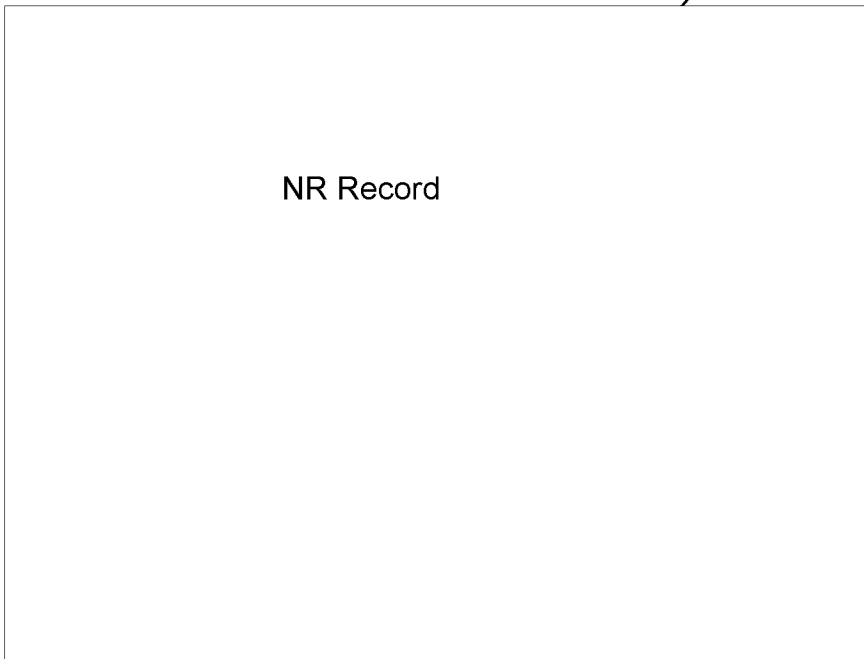


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NR Record

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**BULGARIA: Resurgence of Opposition Party**

The old-line leaders of Bulgaria's Agrarian Party, long subservient to the Communist Party, resigned at a party meeting Saturday, clearing the way for the resurgence of a genuine opposition to the ruling Communists. Speakers at the Saturday session demanded that the party act as an opponent equal to the Communist Party. Nevertheless, the new leader, Angel Dimitrov, is himself a longtime member of the Agrarian leadership. 

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**Comment:** The Agrarian Party—which ruled Bulgaria in the 1920s—poses a potentially serious challenge to the Communist Party's power. The extent of the challenge may depend on the ability of the new leaders to remain in power. Many members probably will perceive the leadership changes as cosmetic and could agitate for younger, more militant leaders undaunted by links to the Zhivkov regime. Even Dimitrov and his allies, however, probably will press recently installed General Secretary Mladenov to address the issues of pluralism and free elections sooner than he had planned. Mladenov for his part almost certainly will seek to avoid actual power sharing, probably citing the Agrarian Party's resurgence as evidence of his support for pluralism. 

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TCS 2980/89

4 December 1989