

**ALERT SERIES**

**BULGARIA**

**MOVEMENTS TOWARDS DEMOCRATIZATION**

**[AL/BGR/93.001]**

**MARCH 1993**

(Information in report compiled through March 1993.)

All the sources of information in this document are identified and are publicly available.

**PRODUCED BY:  
INS RESOURCE INFORMATION CENTER  
425 I STREET, N.W.  
(ULLICO BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR)  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20536**

## DISCLAIMER

The July 27, 1990 Regulations, "Aliens and Nationality: Asylum and Withholding of Deportation Procedures," mandated the creation of a new corps of Asylum Officers to provide an initial nonadversarial adjudication of asylum claims. Asylum Officers use asylum law, interviews with asylum applicants, and relevant information on country conditions to determine the merits of individual claims for asylum.

The Resource Information Center was created to assist Asylum Officers domestically, and Immigration Officers determining refugee status overseas, by collecting and disseminating credible and objective information on human rights conditions. As specified in the Regulations (8 CFR 208.12), such information may be obtained from the Department of Justice, the Department of State, and "other credible sources, such as international organizations, private voluntary organizations, or academic institutions."

Resource Information Center Papers are one means by which information reflecting a wide range of credible sources is summarized for easy access by Asylum and Immigration Officers. The views expressed in Resource Information Center papers do not necessarily represent official U.S. government opinion, nor do they reflect U.S. foreign policy concerns. This paper was written on the basis of publicly available information, analyses, and comment. All sources are cited. This paper cannot be, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to the country surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any claim to refugee status or asylum. Updates to this paper may be made from time to time.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	v
<u>FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT</u> .....	v
<u>"LUSTRATION" BILLS AND RIDERS</u> .....	vi
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	1
<b>POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING</b> .....	3
<u>THE TRANSITION PERIOD</u> .....	3
Zhivkov Forced From Power in 1989 .....	3
Mladenov Institutes Reforms .....	3
Societal Hostility Against Bulgaria's Ethnic Minorities .....	4
Freedom Of The Press .....	5
Trade Unions .....	6
<u>ELECTIONS</u> .....	6
June 1990 .....	6
October 1991 .....	8
January 1992 .....	9
<b>HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS</b> .....	10
<u>JUDICIAL INVESTIGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES UNDER</u> <u>ZHIVKOV</u> .....	10
<u>THE STATUS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BULGARIA</u> .....	11
Ethnic Turks and Ethnic Bulgarian Muslims .....	11
1970 - 1989: The Forced Assimilation Campaign .....	11
1989: 310,000 Ethnic Turks Flee to Turkey .....	12
Resuming Traditional Ethnic Turkish and Muslim Names .....	13
Participation By The MRF In Parliamentary Politics .....	13
Societal Hostility Toward Ethnic Turks .....	15
Turkish Language Classes .....	15
Relations Between Ethnic Turks And Bulgarian Muslims .....	16
Accountability For Human Rights Abuses Against Turks .....	16
Future Status of Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria .....	18
Roms (Gypsies) .....	18
History of Roms (Gypsies) in the Zhivkov Era .....	18
Status of Roms in Bulgaria .....	19
Roms: the Constitutional Ban on Ethnic Parties .....	20
Macedonians .....	21
Vietnamese Guest Workers .....	21
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	23

<b>MAP</b> .....	24
<b>INDEX</b> .....	25

## PREFACE

This preface is intended to serve as a supplement to the following Alert on Bulgaria (AL/BGR/93.001). It covers in brief the most significant developments that have occurred in Bulgaria since initial research was completed in December 1992. The information contained herein is concerned with two topics: the formation of the new government following the fall from power of the UDF in October 1992; and the issue of "lustration bills" (and "lustration riders" to bills) currently being debated in the Bulgarian parliament.

### FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

In late October of 1992, the reigning UDF was voted out of power when its sometime ally, the MRF, sided with the BSP in a parliamentary vote of no confidence.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with his mandate, President Zhelyu Zhelev invited each of the parties to attempt to form a new government. The UDF and the BSP both failed, but the MRF, in conjunction with the BSP and elements within the UDF, was able to form a new government that has been described as "centrist."<sup>2</sup> Lyuben Berov, President Zhelev's economic advisor, was named the new Prime Minister.

The new government was formed at the initiative of the MRF, and is dominated (in terms of seats) by the BSP. No successful coalition would have been possible, however, without the cooperation of some members of the UDF. Although UDF officials have characterized the MRF-BSP

---

<sup>1</sup>"Bulgaria Forming New Government," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 30 October 1992), p. A33.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 730. *see also* Stanev, Boiko, "Bulgaria: Time for Professionals," *Moscow News* (Moscow: No. 3, 13 January 1993) as reported on NEXIS database.

power-sharing agreement as an "unholy alliance," at least 23 members of the UDF have publicly admitted to voting for the new government.<sup>3</sup>

Preliminary indications are that the new government will live up to its "centrist" description. It has described its "programme" as being focussed primarily on "continuation of the reform, privatization, social orientation, strengthening of national security, and denunciation of the policy of confrontation." The new prime minister's cabinet also seems to indicate a commitment to a politics of nonpartisan cooperation, including as it does two members of the UDF and one member of the MRF. Prime Minister Berov has announced that the members of his government "will not be bound hand and foot to any party discipline."<sup>4</sup>

#### "LUSTRATION" BILLS AND RIDERS

Since the end of Communist rule in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian parliament has drafted a series of four "lustration" bills, designed to bar members of the former regime from holding any positions of influence in post-Communist Bulgaria. The fourth and latest version of the "lustration bill" would (if passed) prohibit all those who occupied certain specified positions in the Bulgarian Communist Party from holding any public office. This prohibition would also extend to all those that were members of or collaborators with the Zhivkov era secret police. Any cases that appeared questionable would be referred to a special parliamentary committee, but their decision would be

---

<sup>3</sup>Since parliamentary votes are kept confidential, it is not known exactly how many members of the UDF actually voted to support the formation of the new government. *see* Engelbrekt, Kjell, "Technocrats Dominate New Bulgarian Government," *RFE/RL Research Report* (New York: Vol. 2, No. 4, 22 January 1993), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Stanev, Boiko, "Bulgaria: Time for Professionals," *Moscow News* (Moscow: No. 3, 13 January 1993) as reported on NEXIS database.

final; there would be no recourse to the court system following the decision of the parliamentary committee.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, similar provisions have been attached to a variety of other bills, some of which have been passed. One of these "lustration riders" was attached to the Banking Law, passed in March 1992. This rider barred the same groups of people identified in the lustration bills from sitting on banking commissions or receiving pensions. On 29 July 1992, the Bulgarian Constitutional Court overturned this law, declaring it to be inconsistent with Article 6 of the 1991 Constitution (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of a variety of things, including political opinion).<sup>6</sup> On 11 February 1993, however, the Constitutional Court upheld a very similar law, the so-called Panev Act (also called the "Democratization of Science Act"), that bars persons connected with "supreme structures of the former BCP and security services" from holding "managerial offices at scientific establishments, such as chiefs of departments, deans, rectors, and chief editors of serials."<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), p. 209.

<sup>6</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), p. 209.

<sup>7</sup>"*Decommunization of Science Act*" Ruled Valid (Sofia: Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, 11 February 1993) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: East Europe*, 12 February 1993, pp. 5-6.

## SUMMARY

Since the ruling Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) forced Bulgaria's long-time dictator, Todor Zhivkov, to resign in 1989, Bulgaria has made substantial progress toward the establishment of democracy. The country has had two parliamentary elections (the second of which ousted the BCP's successor party, the Bulgarian Socialist Party, from power) and a presidential election. Each of these elections were judged by international observers to be largely free and fair.

For most sectors of the population, democratic rights and freedoms have been solidly established in both law and practice. The status of Bulgaria's ethnic minorities, however, has yet to be fully resolved. On one hand, the BSP did repeal the forced assimilation policies of the Zhivkov era,<sup>8</sup> and a predominately Turkish organization, the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), does play an important role in the parliament. On the other hand, there was strong judicial and legislative opposition to the MRF's registration as a political party, and a clause in the July 1991 Constitution banning ethnically and religiously based parties bars Rom and Macedonian parties from electoral politics. The open hostility displayed by a significant number of Bulgarian Christians towards ethnic Turks, Muslims, and Roms, the continuing incidents of discrimination and violence against Roms, and other similar considerations indicate that a culture of tolerance has yet to be established.

Bulgaria has demonstrated a promising degree of respect for the rule of law and the provenance of international legal standards. While trials for incidents of corruption and human rights abuse during the Zhivkov era are being conducted, anti-communist "witchhunts" appear unlikely to

---

<sup>8</sup>These policies required among other things, that ethnic Turks, ethnic Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks), Roms (Gypsies), and Macedonians adopt Bulgarian-sounding names.



result. Unfortunately, convictions of top level officials responsible for human rights abuses during the Zhivkov era appear to be equally unlikely to occur.

## POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING

### THE TRANSITION PERIOD

#### **Zhivkov Forced From Power in 1989**

Bulgaria was occupied by Ottoman Turks from 1396 to 1878, and did not achieve complete independence until 1908. It was on the losing side in both World Wars, and communists seized power in conjunction with the "liberation" of Bulgaria by the Soviet Army in 1944. The Bulgarian Communist Party, under the control of Todor Zhivkov since 1954, was forcefully criticized by human rights groups for its severely authoritarian and anti-minority policies.<sup>9</sup>

On 3 November 1989, the last day of an international environmental conference held in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, several thousand Bulgarians participated in a pro-democracy demonstration.<sup>10</sup> The following week, one day after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Bulgarian Communist Party forced the resignation of Todor Zhivkov, its leader and Bulgaria's president of 35 years.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Mladenov Institutes Reforms**

Zhivkov was replaced by Petar Mladenov, his foreign minister, who announced in mid-November 1989 that he favored free elections and a stronger parliament. In mid-December 1989, Mladenov stated that the Communist Party's constitutional monopoly on power should be rescinded,

---

<sup>9</sup>"Bulgaria," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., Vol. 2, 1989), p. 619. *see also* Blake, Robert, *Steer Clear of the Balkans* (The Independent: 24 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>10</sup> *Reform Grips Eastern Europe, Albania and Romania Isolated* (Reuters: 20 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. *see also* "Thousands in Bulgaria Rally," *New York Times* (New York: 4 November 1989), p. A5.

<sup>11</sup>Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgarian Chief Quits After 35 Years of Rigid Rule," *New York Times* (New York: 11 November 1989), p. A1. "Bulgaria: How Zhivkov Fell," *The Economist* (London: 18 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. *and Bulgarian Leader Zhivkov Steps Down; Mladenov Assumes CP Leadership* (Facts on File: 17 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

and that free parliamentary elections should be held in early 1990. The parliament responded by repealing a repressive anti-free speech law,<sup>12</sup> and, on 15 January 1990, by revoking the Communist Party's monopoly on power, as well as a 1946 law banning the Agrarian Party.<sup>13</sup>

During this period, Bulgaria experienced some of the largest independent rallies in its post-war history, with crowds of about 50,000 non- or anti-communist protestors participating. The demonstrations were peaceful, and were eventually covered by the government-controlled media. The government also dismantled a police unit that had harassed human-rights campaigners!<sup>14</sup>

### **Societal Hostility Against Bulgaria's Ethnic Minorities**

As Bulgarians began to exercise freedom of speech, the hostility felt by ethnic Bulgarians towards ethnic Turks and other ethnic minorities became apparent. Groups which advocated minority rights in public demonstrations were met with marked animosity.<sup>15</sup> When the government announced on 29 December 1989 that it would allow ethnic Turks, Bulgarian Muslims, Roms (Gypsies), and Macedonians to readopt their traditional names (which the government had forced them to change

---

<sup>12</sup>*Monday's Events in Eastern Europe* (Associated Press: 11 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgaria's Communist Chief Plans to Relax Grip and Hold Elections," *New York Times* (New York: 12 December 1989), p. A1. *Reform Grips Eastern Europe, Albania and Romania Isolated* (Reuters: 20 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgarian Leader Hints at Future of Free Voting and Other Changes," *New York Times* (New York: 18 November 1989), p. A1. Haberman, Clyde, "Shake-Up in Bulgaria Brings Cautious Optimism," *New York Times* (New York: 12 November 1989), p. A23. **and** "Bulgaria: How Zhivkov Fell," *The Economist* (London: 18 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1991), pp. 1100, 1104. Bohlen, Celestine, "Bulgarian Party Loses Dominance," *New York Times* (New York: 16 January 1990), p. A1. **and** *Monday's Events in Eastern Europe* (Associated Press: 11 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>14</sup>Weyr, Teddie, *Bulgarians Rally to Demand Communists Share Power* (Associated Press: 10 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. **see also** Haberman, Clyde, "50,000 in Bulgarian Demand Faster Movement Toward Democracy," *New York Times* (New York: 11 December 1989), p. A8.

<sup>15</sup>Haberman, Clyde, "Rally of 50,000 Bulgarians Calls for Democratic Future," *New York Times* (New York: 19 November 1989), p. A26.

for "Bulgarian" names in an assimilation campaign which began in the 1970s), ethnic Bulgarian Christians staged protests.<sup>16</sup> As will be discussed in the section on ethnic Turks below, there was equally vehement opposition to Turkish demands that Turkish language instruction be available in schools.<sup>17</sup>

After nearly a year of painstaking negotiations, widespread Turkish protests over the cumbersome and costly judicial procedure adopted by the National Assembly, and significant international pressure, the government agreed in November 1990 to a relatively simple administrative procedure for resuming original names. The legislature also adopted measures guaranteeing religious freedom, but stipulated that Bulgarian would remain the official language.

### **Freedom Of The Press**

On the whole, Bulgaria now enjoys a free press. Over 600 newspapers currently publish in Bulgaria, 135 of which are privately owned, and 125 of which are owned by various political organizations. The Voice of America and broadcast services from Britain and France can be heard freely, and the new Constitution bans censorship. There are, however, occasional skirmishes over proposals to regulate the media or establish "competency" standards.<sup>18</sup> So far these debates have not yet resulted in any significant restrictions on Bulgaria's press.

---

<sup>16</sup>Lekic, Slobodan, *Government Will Allow Turks to Take Back Moslem Names* (Associated Press: 29 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. *see also* "Turks Win Right to Use the Muslim Names They Were Forced to Change," *New York Times* (New York: 30 December 1989), p. A10.

<sup>17</sup>"Bulgaria: Accord in Sofia on Ethnic Dispute," *New York Times* (New York: 13 January 1990), p. A8. Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report: 1990* (New York: Human Rights Watch, January 1991), p. 351. *and* "Ethnic Rivalries Ignite in Bulgaria," *New York Times* (New York: 6 January 1990), p. A1.

<sup>18</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 500. U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 1066. *and* Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), pp. 48-49.

## **Trade Unions**

Bulgaria now has two large labor union confederations, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (KNSB), a successor to the Communist Party's trade union, and Podkrepa, a union formed in 1989 and active in the democratization movement. Unions have the right to strike, except for political reasons, and have exercised that right. While the July 1991 constitution prohibits unions from engaging in political activities, both confederations have been active in parliamentary politics. The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights reports a few cases of apparent discrimination against Podkrepa members, primarily dismissals.<sup>19</sup>

## ELECTIONS

### **June 1990**

Reforms continued during the spring of 1990, while the Communist Party still controlled the government. In February 1990, the Communist Party chose a new prime minister, Andrei Lukanov.<sup>20</sup> Later that spring, the Communist Party changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). In preparation for the elections scheduled in June 1990, opponents of the BSP united to form the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), an "umbrella" opposition party, with Zhelyu Zhelev as its chief.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), pp. 1071-1072. *see also* Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), p. 49.

<sup>20</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1991), p. 1100. *see also* Simons, Marlise, "Sofia Party Picks Support of Change as Premier," *New York Times* (New York: 4 February 1990), p. A22.

<sup>21</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1991), p. 1100. *see also* "Where Old Parties Die Hard," *The Economist* (London: 2 June 1990), p. 55.

The BSP won the June 1990 elections by a small majority. According to the State Department, "[i]nternational observers pronounced the elections free, but many agreed with opposition claims that intimidation by Socialists was a factor in their victory."<sup>22</sup> Support for the BSP, however, may also have been due to the BSP's reforms, its continued influence in rural areas, and the UDF's lack of organization. Within a month after the elections, President Petar Mladenov resigned because of claims that he had sent tanks to deal with an anti-government demonstration in December 1989. The Parliament chose the leader of the UDF, Zhelyu Zhelev, to replace Mladenov on 1 August 1990.<sup>23</sup>

BSP Prime Minister Lukanov came under pressure in November 1990, mainly because of his government's failure to halt the economic decline and improve supplies of food and consumer goods. Although he survived a vote of confidence, Lukanov quit at the end of November, 1990, following two weeks of non-violent protests and a four-day strike by the union Podkrepa.<sup>24</sup> His nonpartisan successor, Dimitar Popov, freed prices on 1 February 1991, which caused a six-fold price increase, but brought food back into the stores.<sup>25</sup>

## October 1991

---

<sup>22</sup>"Ex-Communists Decisively Lead Bulgaria Voting," *New York Times* (New York: 11 June 1990), p. A1. *see also* U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1991), p. 1100.

11 <sup>23</sup>"Bulgaria: Disneyland," *The Economist* (London: 4 August 1990), p. 47. *see also* *The New York Times Index 1990: A Book of Record* (New York: New York Times Co., vol. 78, 1991), p. 210.

<sup>24</sup>*The New York Times Index 1990: A Book of Record* (New York: New York Times Co., vol. 78, 1991), p. 211. Orlikowski, Marian, *Bulgaria: Checkmate: Lukanov's Government Resigns* (Gazeta International: 13 December 1990) as reported on NEXIS database. *and* Longworth, R.C., "Bulgaria Gets Few Points For Progress," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois: 25 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>25</sup>"Bulgaria: Here Comes Reform, at a Price," *The Economist* (London: 9 March 1991), p. 48. *see also* "Bulgaria: Democratic Change Hampered by Weak Leadership - The Political Parties," *Financial Times* (17 May 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

On 12 July 1991, the Bulgarian National Assembly approved a new constitution which according to Human Rights Watch, "provides broad protection of fundamental liberties."<sup>26</sup> On 13 October 1991, Bulgaria had another democratic parliamentary election. A total of 61 parties took part, vying for 240 seats.<sup>27</sup>

The Bulgarian Parliament uses a system of proportional representation, and only three parties won sufficient votes to meet the cutoff requirement for representation:<sup>28</sup> the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), eking out a victory with 111 seats; the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), taking 106; and the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), winning 23. Filip Dimitrov, leader of the UDF, was named prime minister. Although it balked at forming a full coalition with the UDF, the MRF agreed to give the UDF limited support in exchange for some concessions to the ethnic Turkish minority in Bulgaria.<sup>29</sup> As will be discussed in greater detail below, opposition parties nearly succeeded in denying the predominantly ethnic Turkish MRF the seats it had won because of a clause in the new Constitution forbidding the registration of political parties founded on ethnic or religious grounds.<sup>30</sup>

## **January 1992**

---

<sup>26</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 498.

<sup>27</sup>Garber, Larry, "Communists and Pluralism," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California: 20 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. *see also* Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report: 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 498.

<sup>28</sup>A party must win at least four percent of the popular vote to qualify for holding seats in the parliament.

<sup>29</sup>"Bulgaria: In Business, Just," *The Economist* (London: 16 November 1991), p. 64.

<sup>30</sup>"Bulgaria: Hung by the Turks," *The Economist* (London: 19 October 1991), pp. 59-60.

On 12 January 1992, Bulgaria's first popular presidential elections took place. The incumbent president, Zhelyu Zhelev of the UDF, had been chosen by parliament on 1 August 1990 to hold the office until proper elections could be held. He and his vice-presidential running mate, Blaga Dimitrova, were elected in the second round of voting, out of a total of 21 "tandems" or candidate teams.<sup>31</sup> The BSP accepted its loss, calling the election "a step forward in the consolidation of the democratic process in Bulgaria."<sup>32</sup>

In late October, 1992, the UDF was voted out of power when the MRF sided with the BSP in a parliamentary vote of no confidence.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>Zhelev "First Directly Elected President" (Sofia: Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, 19 January 1992) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: East Europe*, 21 January 1992, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup>BSP Accepts Election Results (Sofia: Khorizont Radio Network, 20 January 1992) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: East Europe*, 21 January 1992, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup>"Bulgaria Forming New Government," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 30 October 1992), p. A33. See the Preface for an update regarding the formation of the new government.



## HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

### JUDICIAL INVESTIGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES UNDER ZHIVKOV

Since the fall of Zhivkov, the Bulgarian Communist Party, its successor, the BSP, and the UDF have each taken measures to investigate the allegations of human rights abuse and corruption leveled against officials of the Zhivkov era. Several major incidents have been or are being investigated, including: the suspicious death in 1978 of a prominent exiled Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov; Bulgaria's alleged role in the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II; cases of corruption involving Zhivkov and other high ranking Bulgarian Communist Party officials; and cases in which prison camp officials were implicated in human rights abuses.

Although by and large the trials are being conducted in accordance with international legal standards, there has been a significant lack of cooperation within the Bulgarian bureaucracy.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, most top officials are being tried for relatively minor corruption charges, while only lower-level administrators have thus far been prosecuted for human rights abuses. The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights and Helsinki Watch, as well as various media commentators, have criticized the current government's failure to prosecute former high level officials for the more serious human rights abuses which occurred during the Zhivkov era.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Boyes, Roger, "The Killers of Georgi Markov," *The Times* (UK) (London: 21 January 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. *Former Intelligence Chief Sentenced to Prison in Markov Case* (Associated Press: 19 June 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgaria Pledges an Investigation of Bizarre '78 Killing in London," *New York Times* (New York: 11 January 1990), p. A14. Zhelyazkov, Vladimir, *Scotland Yard Evidence Confirms Umbrella Murder of Bulgarian Dissident* (United Press International: 11 February 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. *General Todorov Goes on Trial Charged With Destroying Markov File* (British Broadcasting Corporation: 11 January 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** Toshkov, Veselin, *General Accused of Destroying Markov Files Found Dead, Suicide Suspected* (Associated Press: 7 January 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>35</sup>Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), p. 48. Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report: 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), pp. 500-501. Tagliabue, John, "Bulgaria Presses Inquiries Into the Communist Past," *New York*

## THE STATUS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BULGARIA

### **Ethnic Turks and Ethnic Bulgarian Muslims**

#### 1970 - 1989: The Forced Assimilation Campaign

According to the *New York Times*, about 1.5 million of Bulgaria's 9 million people are ethnic Turks, most of them located in those areas of Bulgaria that are closest to Turkey.<sup>36</sup> There are also about 200,000 ethnic Bulgarian Muslims, sometimes referred to as Pomaks (a term they find demeaning).<sup>37</sup>

In the 1970s, Bulgarian authorities began a policy of forcing Bulgarian Muslims to change their Islamic names to similar-sounding traditionally Bulgarian names.<sup>38</sup> This "forced assimilation" campaign was extended to Bulgaria's ethnic Turks in the early 1980s and was at its height in the mid-1980s.<sup>39</sup> Turkish-language schools and newspapers were shut down, mosques were closed except

---

*Times* (New York: 6 June 1991), p. A15. Wolf, Jim, *CIA Linked Past Soviet Assassinations to Attempt on Pope* (Reuters: 1 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. *Bulgaria's Parliament Strips Ex-Premier of Immunity* (Associated Press: 7 July 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** Stephen, Chris, "Bulgaria Begins Anti-Communist Purge," *The Ottawa Citizen* (Ottawa, Canada: 18 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. According to *The Times* (UK), Zhivkov's public demeanor suggests that he is nearly senile and may not be competent to stand trial. **see** Boyes, Roger, "The Killers of Georgi Markov," *The Times* (UK) (London: 21 January 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>36</sup>"Ethnic Rivalries Ignite in Bulgaria," *New York Times* (New York: 6 January 1990), p. A1. **see also** Lekic, Slobodan, *Government Will Allow Turks to Take Back Moslem Names* (Associated Press: 29 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>37</sup>Bohlen, Celestine, "A Junction of Ottoman Hate and Today's Mistrust," *New York Times* (New York: 28 October 1991), p. A4. **see also** Lekic, Slobodan, *Thousands Rally For Speedier Reform, Turks Demand Rights* (Associated Press: 29 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. Another source claims that there are closer to 400,000 Ethnic Bulgarian Muslims in Bulgaria. **see** *Chief Mufti Defends Muslim Rights* (British Broadcasting Corporation: 12 March 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. On the issue of the pejorative connotations of the term "Pomak" **see** U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 734.

<sup>38</sup>Gustincic, Andrej, *Bulgarian Moslems Join Democracy Marches* (Reuters: 16 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>39</sup>Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgaria Forces Turkish Exodus of Thousands," *New York Times* (New York: 22 June 1989), p. AA1.

on religious holidays, and Turkish boys were even checked on a regular basis to see if they had been circumcised.<sup>40</sup>

### 1989: 310,000 Ethnic Turks Flee to Turkey

In the spring of 1989, the Bulgarian government began to exert extreme pressure on ethnic Turks to leave Bulgaria altogether. At first, Turkish Prime Minister Ozal promised that Turkey would accept every ethnic Turk who fled Bulgaria.<sup>41</sup> In August 1989, however, after more than 310,000 ethnic Turks had crossed into Turkey, the Turkish government closed the border. By mid-December 1989, about 65,000 of these expatriates had returned to Bulgaria.<sup>42</sup>

### Resuming Traditional Ethnic Turkish and Muslim Names

Both ethnic Turks and ethnic Bulgarian Muslims staged demonstrations in December 1989 demanding the right to resume their original names.<sup>43</sup> Bulgarian Christians were vocal in their

---

<sup>40</sup>Gustincic, Andrej, *About 2,000 Demonstrate in Front of Bulgarian Television* (Reuters: 16 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. Haberman, Clyde, "Flow of Turks Leaving Bulgaria Swells to Hundreds of Thousands," *New York Times* (New York: 15 August 1989), p. A1. Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgaria Forces Turkish Exodus of Thousands," *New York Times* (New York: 22 June 1989), p. AA1. **and** Dempsey, Judy, "Bulgaria's Hardline Leader Quits," *Financial Times* (UK) (London: 11 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>41</sup>Haberman, Clyde, "Bulgaria Forces Turkish Exodus of Thousands," *New York Times* (New York: 22 June 1989), p. AA1. **see also** "Bulgaria: How Zhivkov Fell," *The Economist* (London: 18 November 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>42</sup>"Bulgaria and Romania; Minority Strategies," *The Economist* (London: 23 March 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. Haberman, Clyde, "Pleas for Bulgaria's Muslim Minority," *New York Times* (New York: 17 December 1989), p. A30. **and** Battiata, Mary, "Ethnic Politics Return to Bulgaria: Communists, Beaten in Election, Revive Fear of Turkish Power," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 27 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>43</sup>Haberman, Clyde, "50,000 in Bulgaria Demand Faster Movement Toward Democracy," *New York Times* (New York: 11 December 1989), p. A8. Gustincic, Andrej, *About 2,000 Demonstrate in Front of Bulgarian Television* (Reuters: 16 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** Gustincic, Andrej, *Bulgarian Moslems Join Democracy Marches* (Reuters: 16 December 1989) as reported on NEXIS database.

opposition to minority rights, particularly regarding the issue of traditional names.<sup>44</sup> As mentioned above, it took from mid-December 1989 to November 1990, a period marked by widespread anti-Turkish strikes and demonstrations, for an acceptable procedure for the resumption of traditional names to be adopted.<sup>45</sup>

### Participation By The MRF In Parliamentary Politics

The July 1991 Constitution adopted by Bulgaria's parliament expressly forbids the registration of political parties founded on ethnic, racial or religious bases. The ban also extends to any associations or religious societies which have political aims, or which engage in political activities. Human Rights Watch maintains that "such a narrow view of freedom of association has no place in a democratic society."<sup>46</sup> The State Department concurs, stating that "[t]he constitutional ban on ethnic- and religious-based political parties seems to conflict with Bulgaria's commitments within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe."<sup>47</sup>

The Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), although predominantly Turkish and Muslim, is not exclusively so. The spokesperson for the movement at the time of the elections, for instance, was Jewish. The MRF won 23 parliamentary seats in the 1990 elections, officially running as a

---

<sup>44</sup>Haberman, Clyde, "Rally of 50,000 Bulgarians Calls for Democratic Future," *New York Times* (New York: 19 November 1989), p. A26. Semerjieva, Liliana, *Ethnic Row Closes Bulgarian Schools in Turkish Minority Area* (Reuters: 19 February 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** "Bulgaria: Democratic Change Hampered by Weak Leadership - The Political Parties," *Financial Times* (17 May 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>45</sup>"Bulgaria: Accord in Sofia on Ethnic Dispute," *New York Times* (New York: 13 January 1990), p. A8. Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1990* (New York: Human Rights Watch, January 1991), p. 351. **and** "Ethnic Rivalries Ignite in Bulgaria," *New York Times* (New York: 6 January 1990), p. A1.

<sup>46</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), pp. 498-499.

<sup>47</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 1067.

"movement" rather than as a party.<sup>48</sup> When the MRF attempted to register a parallel political party, however (the Rights and Freedoms Party), the Supreme Court declared the party unconstitutional.<sup>49</sup> Pressure from western ambassadors may have been central in the Court's decision on September 20 to allow the MRF to register for the 13 October 1991 elections. According to the State Department, the decision was made on a technicality: the Central Electoral Commission ruled that the registration of the MRF for the parliamentary elections in 1990 (before the Constitution was changed) was a permanent registration which could not be revoked.<sup>50</sup> Despite reported acts of intimidation in the countryside (where most ethnic Turks live) about 6% of the population voted for the MRF in the 13 October elections.<sup>51</sup>

### Societal Hostility Toward Ethnic Turks

Anti-Turkish sentiments continue to be expressed and exploited by ethnic Bulgarian parties, notably by elements within the BSP, which have openly appealed to anti-Turkish sentiments in their

---

<sup>48</sup>*Chief Mufti Defends Muslim Rights* (British Broadcasting Corporation: 12 March 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. "Bulgaria: Democratic Change Hampered by Weak Leadership - The Political Parties," *Financial Times* (UK) (London: 17 May 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. Garber, Larry, "Communists and Pluralism," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California: 20 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** *Bulgaria Approves New Constitution, Paves Way for New Elections* (Reuters: 12 July 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>49</sup>*Chief Mufti Defends Muslim Rights* (British Broadcasting Corporation: 12 March 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. "Bulgaria: Democratic Change Hampered by Weak Leadership - The Political Parties," *Financial Times* (UK) (London: 17 May 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. Garber, Larry, "Communists and Pluralism," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California: 20 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** *Bulgaria Approves New Constitution, Paves Way for New Elections* (Reuters: 12 July 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>50</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 499. **see also** U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 1067.

<sup>51</sup>Zhelyazkov, Vladimir, *Bulgarian President Warns Against Exploiting Ethnic Divisions* (United Press International: 30 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. "Bulgaria; Hung by the Turks," *The Economist* (London: 19 October 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 499.

political campaigns. Other radical nationalist organizations which have made anti-Turkish statements include the Bulgarian National Radical Party, the Fatherland Party of Labor, the Bulgarian National Democratic Party, and the People's Committee for Defense of the National Interest.<sup>52</sup>

### Turkish Language Classes

One of the concessions won by ethnic Turks from the BSP was a promise that Turkish language instruction would eventually be made available in public schools. In March 1991, anti-Turkish organizations blockaded schools and staged hunger strikes to protest the institution of Turkish language instruction.<sup>53</sup> The legislature responded by first postponing, and then (on 1 October 1991) prohibiting the teaching of minority languages in Bulgarian schools. A widespread Turkish school boycott followed, and the BSP lifted the ban shortly before leaving office.<sup>54</sup> In November 1991, the newly elected government (relying heavily on support from the largely ethnic Turkish MRF to stay in power) issued a decree stating that minority children in the third through eighth grades could receive minority language instruction as an optional subject, after school hours, for four hours a week.<sup>55</sup>

### Relations Between Ethnic Turks And Bulgarian Muslims

---

<sup>52</sup>BSP Congress Issues Policy, Security Resolution (Sofia: DUMA, 29 December 1991) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: East Europe*, 13 January 1992, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup>"Bulgaria: Here Comes Reform, at a Price," *The Economist* (London: 9 March 1991), p. 48. *see also* Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), pp. 46-47.

<sup>54</sup>"Bulgaria: Here Comes Reform, at a Price," *The Economist* (London: 9 March 1991), p. 48.

<sup>55</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), pp. 499-500. *see also* Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), p. 47.

Friction also exists between ethnic Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) and ethnic Turks. Some Bulgarian Muslims are opposed to the MRF, which is seen by them as being dominated by ethnic Turks. According to a *New York Times* analyst, such attitudes stem from "a distrust handed down from the days of Ottoman rule and made worse by the communists."<sup>66</sup>

#### Accountability For Human Rights Abuses Against Turks

Some provisions are being made to redress past human rights abuses against ethnic Turks. Bulgarian citizens who were forced to leave during the 1989 anti-Turkish campaign are receiving some compensation for confiscated property and lost jobs when they return to Bulgaria, and in January 1992 the Bulgarian Interior Ministry fired 28 policemen for having been actively involved in the forced Turkish name-changing campaign under Zhivkov.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, Bulgaria still lacks any real consensus as to the rights of Bulgarian minorities. A "Bill Against Ethnic Discrimination" introduced by EcoGlasnost, which would have adopted the standards of international human rights law on the treatment of minorities, failed to pass parliament, and no effort has been made to investigate the torture of Turkish political prisoners under Zhivkov.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Bohlen, Celestine, "Zornitz Journal: A Junction of Ottoman Hate and Today's Mistrust," *New York Times* (New York: 28 October 1991), p. A4.

<sup>57</sup>*Interior Minister Explains Staff Dismissals* (Sofia: Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, 9 January 1992) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: East Europe*, 13 January 1992, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), pp. 499-500.

### Future Status of Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria

The sheer number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria (they make up about 10% of the Bulgarian population), the weight of international concern, the fact that both of Bulgaria's two major parties need MRF support to attain a parliamentary majority, and the political acumen of MRF leader Ahmed Dogan have all combined to afford Bulgaria's ethnic Turks a certain amount of security despite a continued mood of general hostility towards minorities. Until a social consensus is reached regarding the rights of minorities, however, the status of ethnic Turks will remain uncertain.<sup>59</sup>

### **Roms (Gypsies)**

#### History of Roms (Gypsies) in the Zhivkov Era

Bulgaria's approximately 850,000 Roms (Gypsies) comprise just under 10% of Bulgaria's population of 9 million. Roms were primarily nomadic until the mid-1950s, when the Bulgarian government began a campaign of forced assimilation, severely restricting traditional Rom religious and cultural practices. Roms were forced to settle in Soviet-style collective farms or in specially-built housing projects, mostly in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Sliven, Varna, Rousse and Vidin.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup>"Bulgaria: Democratic Change Hampered by Weak Leadership - The Political Parties," *Financial Times* (UK) (London: 17 May 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>60</sup>Konstantinova, Elizabeth, *Futility Breeds Tension in Bulgarian Gypsy Ghetto* (Reuters: 23 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. *One Killed, 18 Wounded in Clashes Between Gypsies, Police* (Paris: Agence France Presse, 3 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. *and Human Rights: Bulgarian Gypsies Face Abuses Says Report* (InterPress Service: 14 July 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.



## Status of Roms in Bulgaria

Most Bulgarian Roms live in crowded conditions (sometimes as many as 20 people to a room) in rundown housing projects where the unemployment rate among Roms usually runs from 50% - 80%. Crime levels are estimated to be seven times as high in the Rom ghettos as elsewhere in Bulgaria, and the social services available (e.g. garbage collection, street sweeping) have been described as being "vastly inferior" to those provided to other communities.<sup>61</sup>

The government maintains that Roms are equal under law, and that it is unable to provide better educational facilities and social benefits because of the poor state of the economy.<sup>62</sup> Reports by the State Department and Helsinki Watch, however, indicate continued discrimination against Roms in housing, employment opportunities and job security, military service, and education.<sup>63</sup>

Bulgaria's police are predicting "Los Angeles style riots" if increasing ethnic tensions, and tensions between the Rom community and the police force, are not somehow relieved. After a clash in the Stolipinovo ghetto left one dead and 18 wounded, the Bulgarian government stepped up attempts to alleviate the tension between police and Roms. Plans include the teaching of non-violent crowd control tactics, the hiring of police who are Roms, cooperation with leaders in the Rom

---

<sup>61</sup>*Human Rights: Bulgarian Gypsies Face Abuses Says Report* (InterPress Service: 14 July 1991) as reported on NEXIS database. *see also* Konstantinova, Elizabeth, *Futility Breeds Tension in Bulgarian Gypsy Ghetto* (Reuters: 23 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>62</sup>Konstantinova, Elizabeth, *Futility Breeds Tension in Bulgarian Gypsy Ghetto* (Reuters: 23 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>63</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), pp. 1064, 1071. Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 504. *and Human Rights: Bulgarian Gypsies Face Abuses Says Report* (InterPress Service: 14 July 1991) as reported on NEXIS database.

communities, and the institution of a national program aimed at settling the acute social problems of Roms.<sup>64</sup>

### Roms: the Constitutional Ban on Ethnic Parties

As mentioned above, the 13 July 1991 Constitution expressly forbids ethnic-based political parties from registering to take part in elections, a decision which the State Department characterizes as being in "conflict with Bulgaria's commitments within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe."<sup>65</sup> The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights concurs, stating that the ban has "significantly infringed the right of political participation of ethnic and religious minorities."<sup>66</sup> Organizations representing Roms were not allowed to participate in either the 1990 or the 1991 elections. The general feeling of hostility towards Bulgaria's ethnic minorities has resulted in a failure on the part of the current parliament to champion the cause of the Roms, or support constitutional provisions guaranteeing minority rights. Helsinki Watch charges that Roms "frequently face open discrimination from members of the Bulgarian government and parliament," including but not limited to ethnic slurs and derogatory stereotyping.<sup>67</sup>

### **Macedonians**

---

<sup>64</sup>Konstantinova, Elizabeth, *Futility Breeds Tension in Bulgarian Gypsy Ghetto* (Reuters: 23 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. *Interior Ministry Adopts Special Measures in Gipsy [sic] Conflict* (Sofia: Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, 5 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. *and One Killed, 18 Wounded in Clashes Between Gypsies, Police* (Paris: Agence France Presse, 3 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

<sup>65</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 1064.

<sup>66</sup>Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), p. 45.

<sup>67</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 500.

The traditional Macedonian region of the Balkans is now divided by the borders of Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia (now an unrecognized republic of Macedonia), and Greece. Macedonians like ethnic Turks and Roms (Gypsies), were targeted in the forced assimilation campaign of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1991, the Bulgarian Supreme Court denied two ethnic Macedonian organizations, Ilinden and Ilinden Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Independent, the right to register as political organizations because they were deemed to be separatist organizations that threatened the security of Bulgaria. The State Department characterized this decision as in "conflict with Bulgaria's commitments within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe."<sup>68</sup> The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights concurs, stating that the ban has "significantly infringed the right of political participation of ethnic and religious minorities."<sup>69</sup> Helsinki Watch maintains that the groups should have been permitted to register, as they have explicitly disavowed the use of violence and have recognized the territorial integrity of Bulgaria.<sup>70</sup>

### **Vietnamese Guest Workers**

In 1991 there were 13,000 Vietnamese "guest workers" in Bulgaria, employed on short-term contracts, usually in unskilled positions. After a riot between Vietnamese and ethnic Bulgarians

---

<sup>68</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 1064.

<sup>69</sup>Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Bulgaria," *Critique: Review of the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, July 1992), p. 45.

<sup>70</sup>Human Rights Watch, "Bulgaria," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 499. *One Killed, 18 Wounded in Clashes Between Gypsies, Police* (Paris: Agence France Presse, 3 August 1992) as reported on NEXIS database. **and** Zumwalt, Elmo, "Turnaround in Bulgaria," *Washington Times* (Washington, D.C.: 30 April 1992) as reported on NEXIS database.

brought in police (who killed two Vietnamese and wounded others), the Bulgarian government moved to return to Vietnam the majority of the Vietnamese before the expiration of their contracts.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Bulgaria," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 1071.

## CONCLUSIONS

Bulgaria has made substantial, and largely consensual, progress towards implementing and maintaining democratic processes and institutions. It is important to note, however, that laws protecting the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, as well as those of former government officials who have not been tried and found guilty of specific crimes, have often been implemented as a result of pressure or fear of pressure from the United States and Europe. Incidents of open hostility and discrimination continue to mar relations between "mainstream" Bulgarians and the ethnic and religious minorities. Until a consensus is reached regarding the rights of minorities and political dissenters (a goal few democracies have achieved) the potential for an escalation of human rights violations will continue to exist.

## MAP

Central Intelligence Agency, Atlas of Eastern Europe - August, 1991, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office

## INDEX

Agrarian Party, repeal of ban on	4
Anti-communism	
see Lustration	2
Berov, Lyuben	v, vi
Blockades	
see Demonstrations	15
BSP	v, 6-10, 15
alliance with MRF	v, vi
Bulgarian Communist Party	3
Bulgarian National Democratic Party	15
Bulgarian National Radical Party	15
Censorship	
see Freedom of expression	5
Circumcision	
see Freedom of expression, restrictions on Islam	12
Communism	3
Communist Party, repeal of power monopoly for	4
Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (KNSB)	6
Constitution, July 1991	8, 13
barring ethnic- and religious-based parties	9
Demonstrations, anti-communism	4
Demonstrations, anti-government	7
Demonstrations, anti-Turkish	5, 15
Demonstrations, non-violent	7
Demonstrations, pro-communism	4
Demonstrations, pro-democracy	3, 4
Dimitrov, Filip	8
Dimitrova, Blaga	9
Discrimination, ethnic or religious	
see Ethnic minorities	9
Dogan, Ahmed	
leader of the MRF	18

EcoGlasnost .....	17
Elections .....	6, 8
January 12, 1992, for president .....	9
June 1990, for parliament .....	7
voter intimidation .....	14
Electoral Commission .....	14
Ethnic discrimination	
see Ethnic minorities .....	9
Ethnic minorities	
anti-Turkish sentiment .....	15
ban on ethnic based parties .....	13
hostility against minorities .....	13
lack of constitutional protection for .....	17
role of international pressure in treatment of .....	18
Ethnic minorities, Bulgarian Muslims .....	5, 11, 13, 16
tensions with ethnic Turks .....	16
Ethnic minorities, forced assimilation .....	12
Ethnic minorities, Islam	
constitutional ban on ethnic, religious based parties .....	13
Ethnic minorities, Jews .....	14
Ethnic minorities, Macedonians .....	5, 21
constitutional ban on ethnic based parties .....	21
forced assimilation .....	21
Helsinki Watch statement on ban on ethnic based parties .....	21
State Department statement on ban on ethnic parties .....	21
Ethnic minorities, Roms .....	5, 18, 19
discrimination .....	19, 20
forced assimilation .....	18
Helsinki Watch statement on discrimination against .....	19
inferior social services tied to discrimination .....	19
legal status .....	19
societal hostility toward Roms .....	20
State Department statement on discrimination against .....	19
unemployment tied to discrimination .....	19
Ethnic minorities, Turks .....	5, 9, 11, 13
accountability for human rights abuses against .....	16
compensation for confiscated property, lost jobs .....	16
ethnic Turks flee Bulgaria, 1989 .....	12
societal hostility against .....	15
Turkish language instruction, laws on .....	15



Fatherland Party of Labor .....	15
Forced Assimilation	
see Ethnic minorities .....	11
Freedom of association	
see Freedom of expression, ban on ethnic based parties .....	13
Freedom of expression .....	4, 5
ban on ethnic based parties .....	13
Freedom of expression, ban on Turkish newspapers .....	12
Freedom of expression, constitutional ban on ethnic parties .....	13
Freedom of expression, restrictions on Islam .....	12
Freedom of expression, Turkish language in schools .....	12
Gypsies	
see Ethnic minorities, Roms .....	18
Human Rights	
see Ethnic minorities .....	10
Hunger strikes	
see Demonstrations .....	15
Ilinden .....	21
Ilinden Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization	
-Independent .....	21
Intimidation	
see Elections .....	7
Islam	
see Ethnic minorities .....	12
see Freedom of expression, closing of mosques .....	12
see Freedom of expression, restrictions on Islam .....	12
Jews	
see Ethnic minorities, Jews .....	14
John Paul II, assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II .....	10
Judicial investigations .....	10
assassination of Georgi Markov .....	10
corruption .....	10
human rights abuses .....	10
Papal assassination attempt, John Paul II .....	10

KNSB .....	6
Labor unions .....	6
Lukanov, Andrei .....	6, 7
Lustration .....	vi, vii
Markov, Georgi	
see Judicial investigations .....	10
Mladenov, Petar .....	3, 7
Mosques, closing of	
see Freedom of expression, closing of mosques .....	12
MRF .....	v, 8, 16
alliance with BSP .....	v, vi
ethnic composition of .....	14
legal status after July 1991 constitution .....	14
Names, "forced assimilation" campaign .....	5, 12
National Assembly .....	8
Nationalism	
see Ethnic minorities, anti-Turkish sentiment .....	15
Neo-Nazi party .....	15
Newspapers	
see Freedom of expression .....	5
see Freedom of expression, ban on Turkish newspapers .....	12
Ottoman Turks, in Bulgaria .....	3
Panev Act .....	vii
People's Committee for Defense of the National Interest .....	15
Plovdiv .....	18
Podkrepa .....	6
see Unions .....	8
Police	
policy toward Roms .....	19
Police, relations with Roms (Gypsies) .....	19
Political parties	
see Ethnic minorities, ban on ethnic based parties .....	13
Pomaks	
see Ethnic minorities, Bulgarian Muslims .....	11

Pope John Paul II	
see Judicial investigations, papal assassination attempt	10
Popov, Dimiter	8
Population	
Bulgaria	11
ethnic Bulgarian Muslims	11
ethnic Turks	11
Roms (Gypsies)	18
Prison camps	
see Judicial investigations, human rights abuses	10
Proportional representation	8
Protests	
see Demonstrations	5
Radical nationalist organizations	
see Ethnic minorities, anti-Turkish sentiment	15
Rally	
see Demonstrations	4
Religion	
see Ethnic minorities	9
Rousse	18
Schools	
see Freedom of expression, Turkish classes in school	12
Sliven	18
Sofia	3, 18
Soviet Army	3
Stolipinovo	19
Trade unions	6
Turkey	
policies on Bulgarian ethnic Turks	12
Turkish language classes	9
UDF	v, 7, 8, 10, 18

Union of Democratic Forces	
see UDF . . . . .	7
Unions . . . . .	7
Varna . . . . .	18
Vidin . . . . .	18
Vietnamese	
see Ethnic minorities, Vietnamese . . . . .	21
Zhelev, Zhelyu . . . . .	7, 9
Zhelev . . . . .	v
Zhivkov, Todor . . . . .	11
resignation of . . . . .	3