

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT [REDACTED]

COUNTRY Bulgaria

DATE DISTR. Dec, 22, 1954

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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Domestic Politics

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1. [REDACTED] There was gossip that Chervenkov was viewed with disfavor in Moscow and that he would like to assert his independence from the Soviets but was too weak to do anything. Yugov had been rehabilitated in recent months but neither he nor any of the Party leaders commanded any particular influence among the population. [REDACTED] Chervenkov probably had the most influence, thanks to a widespread belief that Dimitrov had been murdered by the Soviets and that Chervenkov, as Dimitrov's close follower, was possibly a potential opponent of the Soviets. [REDACTED] Ruben Levi, who is said to have changed his name to Avranov, had been criticized in the Communist press. [REDACTED] 25X1

2. [REDACTED] the average level of intelligence of Party members had declined in recent years. Five years ago, there were more old members who were convinced Communists and whose membership dated back to before 1944. Now the Party was recruiting stupid but ambitious people from remote villages. There was considerable discussion about bringing more members of the intelligentsia into the [REDACTED] 25X1

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Party but this was still mainly talk. At the present time, the percentage of members secretly opposed to Communism was larger than five or eight years ago. As jobs were given more and more to the ambitious, selfish, unprincipled, and opportunistic, [redacted] in the future, the Party would become an even more useful, though possibly less reliable, tool in the hands of the Soviets than it had been to date. 25X1

3. The Bulgarian public was generally favorable to the emigrants but did not know much about or take an interest in the activities of the individual emigrants or emigrant groups. The monarchy no longer had much importance or much future in the eyes of most Bulgarians. [redacted] in the referendum shortly after the war, many people voted [redacted] as an anti-Communist protest and not because they favored a monarchical system. 25X1

4. In the event of a political upset in Bulgaria, all agricultural collectives and state farms would be swept away at once. There was practically no support in any section of the population for collectivization in agriculture; however, Socialism might survive in industry.

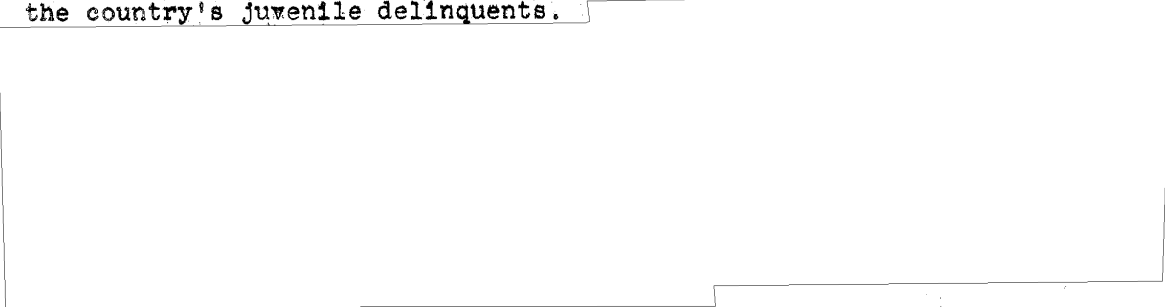
5. [redacted] 25X1

Youth and Communism

6. [redacted] the proportion of convinced Communists among the youth of twenty was no greater than among older age groups; in any case it was not more than five or ten percent of the total. [redacted] 25X1

7. The Dimitrov Union of National Youth (DSNM) was unpopular among young people and was quite ineffective in converting youth to Communism. Nevertheless, [redacted] the constant unchallenged repetition of Communist propaganda partially succeeded in making people acquire some Communist habits and ideas without their knowing it. 25X1

8. Hooliganism was a serious problem but a non-political one. [redacted] ascribed it to the lack of adequate recreational facilities for young people. In Sofia and its vicinity, there were only two or three places where young people could dance and enjoy themselves. There were a few protected and pampered young people, the children of Party leaders, but [redacted] did not [redacted] contributed more than its share to the country's juvenile delinquents. 25X1



Amnesty of Political Prisoners

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9. It was widely believed in Bulgaria that during summer 1954 a very large number of inmates of concentration camps had been set free. [redacted]

[redacted] there would probably be an official announcement of amnesty on the nine September

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holiday. It was believed that the amnesty would set free persons in prison and that the earlier unannounced releases had been confined to inmates of the labor camps or to persons who had never been brought to trial; there were no rumors of releases of ordinary criminals.

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10. People were no longer as afraid as they had once been of being arbitrarily arrested; however, there was as much caution as ever about speaking openly. It was felt that any opposition to the regime would be punished as severely as ever but that the authorities were now less likely to involve innocent people in such cases.

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The Government's generally milder policy has not increased public support for the regime because everyone saw the change as only part of the latest shift in the Moscow line.

Attitudes toward New Economic Course

11. most Bulgarians agreed that the so-called new economic course was a Communist trick to weaken opposition to the regime. Because living conditions, better now than two years ago, were worse than six years ago, and were far from pre-war living standards, this trick had not changed Bulgarian public attitudes toward the regime. In 1939, prices of commodities in levas were about the same as today but wages then were from three to five times higher. This was the calculation people constantly made and which convinced them that many annual price reductions would be required to raise standards to the pre-war level. A lack of confidence in the future was also seen in the continued fears that sooner or later another currency reform would be sprung on the country.
12. The goals of the Government's industrialization program were approved and there was a general impression that some progress was being made toward industrializing the country. Nevertheless, the Government claims about the amount of progress were disbelieved; official statistics were seen as mainly lies. The official line was that the high level of investments in industry was imposing heavy sacrifices on the present generation. This was, to some extent, accepted by the population but nobody thought that the industrialization program was entirely, or even chiefly, responsible for the catastrophic fall in living standards.
13. the proliferation of unproductive police, soldiers, and bureaucrats, and the basic inefficiency of Communist organizational methods were mainly responsible for Bulgaria's bad economic situation. There were more planners than workers. If a factory had trouble, its politically-appointed director, instead of trying to cope with the trouble, spent most of his time writing letters to his superiors to establish a paper record proving that he was actively seeking a solution to the problem and that he was not responsible for the trouble. The multiplication of paper work effectively protected the inefficient individual and brought the economy to a slowdown.
- Industrialization was not responsible for low living standards. Communist mismanagement was responsible. How else, could one explain the fact that, despite the much publicized construction of new dams and electrical works, there were usually two nights or more a week in August 1954 when electric current failed in different parts of Sofia? The forced loans deducted from peoples' salaries should have been enough to cover investments for industrialization without additional levies through fixing very high prices for consumer goods.

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14. Soviet exploitation of Bulgaria was also partly responsible for the country's continued low standard of living. When announcements were made that the Bulgarian Government was sending help to North Korea, people assumed that because it would be uneconomical to send Bulgarian help all the way to North Korea, the aid from Bulgaria probably went instead to the Soviet Union. The latter apparently sent some help to Korea, but probably compensated itself for at least part of this help by insisting on increased contributions from the satellite countries.

15. [redacted] in mid-1953, [redacted] at the Ministry of National Defense, considerable cuts were made in the Ministry's funds for financing [redacted] new construction. 25X1

[redacted] the cut to be 20% of that year's investment plan. The cuts took the form of cancelling plans for new construction and reducing amounts which could be spent on projects already under way. Because the 1953 construction plans were apparently larger than the 1952 figures, [redacted] actual 1953 outlay for construction was as large as that of the previous year. The only specific example [redacted] of a project which was cut back was one for an oil tank storage farm about 20 km. from Sofia. The 1953 plan called for construction of about 40 large tanks. Work was [redacted] nearly finished on 28 tanks but when these were completed no work was started on the other 12 tanks. [redacted] there was no plan to build the remaining 12 tanks the following year. 25X1

16. [redacted] because there had been no cut in the three-year term of compulsory military service, there had been no such cut in war production. 25X1

Religion in Bulgaria

17. The subordination of the church to the regime had been of only minor help in controlling the people. The government really was not so much interested in getting support from the church as in controlling the church so that it would not be able to oppose the regime. The election of Bulgaria's first Orthodox Patriarch of modern times had left people indifferent. The Patriarch was regarded as a Communist tool, a careerist, who sold himself to the regime. Young people were afraid to go to church except on major church holidays, when nearly everyone, believer and non-believer alike, went to church. It was relatively safe to go to church in Sofia but a young person in a small town who went very often would be in considerable danger of being expelled from the DSNM and of possibly losing his job. [redacted] even without this political pressure on the young people, the influence of the church on the population was declining. There seemed to be a general growth of indifference to organized religion among young people. Fewer and fewer people had church weddings. A church marriage customarily involved excessively heavy expenditures on flowers, long dresses, etc., while the registry office-marriages, which had to be performed first, were free. 25X1

Foreign Affairs and the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

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[Redacted]

19. There was no enthusiasm for Pan-Slavism. People were tired of "Grandfather Ivan", as the USSR was called, and would be glad to have nothing to do with the Soviet Union. The Bulgarian people were not anti-Soviet but believed the Communists were an oppressive minority in the USSR as in Bulgaria; they consequently felt that the Soviets were, in a sense, fellow victims of Bolshevism. This latent sympathy for the Soviets did not extend to Soviet citizens who came to Bulgaria. These people were universally regarded as ignorant carpetbaggers.

20. People read classical Russian books but were not interested in or influenced by Soviet literature.

[Redacted]

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21.

[Redacted]

22.

23.

Soviet Citizens in Bulgaria

24.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] a six-story apartment building on Stalin Street, number 62, at the corner of Patriarch Eftym Street, was reserved for Soviet personnel attached to the Ministry of Defense: there were 15 flats in the building. The Ministry had a garage at Sezdika Street, No. 25, which operated a motor pool of about 30 cars for Soviet citizens working in the Ministry. The drivers were Bulgarian soldiers. On the basis of the above, [Redacted] the total number of Soviet personnel with the Ministry would be between 20 and 30.

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[Redacted]

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Sidelights on Bulgarian-Rumanian Relations

25. The [] tour to East Germany was delayed by one day because of unexplained difficulties in obtaining a Rumanian transit visa for the group. At the Bulgarian-Rumanian border crossing point, the two railway coaches in which the Bulgarian party was travelling were taken off the train, and held at the border from about 0600 hours until nearly noon. During that time, two trains departed for Bucharest but the Rumanian customs officials pretended that some questions about the group passport prevented them from allowing the group to leave. The Bulgarians on the train were all convinced that the delay was caused by the failure of the Bulgarians to bribe the Rumanian officials with money, cigarettes, or liquor. The customs examination was very superficial and none of the Bulgarians' luggage was opened. The Rumanians probably knew that the Bulgarians were carrying considerable quantities of cigarettes and other contraband for sale in East Germany and wanted a share of it. 25X1
26. One of the group claimed to have heard that the Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister, Georgi Traikov, was once held by Rumanian border guards at a Soviet frontier for six hours and was only released and allowed to proceed to Bucharest on his way to Bulgaria after he had telephoned the Rumanian Communist leader, Groza. The Bulgarians ascribed this incident also to the same notorious determination of the Rumanian officials to extort bribes on every possible occasion rather than to any political consideration. [] since Bulgaria regained part of Dobrudja there is no anti-Rumanian feeling in Bulgaria. 25X1
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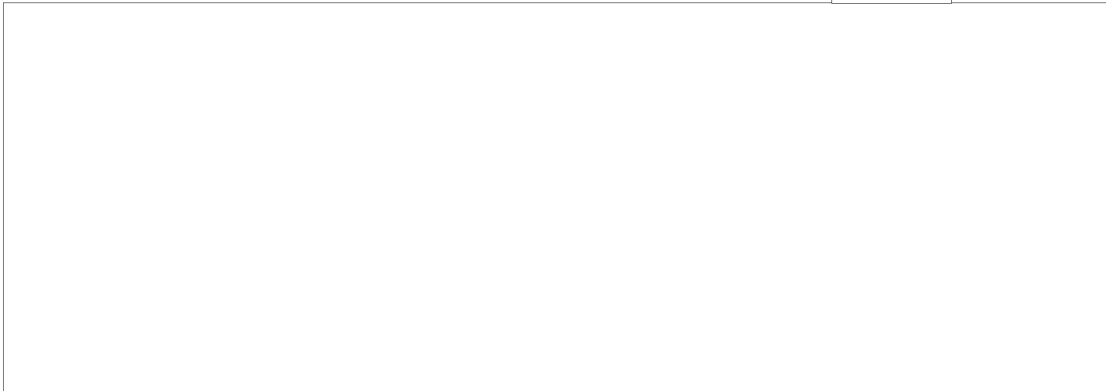
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31.

Opportunities for Travel Outside Bulgaria:

32. It is now fairly easy for Bulgarians to get permission to travel on escorted tours to neighboring Satellite countries. [redacted] Requirements for travel to East Germany were stiffer than for other Satellites. [redacted] the chance to travel to East Germany from an announcement in the window of the Balkanturist Agency office on Rakovski street in Sofia. The trip was to include four days in Leipzig and two in East Berlin. Individual applications were accepted. [redacted] each submitting his identity document, two photos, and a letter from his employer that the visit to Leipzig would help him directly with his work. Balkanturist itself obtained a classified letter on each applicant from the cadre section at his place of employment. About 200 people applied for the approximately 50 available places in the tour. Balkanturist threw out about 50 names of private persons with no plausible reason and sent the remainder of the applications to the militia. The latter presumably made an investigation of the applicants and then selected the 50 most deserving or reliable persons. A group passport was made out and given directly to Balkanturist. The persons chosen had to submit an additional 12 photos each.
33. [redacted] All of the persons selected were either married or relatively important officials or Party members. The announcement of who was to go was made only two days before the tour left.
34. A clerk at Balkanturist mentioned that applications might be accepted later for escorted tours to the Soviet Union. There was no indication of when such tours would begin, where they would go, or how large they would be. [redacted] some token tourist travel of this sort would be allowed in the near future, otherwise, nothing would have been said of it at Balkanturist in this very vague way.

Protection of Classified Information in Bulgarian Ministries

35. [redacted] work in the Ministry of Construction was all unclassified. [redacted]
- [redacted] At the Ministry of Defense, however, no visitors were allowed and all documents had to be put away in a file room at night. Blank sheets of transparent tracing paper were stamped secret and registered in the file room. Torn and otherwise unuseable sheets had to be returned to the file room where they were checked off the register even though nothing might have been written on them. Brief cases were inspected when people left the Ministry and occasionally employees were searched.

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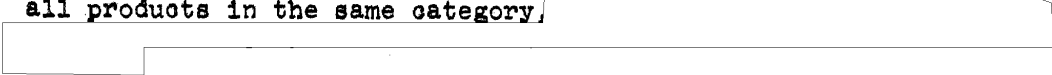
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Prices of Imports from other Satellite Countries

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36. [redacted] in the Construction Planning Organization of the Ministry of Defense in December 1952, [redacted] a pump from Czechoslovakia was invoiced in rubles. The cost to the Ministry of Defense was calculated by converting the ruble cost into Bulgarian currency at the official published exchange rate and multiplying that sum in levas by a coefficient of something between 2.3 and 2.7. The coefficient was apparently the same for all products in the same category.

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