclaim that they were following immediately in the wake of the "Big Brother" and were starting to build communism. What a feather in their cap if they were to overtake the other more advanced satellites! But in the absence of any encouragement from Moscow, the Bulgarian leaders were certainly hesitant to take such a step alone and without at least moral support from a powerful quarter. At this juncture, on 29 August 1958, the CPR published a resolution which concluded with the words: "The realization of Communism in our country is already not something far away. We must actively use the form of the people's communes and through it find the concrete road of transition to Communism." On November 21st, General Chu-Teh, China's deputy chief of state and vice-chairman of the Party's Central Committee,

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told a youth rally that full-blown Communism would be attained in this generation. Zhivkov practically paraphrased Chu-Teh when he announced on 1 December 1958, in a speech to the Komsomol Congress:

The building of Communism will begin much earlier than we had imagined and certain fundamental objectives of Communism will be achieved in the near future by the present leaders of the Party and of the Government . . . The children who will finish school ten or twelve years from now will find themselves in a purely communist country.

111. Two weeks later, the Chinese announced their leap backwards. Life published Khrushchev's strictures on Chinese claims, as reported by Senator Humphrey, and by 17 January 1958, Zhivkov claimed no more for Bulgaria than to be entering on the stage of "the completion of the construction of socialism and the preparation of the conditions for the transition to Communism."

112. Whereas therefore in June the socialist construction of the Bulgarian economy had been described as already "achieved," seven months later the construction of socialism still remained to be "completed." At the same time Zhivkov stressed the leading role of the USSR more heavily than ever, for it indicated "the only correct path for the building of the Communist society." Chervenkov in an article on the Chinese communes, published by Rabotnichesko Delo of 15 January 1959, emphatically stressed that the innovation was only suited to the specific conditions in China, and in no case could enable a country to overleap the socialist stage.

113. At the end of the month, Khrushchev clinched the matter by his statement to the XXI Congress that after the

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fulfillment of the Seven Year Plan it would take the USSR about five years more to "complete the initial stage of Communist construction" and that in any case the socialist countries "would more or less simultaneously pass to the higher phase of Communist society. "

114. It would have been too much to expect the Bulgarian leaders to practice the virtue of self-criticism to the point of admitting they had been mistaken. In his report to the National Assembly on 10 March, Zhivkov put the blame for having jumped the gun on the anonymous authors of "certain articles published in our press and periodicals which expressed the incorrect views that we are now beginning construction of the highest levels of the Communist society . . . " He then proceeded to recapitulate and to endorse Khrushchev's dicta on the fundamental difference between socialism and communism - reward according to labor and allocation of goods according to need - and on the continuity between socialism and communism, which made it impossible to define when one came to an end and the other began.

115. It may be observed, however, that whereas in January Zhivkov had retreated to the point of merely claiming that Bulgaria was entering the stage of the "completion of the construction of socialism and the preparation of the conditions for the transition to communism, " in March - after his visit to Moscow - he denied only that Bulgaria was "beginning construction of the highest levels of the communist society. "¹

116. Even without the indiscretions of the Bulgarian newspapers, the Chinese inspiration for the Bulgarian great leap forward seems apparent. The identical term used to describe the new phase, its amplitude, far exceeding any

¹ Our italics.

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plan revision within the Soviet Orbit, some features of the administrative reorganization, the stress on "communalization" of family life, all had a distinctly Chinese flavor. Nor can Chervenkov's mission to China at the particular time it took place have been a mere coincidence. And perhaps most revealing were the excessive protestations of conformity with the Soviet model.

117. Nevertheless, Zhivkov and his friends, knowing that one cannot be too careful when one has to do with Moscow, and doubtless disturbed by the ominous absence of Soviet praise for the Chinese developments, prudently lagged some distance behind Mao Tse-tung and refrained from openly committing themselves. Events amply justified their prudence.

118. But the fact remains that the Bulgarian leaders did show an unusual amount of courage, one might even say, of "national" communism, in going as far as they did. Granted that they probably expected Moscow to swallow the Chinese initiative with outward good grace and to permit them to ride on the Chinese coattails, the mere fact of embarking on such a course without Moscow's prior approval betrays an unwonted spirit of independence. It also betrays, besides a surprising misunderstanding of Soviet motivations, the same megalomania which was apparent in the economic targets of the Bulgarian leap forward. Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi. It should have been obvious to the Bulgarians that Bulgaria was not China and that for a satellite to out-perform the USSR smacked of lèse-majesté. What was more important, Moscow was clearly not going to allow a satellite to decide for itself how far it had progressed on the road to Communism. Moscow's claim to leadership of the communist camp being ostensibly based on the fact that it has advanced furthest on the road to Communism, it will not allow a satellite to claim to have caught up with it. That would simply be another road to Titoism. Hence the importance of the thesis

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of the continuity between socialism and Communism, explicitly accepted by Zhivkov. In the absence of objective criteria, it is up to the leader of the most advanced communist party to decide for each country when the moment to enter upon the communist stage has come. Moreover, to avoid ill considered "great leaps forward," or possible bad feeling, the socialist states have been warned that progress will be "almost simultaneous."

119. Although the Bulgarian leaders have undoubtedly been absolved by the Kremlin of any disloyal intent, all indications point to Soviet luke-warmness toward their economic plan and skepticism with regard to its chances of success. It is true that Zhivkov, after his return from the XXI Congress in Moscow, reduced the planned increase in agricultural production to a more realistic figure. It is also true that in March, Khristozov confirmed the grant of the Soviet credit, but its modest proportion considering the magnitude of the task was tantamount to damning with faint praise. In Soviet articles dealing with economic progress in the Orbit, the absence of the usual encomia for overfulfilling norms, even of simple acknowledgement of the Bulgarian effort, is remarkable. Izvestia, for example, in a 17 January 1959 article on the subject, bestowed no special praise on Bulgaria. Pravda, in an article on "The Great Commonwealth (sodruzhestvo) of Socialist Countries" (28 April 1959) wrote:

In the seven-year period . . . the USSR plans to increase the output of industrial production 1.9 times. The growth of industrial production in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR will be approximately the same. The national economy of the CPR and the other socialist lands will develop at a fast pace.

Bulgaria, which plans to treble industrial production in four years, is not even mentioned by name.

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120. Soviet skepticism with regard to Bulgaria's prospects is not astonishing, considering that many Bulgarians themselves are highly pessimistic, especially as the most important prerequisite, popular enthusiasm, seems to be entirely lacking. Talk as Zhivkov may of the compulsion under which the planners allegedly found themselves to heed the "indomitable striving of the people's masses to advance their movement aimed at fulfilling the tasks ahead of schedule,"¹ he sounds less convincing than other Central Committee members, Rada Todorov, for instance, who declared: "None of us, including me, believes that the job will be very easy or very smooth . . . But I believe that our people understand and will understand that all this is happening for their welfare, for their happiness . . ." ² Vladimir Bonev, another member, thought that in "implementing these gigantic tasks . . . we will indisputably encounter great difficulties, particularly in Sofia where these reorganizations affect a considerable part of our national industry and whence the most employees will be sent into material production."³ P. Kubandinski, Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, admitted that "the nationwide movement for the prefulfillment of the Five Year Plan also encounters serious difficulties of objective and subjective character."⁴

121. These statements hardly seem to confirm Zhivkov's claim that the great leap forward had been decided in response to an irresistible popular demand. Chervenkov

¹ Report to National Assembly, 19 March 1959.

² Rabotnichesko Delo, 12 January 1959.

³ Ibidem, 24 January 1959.

⁴ Pravda (Moscow), 1 April 1959.

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appears to have been more honest when he placed the responsibility on Lenin. Whether the great leap succeeds or fails, it will hardly improve the standing of the Party among Bulgarians in the coming years. Failure would do no good to the Party's prestige and to public faith in Communist planning, while success can only be at the price of an exhausting physical effort, the material reward for which is bound to lag considerably. There is no reason to assume Bulgarians will like it any better in 1959 than in 1953.

122. It is therefore safe to predict a further drop in Communist Party popularity in Bulgaria, which, as a matter of fact, has never been as high as seems to be rather widely assumed. It is true that collectivization has been achieved in Bulgaria more rapidly and completely than in any other Communist ruled country, but there are no grounds for the assumption that the Bulgarian peasants were any less opposed to it than Polish, Yugoslav, or Hungarian peasants. The difference seems to have been that the regime could afford to disregard the inevitable drop in production. Nor does the fact that in the cities there have been no large scale anti-regime outbreaks as in East Germany, Hungary, or Poland prove that the Bulgarian white and blue collar classes are any less opposed to the regime. Their numerical weight is, however, much smaller. As for the Bulgarian intelligentsia, it has been one of the most outspoken in its opposition to the regime.

123. On the other hand, in Bulgaria, practically alone among the satellites there is no historic anti-Russian as distinct from anti-communist sentiment. There was very little fighting, and therefore plundering by the Russians after World War II. No occupation troops remained to offend national pride, nor had Russia ever annexed any formerly Bulgarian territory. Political and cultural ties with Russia, the "Protector" of the smaller Slav nations, had always been close.

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However, the fact that Russians are not generally hated and feared by Bulgarians, as they are by Russia's immediate neighbors, does not make present day Russian ideology any more palatable to them. But it may help to explain - together with the stolidity of the Bulgarian - why popular opposition remained below the boiling point in 1956 and why, in the words of the BCP Central Committee meeting of 5 December 1958, the regime leaders were able, by a judicious display of "implacability" and "Communist principles," to save the country "from defeat at the hands of revisionism."

124. Of equal, if not greater importance, for the relative smoothness of the Bulgarian waters was the failure of the BCP to produce another Kostov during the 1956 crisis. Under present circumstances, even if one should emerge, it would make little difference. The pendulum is now everywhere swinging away from revisionism, let alone from anti-communist outbreaks. If and when it again swings in the opposite direction, the Bulgarian people can be counted upon to be as eager as any other to take advantage of every favorable opportunity to regain their freedom.

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