

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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33 page

study entitled "The Bulgarian Army". This is a very well written item concerned primarily with describing the various changes in the high command of the Bulgarian Army since World War II. It contains

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information about current and recent leaders of the Army.

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THE BULGARIAN ARMYINTRODUCTION

1. The Bulgarian Army came under Soviet control in the course of the Soviet Army's campaign in the Balkans in the autumn of 1944. Unlike the other Satellites of Germany, Bulgaria did not take part in the war against Russia and, although the Bulgarian Army was fully mobilised during the Second World War, it was used by the Germans for occupation duties, and had no experience of regular warfare. Stretched out from the Turkish frontier across the Balkan peninsula to occupied Macedonia and Eastern Serbia, the Bulgarian Army was the Germans' peace-time garrison for their Balkan conquests. However, when all prospects of German victory faded in 1944, the Bulgarian Army showed no enthusiasm for defending Germany in the Balkans, and allowed Soviet troops to enter and occupy Bulgaria without opposition. Even at the height of their success, the Germans had been unable to make the Bulgarian Army fight for them on a major battlefield, but the Russians would listen to no excuses. A hastily-formed group of three Bulgarian armies was attached to the left wing of Marshal Tolbukhin's Third Ukrainian Front, and pushed unceremoniously into German-held Macedonia early in October 1944. Bad leadership and worse morale combined with lack of operational experience made the Bulgarian Army's Macedonian campaign a costly and unrewarding affair from the Bulgarian point of view; but for the Soviet High Command it proved valuable as a testing ground for a future Bulgarian contingent for the final advance towards Vienna. By the end of the Macedonian expedition, the Soviet armies were already fighting in Hungary, and the Soviet High Command demanded a Bulgarian Army to take over a sector of the front. Early in March 1945 six Bulgarian divisions, commanded by Lt. Gen. Vladimir Stoichev,

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were engaged in hard fighting south of Lake Balaton when the Germans made their desperate attempt to break through the Third Ukrainian Front and recapture Budapest. With the help of a Soviet corps, the Bulgarians succeeded in holding the German attack, and later took part in the Russian offensive into Austria, linking up with the British Eighth Army near Klagenfurt in May. Immediately after V.E.-day, the Bulgarian Army returned to Bulgaria for demobilisation. It had suffered disproportionately large casualties (over 30,000 in four months' fighting), but it had gained a new foundation of experienced commanders and troops. Its return marked the real beginning of the Communist campaign, directed by the commander of the Soviet Army of Occupation in Bulgaria, Col.-Gen. (now Marshal) S. S. Biryuzov, to turn the Bulgarian Army into a Communist auxiliary of the Soviet army.

MILITARY GROUPINGS IN 1945

2. So much for the historical background of the contemporary Bulgarian Army. At the time when the stage was being set for the Communist seizure of control there were three main groups concerned in the command of the Bulgarian Army:

- (a) The Republican officers of the 'Military League', most of whom belonged to the 'Zveno' political party.
- (b) The Communist leaders of the partisan movement.
- (c) The Bulgarian officers serving in the Soviet army.

First, a word of explanation about each of these groups:

(a) The Republican Officers

Ever since the end of the first World War there had

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existed a group of young officers in the Bulgarian Army who believed that successive Bulgarian governments had been wrong in aligning the country with Germany, and advocated a policy of reconciliation with Yugoslavia, friendship with the Western powers and sympathy for Russia. This group, the 'Military League', was strongly nationalistic, republican and authoritarian in home affairs. In 1923 it helped to overthrow the peasant regime installed in Bulgaria after the first World War and actually seized power by coup d'etat in 1934. The 'League' was overthrown in the following year, and the leaders, notably Colonels Georgiev and Velchev, and Major Stanchev, were arrested, tried and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Nevertheless, the League's influence remained strong in the army and among officers whose careers had been terminated after the collapse of its government in 1935. During the later stages of the second World War, representatives of the 'Military League' and its civilian counterpart, the 'Zveno' (the link) political party, collaborated with the Communists, the left-wing Agrarians and the Social Democrats in an anti-German, Soviet-sponsored organisation called the 'Fatherland Front'. On the approach of the Soviet army to Bulgaria in August 1944, the 'Fatherland Front', meeting in semi-secrecy, agreed upon a shadow Cabinet, approved by the Soviets, which could assume power after a coup d'etat. A purely

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Communist attempt to carry this out on 1st September 1944 proved abortive, and it was left to a group of 'Military League' officers, led by ex-Colonel Velchev and ex-Major Stanchev, to stage a successful putsch in the capital on September 9th.

Immediately, the 'Military League' began an outwardly impressive but brief period of supremacy in the army. With the agreement of the Communists, they removed the great majority of old officers from their commands, and replaced them by members of the 'League'. Velchev, now a Lt. General, became Minister of War. A Col. Slavkov became Chief of the General Staff, and the three armies being mobilized for the Macedonian campaign were entrusted to ex-Major Stanchev and ex-Major Vladimir Stoichev, and to a Lt. Col. Urunov. Members of the 'League', many of whom had not been in uniform since 1935, suddenly found themselves Generals and Colonels in command of divisions or brigades: men like Stoyan Trendafilov (Commander of the Armoured Brigade), Todor Toshev (Commander of the 1st 'Iron' Division), Nikola Genchev (Commander of the 2nd Division) and Marko Atanasov (Commander of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade). Only in the more technical arms of the service were the previous officers left untouched. During the fighting in Macedonia and Hungary, new members of the Republican Officers' / group

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group⁺ reached divisional commands, some of whom were highly praised by Marshal Tolbukhin. They included Generals Harizanov, Taraleshkov, Lyubenov and Dotsev, and Colonels Ganev and Hubenov.

Although officers of this group held all the important military and staff posts in the Bulgarian Army in the summer of 1945, they never succeeded in forming a united front against Communist infiltration. They were a group of individuals rather than a united Party, and the Communists found little difficulty in demolishing their hold over the Army in the years 1945-1947. To begin with, some Republican officers were prepared to go over to the Communists and to become Party members: such men were Lt. Gen. Krum Lekarski, Maj. Gen. Todor Toshev, and to a lesser extent, Maj. Gen. Stoyan Trendafilov. Others adopted a passive attitude, and were ready to hold on to their commands by the grace of the Communists rather than risk them in defence of their own group. In this category one might place Lt. Gen. Vladimir Stoichev, Maj. Gen. Hristo Stoikov, the Head of the

/ Military

⁺ Shortly after September 1944, the organisation of the 'Military League' was officially disbanded, on the grounds that its aims had been achieved by the coalition government of the Fatherland Front. Its members were absorbed into the republican 'Zveno' Party, but for the sake of continuity, it will be convenient to refer to the military element in the 'Zveno' Party as the Republican Officers' group.

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Military Academy, and others. Only the real 'Old Guard' of the former Military League, led by Gen. Danyan Velchev and Lt. Gen. Kiril Stanchev, consciously resisted Communist domination, and ultimately paid the penalty.

(b) The Communist Partisans

The policy of the Bulgarian C.P. during the Second World War need not be described here, but a brief note on the partisan movement which began in 1942 is necessary in order to identify the partisan element in the present Bulgarian Army. The Bulgarian partisan movement was never intended to become a mass rising of all anti-German forces in the country. It was to be a small militant nucleus composed exclusively of Communists, each one hand-picked for reliability, courage and ideological purity. The H.Q. of the partisans sent recruits in twos and threes into the mountains, distributing reinforcements in this way according to the needs of the Party's Military Committee. Non-Communist recruits were unwelcome and turned away as "opportunists". The movement was in touch with the Soviet Union through Soviet agents of Bulgarian origin parachuted or otherwise introduced illegally into the country. Relatively few operations were undertaken by the partisans on their own initiative. In the struggle in the mountains and forests, the initiative

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normally lay with the Bulgarian police and regular army, whose brutal efficiency kept partisan casualties high - particularly among the leaders. Three times the partisan movement was decapitated by police action: once in 1942, when the C.C. of the C.P. was arrested, and twice in 1944. In January of that year, the partisans' C-in-C, Hristo Mihailov, was killed, and in June disaster overtook the only two field units of any size which were operating in W. Bulgaria. This catastrophe later assumed some importance in another context and is worth a brief description. The Party H.Q. ordered Slavcho Trnski, a leading partisan commander, to lead his 'brigade' from the Yugoslav frontier into the Balkan mountains in order to link up with another 'brigade' under Dobri Dzhurov, at whose H.Q. the leading figures of the partisan movement were in hiding. Police and army units ambushed the two 'brigades' and almost annihilated them. Trnski and Dzhurov escaped, but among the victims was the Chief of Staff of the movement, Trichkov, and the wife of Georgi Chankov, who later became a leading Party and Government official. At the time of Trnski's disgrace in 1951, it was rumoured that he had not done all he could to save his colleagues from the police.

After the coup d'etat of 9th September 1944, the surviving leaders of the partisan movement were

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granted military or police ranks in the new army and militia forming under Soviet instructions. But after one experience of partisans organised into a 'People's Liberation Guards Division' on the battlefield, Marshal Tolbukhin and his chief adviser attached to the Bulgarian Army, Maj. Gen. Blagodatov, steadfastly refused to grant operational commands to ex-partisans. Some became political commissars, others received War Ministry appointments, but the majority entered the senior ranks of the militia. The following list shows the most important partisan commanders who survived the 1944 disaster, and the posts they occupied in the immediate post-war period :-

<u>Partisan position</u>	<u>Position in 1945</u>
C-in-C: Dobri Terpeshev	Minister without Portfolio
C. of S: Peter Iliev	Head of Chancery, War Ministry
Staff: Rusi Hristozov	Director of the People's Militia
Blagoi Ivanov	A deputy War Minister
Peter Vranchev	Director of Military Intelligence
Lev Glavinchev	Deputy Director of Militia
Field Commanders:	
Boyana Bulgaranov	Commissar of Military Academy
Boris Kopchev	Commissar of Second Army

/ Shteryu Atanasov

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<u>Partisan position</u>	<u>Position in 1945</u>
Field Commanders (cont.):	
Shteryu Atanasov ⁺	Commissar of First Army
Yonko Panov	Commissar of Third Army
Metodi Hristov	Commissar of Fourth Army
Slavcho Trnski	Nominal "Commander of all Partisan Forces"
Dobri Dzhurov	In War Ministry, later on loan to Militia
Dencho Znepolski	In training in War Ministry
Slavcho Radomirski	In training in War Ministry
Vasil Markov	Director of Railway troops, then of State Railways

(c) The Soviet Officers

At the time when the Soviet army was completing its unopposed occupation of Bulgaria, there were a few officers of the rank of Colonel and above of Bulgarian origin serving in the Soviet Armed Forces. They had been members of the B.C.P. since 1919-1922, and had taken part in the unsuccessful armed rising of the Communist Party in Bulgaria in 1923. After the failure of the rising, they had taken refuge in Yugoslavia, and in the course of the next two years / had made

⁺ Shteryu Atanasov, Ivan Vinarov, Dimitar Gilin and a few others belong to two categories. They were Soviet officers who were sent illegally into Bulgaria and Macedonia in 1943 or 1944 and worked with Bulgarian or Yugoslav partisans. According to some reports, the same was true of Blagoi Ivanov (see above).

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had made their way illegally to the Soviet Union, where they joined the army and served in the second World War on the Eastern Front. In 1944-45, they were sent back to Bulgaria by the Soviet Government to take up key posts in the new Bulgarian Army.

Two of these officers reached the rank of Major General in the Soviet Army: the present Minister of National Defence, Peter Panchevski, and Ivan Kinov, his First Deputy. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] he was junior in political status to two other officers, Georgi Danyanov and Asen Grekov, who had been the main military leaders of the 1923 uprising. Georgi Danyanov, [Redacted]

[Redacted] was very close to Georgi Dimitrov during the latter's leadership of the Comintern. [Redacted]

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Asen Grekov was also a

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Colonel in the Soviet army

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The first Soviet officer of Bulgarian origin

to return to Bulgaria was Maj. Gen. Ivan Kinov.

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[Redacted]

A more obscure individual was Col. Ivan Mihailov, a Soviet Artillery officer, who returned to Bulgaria late in 1945.

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Finally,

there were two air force officers, Col. Zahari Zahariev, who had won the title 'hero of the Soviet Union' during the Spanish Civil War, and Col. Atanas Atanasov, who had been in Russia since 1917. There were, therefore, 7 regular Soviet officers (excluding those who were sent illegally during the war) who returned to Bulgaria after 1944 :

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	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Return</u>	<u>Position</u>
1.	Maj. Gen. Ivan Kinov	Nov. 1944	Chief of the General Staff
2.	Col. Georgi Danyanov	1944	In War Ministry: Head of Military Section of the C.C.
3.	Col. Zahari Zahariev	1944	Deputy Commander of Air Force
4.	Col. Asen Grekov	Mar. 1945	Commander of Fourth Army
5.	Maj. Gen. Peter Panchevski	Jun. 1945	Commander of First Guards Division
6.	Col. Ivan Mihailov	end 1945	Director of Artillery
7.	Col. Atanas Atanasov	? 1945	Head of Personnel Section of Air Force

In the list of the main military groups which influenced the Bulgarian Army in 1944-45, we must not forget the role of the Soviet Army of Occupation. In December 1944, Col. Gen. S. S. Biryuzov, Chief of Staff of the Third Ukrainian Front, was appointed Commander of the 37th Army in Bulgaria and Deputy Chairman (to Marshal Tolbukhin) of the Allied Control Commission. Col. Gen. Biryuzov's instructions clearly included the removal of any obstacles in the path of the B.C.P. to supreme power, and to this end he frequently interfered blatantly in the internal politics of the country and the army.

Such, then, were the main elements in the Bulgarian Army in 1945. The following list, valid for November-December 1945, shows the command of the Army, and the distribution of posts between the

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republican officers, communist partisans and
Soviet officers:

Minister of War:	Lt.Gen. D. Velchev	(Republican)
First Assistant Minister:	Lt.Gen. G. Damyanov	(Soviet officer)
Second Assistant Minister:	Maj.Gen. B. Ivanov	(Partisan)
Head of Political Administration:	Maj.Gen. F. Kozovski	(Party C.C.)
Chief of the General Staff:	Lt.Gen. I. Kinov	(Soviet officer)
Deputy Chief of the General Staff:	Maj.Gen. A. Krustev	(Republican)
Chief Inspector of the Army:	Lt.Gen. I. Marinov	(Republican)
Director of Artillery:	Maj.Gen. I. Mihailov	(Soviet officer)
Director of Armour:	Maj.Gen. S. Trendafilov	(Republican)
Director of Personnel:	Maj.Gen. P. Iliev	(Partisan)

First Army - H.Q. Sofia

Commander:	Lt.Gen. T. Toshev	(Republican)
Chief of Staff:	Col. P. Hadzni-Ivanov	(Republican)
Political:	Maj.Gen. S. Atanasov	(Partisan)
1 Guards Division:	Maj.Gen. P. Panchevski	(Soviet officer)
1 Division:	Maj.Gen. V. Mirchev	(Republican)
1 Armoured Brigade:	Col. Sudalov	(Republican)

Second Army - H.Q. Plovdiv

Commander:	Lt.Gen. K. Stanchev	(Republican)
Chief of Staff:	Col. Petrov	(Republican)
Political:	Maj.Gen. B. Kopchev	(Partisan)

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2 Division:	Maj.Gen. B. Zahariev	(Republican)
8 Division:	Maj. Gen. B. Harizanov	(Republican)
10 Division:	Maj.Gen. I. Hubenov	(Republican)

Third Army - H.Q. Varna

Commander:	Lt.Gen. N. Genchev	(Republican)
Chief of Staff:	Col. Manov	(Republican)
Political:	Maj.Gen. Y. Panov	(Partisan)
3 Division:	Maj.Gen. V. Lyubenov	(Republican)
4 Division:	Maj.Gen. T. Ganev	(Republican)

Fourth Army - H.Q. Plevna

Commander:	Lt.Gen. A. Grekov	(Soviet officer)
Chief of Staff:	Col. Mirchev	(Republican)
Political:	Col. M. Hristov	(Partisan)
5 Division:	Col. Mustakerski	(Republican)
6 Division:	Maj.Gen. A. Dotsev	(Republican)
9 Division:	Maj.Gen. I. Vinarov	(Soviet officer - Partisan)

THE COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER 1946-47

3. The Communist campaign to take over control of the Bulgarian Army began shortly after the visit of the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, A. Y. Vyshinski, to Sofia in December 1945. As often happens, it began imperceptibly with preliminary flattery of the intending victims. The War Minister, Lt. Gen. Velchev, received promotion and high Soviet decorations, and two leading Republican officers, Lt. Gen. V. Stoichev and Lt. Gen. I. Marinov accepted offers of diplomatic appointments in

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Washington and Paris, respectively. Then in June 1946, a significant Bill on military affairs was passed in the National Assembly, empowering all Political Commissars to report on the political reliability of the officers of their headquarters. One month later, the Press published their findings: approximately 1,200 officers to be dismissed, some for 'fascist activity', others 'in the interests of the service'. They included Lt. Gen. Genchev, Commander of the 3rd Army (on the special recommendation of Gen. Y. Panov), Maj. Gen. B. Harizanov, Commander of the 8th Division, Maj. Gen. Hubenov, Commander of the 10th Division, Maj. Gen. Spasov, former Commander of the 4th Division, Maj. Gen. Mirchev, Commander of the 7th Division, Maj. Gen. Dotsev, Commander of the 6th Division, and Maj. Gen. Novakov, another former divisional commander. Lt. Gen. Stanchev, the Commander of the Second Army, was arrested, and Gen. Velchev was forced to resign. He was sent abroad as Minister to Switzerland on 29th September 1946, where he died a few years later.

4. Having broken the resistance and unity of the Republican officers, the Communists proceeded to destroy their reputation as officers in a series of show trials. The most prominent of these was that of Lt. Gen. Stanchev in February 1947. After six months in prison, Stanchev was brought to Court and sentenced to life imprisonment on treason charges.

5. Meanwhile, the Communists and the Soviet Command, realising that under the Peace Treaty with Bulgaria signed in March 1947, Soviet troops had to leave the country by the end of the year, pressed on with the training of new Communist commanders. Lt. Gen. G. Danyanov, the

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former Soviet Colonel, was the new Defence Minister, and certain ex-Partisan leaders, such as Maj. Gen. Slavcho Trnski, were sent to the Soviet Union for regular military training. Most of the remaining partisans who were not sent to the Militia or to the newly-formed Frontier Guards⁺ were given commands of divisions, regiments or even battalions, in order to gain military experience. Thus, before becoming Head of the Political Department in January 1948, Maj. Gen. B. Bulgaranov, Political Commissar of the Military Academy, took over command of the 5th division. Col. Dobri Dzhurov, after a period in the Militia, became the Commander of the 3rd division, Col. Dencho Znepolski became the Commander of 6 Guards regiment and Maj. Gen. B. Kopchev Commander of the 2nd division. Even Maj. Gen. Shteryu Atanasov, Political Commissar of the First Army, had a spell as Commander of the 8th division in 1947-48. Col. Metodi Hristov was given command of the 35th regiment, and Col. T. Anev became Chief of Staff of the 6th division. In this way, the Communists showed that they hoped to find their new military class among the Partisans who had proved their loyalty to Communism during the war. This meant that a great responsibility fell on the Soviet officers who had to hold the fort until the partisans were ready for senior commands. One of them, Maj. Gen. Panchevski was entrusted with the formation of a Soviet-type armoured unit early in 1948. For this purpose he succeeded Gen. Trendafilov as Director of the Armoured Forces, handing over command of the Guards division to Gen. Trnski,

/ who had

⁺ The Frontier Guards were established in September 1947 under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior. Their first Commander was the Partisan, Yonko Panov, whose deputy was Lev Glavinchev. All the commanders were drawn from the ranks of the Partisans.

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who had just returned from a Soviet military academy. Panchevski set up his H.Q. in Kazanlik in Central Bulgaria. At the end of a year, Panchevski had laid the foundations of two tank divisions. But before the development of armour could proceed further, political events brought upheaval to the Army command, and Panchevski was swept into the post of Minister of Defence.

THE EFFECT OF THE TITO-COMINFORM SPLIT ON THE BULGARIAN ARMY.

6. Although the break between Tito and the Cominform became public in June 1948, it was not until the autumn of 1949 that its effects were felt in the Bulgarian Army. It will be remembered that Georgi Dimitrov died in Moscow on 2nd July 1949, and about the same time, the chief Bulgarian 'Titoist', Kostov, was arrested and charged, although he was not tried until December. It was on 30th October 1949 that Bulgarians learnt with surprise that the Chief of the General Staff, the distinguished Soviet officer, Lt. Gen. Ivan Kinov, and the Head of the army's political department, the ex-partisan, Maj. Gen. Boyan Bulgaranov, had been dismissed for "failing to cope with their work". Kinov's successor was Lt. Gen. A. Grekov, the Commander of the Second Army, who also became 1st Deputy Defence Minister, and Bulgaranov's, Maj. Gen. Metodi Hristov, who, after commanding a regiment, had been Chief of the Political Department of the Third Army. Other changes were :

- (1) Maj. Gen. Dzhurov succeeded Grekov as Commander of the Second Army.
- (2) Maj. Gen. H. Atanasov, one of the two remaining Republican officers, was replaced as Commander of the Third Army by Maj. Gen. Slavcho Trnski.

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- (3) Lt. Gen. T. Toshev was replaced as Commander of the First Army by Maj. Gen. Panchevski, who also became 2nd Deputy Minister of Defence.
- (4) Lt. Gen. I. Mihailov, Director of Artillery, became 3rd Deputy Minister of Defence, a new post.
- (5) The Deputy Commander of the Frontier Guards, Maj. Gen. Lev Glavinchev,⁺ was replaced by Maj. Gen. D. Gilin, a Soviet officer and partisan.
- (6) The Chief of Military Intelligence, Maj. Gen. Peter Vranchev, a former partisan and pre-war Soviet agent, was dismissed and arrested. His successor was another ex-partisan, Col. Zdravko Georgiev.

The chart of the High Command in December 1949 therefore read as follows :

Minister of Defence:	Lt. Gen. G. Danyanov
1st Deputy and Chief of the General Staff:	Lt. Gen. A. Grekov
2nd Deputy and Commander of the First Army:	Lt. Gen. P. Panchevski
/ 3rd Deputy	

⁺ Lev Glavinchev, a former partisan, was a Macedonian, and this no doubt was partly responsible for his fall from power during the struggle against Titoism. He has not been heard of since 1949.

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3rd Deputy:	Lt. Gen. I. Mihailov
Head of Political Department:	Maj. Gen. M. Hristov
D.M.I.:	Col. Z. Georgiev

7. These changes cut right across previous conceptions of military groupings in the Army. That Gen. Kinov, a Soviet General, and Gen. Bulgaranov, the partisan leader, should both suffer dismissal and disgrace, while Slavcho Trnski, who was the General most commonly accepted as pro-Tito and a national Communist, should be promoted from divisional to army command, was unexpected. The removal of the former Republican Generals Toshev and Marko Atanasov can be explained by their political background. But there is no reason to believe that Kinov was either incompetent or pro-Yugoslav, and Bulgaranov's wartime activities in Macedonia are believed to have led him into conflict with the Yugoslav Communists. Although Kinov and Bulgaranov were dismissed from their posts in the Army, they were not arrested or tried. Kinov became Head of the para-military organisation - later known as 'D.O.S.O.', and Bulgaranov returned to civilian life as Director of the Industrial Production Department of the Central Co-op. Union.

8. On the available evidence, it seems likely that the removal of these men from centres of military power was probably a precautionary measure taken simply because the two men seemed to be running the Army together too independently. Perhaps it had been reported that they resented some aspects of Soviet military domination, such as the defence treaty between Bulgaria and the U.S.S.R., with which even Gen. Danyanov was reported to be dissatisfied. What does

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seen unlikely is that Kinov and Bulgaranov represented an anti-Soviet pro-Tito centre in the Army, if only because their punishment must surely have been more severe.

9. The case for believing that the Soviet authorities simply wanted Kinov and Bulgaranov out of the way is consistent with the next series of changes which took place in the spring of 1950. Gen. Danyanov, the Minister of Defence, was appointed President of the Republic, and his place was taken not by the 1st Deputy Minister, Gen. Grekov, but by the 2nd Deputy, Gen. Panchevski. Generals Danyanov and Grekov were known to be close associates, and also friends of the late Georgi Dinitrov, and in view of the divergences between Dinitrov and the Soviet Government in the last year of his life, it would be logical to sidetrack these two officers. On 19th March 1950, the Party took action against Kinov and Bulgaranov by expelling them from the C.C. Their expulsion followed that of Maj. Gen. Boris Kopchev, Head of the Political Department of the Second Army and Bulgaranov's deputy, Col. Ivan Buchvarov (not to be confused with the General of the same name who later became C.G.S.), who were removed in January 1950. These changes greatly strengthened the position of the two Soviet military mouthpieces in the C.C., Panchevski and Mihailov who, with Grekov by-passed and Danyanov a figurehead, were the men in real control of the Army.

10. To sum up this phase of the purge in the Bulgarian Army (October 1949 - May 1950) :

- (1) Kinov and Bulgaranov, who as C.G.S. and
Head of the Political Department of the Army
/ had controlled

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had controlled it together since the end of 1947, were removed and down-graded militarily and politically.

- (2) The two 'Old Guard' Soviet officers, who had been close to Georgi Dinitrov, were bypassed and sidetracked.
- (3) The way was thus cleared for Panchevski and Mihailov, the two most reliable Soviet officers of unblemished records.
- (4) Although these changes occurred against the background of the Tito-Cominform split, there is no reason to believe that they were the result of the discovery of any pro-Tito plot or faction in the Bulgarian Army at this stage.

11. With Gen. Panchevski firmly established as Minister of Defence, the Soviet military advisers pressed on with the modernisation and re-distribution of the Army, particularly in view of the tense situation vis-a-vis Yugoslavia. But at the end of 1950, a further series of changes in the High Command was made. In December, the 2nd Deputy Minister of Defence, Lt. Gen. Ivan Mihailov, added the post of Deputy Premier to his responsibilities, and became a kind of permanent liaison between the Government and the Army. It was probably felt, after Gen. Panchevski's first few months as Minister of Defence, that he had become so much of a professional soldier during his career that he was not suited for the governmental and party aspects of a Ministerial post. The authorities therefore may have decided to create

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a 'double-headed' Minister of Defence: Panchevski the soldier-technician, and Mihailov the Cabinet Minister. Thus, Panchevski rarely does more than reading stereotyped Orders of the Day, while Mihailov carries out the more governmental duties of a Minister of Defence: speech-making, attending the National Assembly and representing the Army in delegations abroad. The successor who was appointed to the vacancy caused by Panchevski's elevation was the Soviet air force officer, Maj. Gen. Atanas Atanasov, whose selection, in spite of a widespread reputation for inefficiency, strengthens the belief that the highest posts were, with a few exceptions, open only to Soviet officers at this time.

12. In January 1951, Maj. Gen. Slavcho Trnski, the Commander of the Third Army, received yet another promotion involving return to the capital, Sofia. Handing over his Army to Maj. Gen. Dobri Dzhurov, Trnski became Head of the 'Vasil Levski' Military Academy⁺. A month later it was announced that Lt. Gen. Grekov had been relieved of the post of Chief of the General Staff (though remaining 1st Deputy Minister), and was replaced by a Maj. Gen. Ivan Buchvarov. Very little is known about this officer, except that he is believed to have been a professional artillery officer with no known affiliations either with the partisans or the Soviet officers. His selection may well have been due mainly to his professional qualifications, for he has maintained his position unchallenged since his appointment.

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⁺ Dzhurov was succeeded as the Commander of the Second Army in Plovdiv by another ex-partisan who had completed his training as a senior commander, Maj. Gen. Dyako Dyakov.

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13. May 1951 brought a sudden reversal of fortune for Gen. Slavcho Trnski. One morning, the ex-Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Kinov, appeared at the 'Vasil Levski' Military Academy and announced that he was the new Commandant; Gen. Trnski disappeared, along with his closest friend and wartime colleague, Col. Dencho Znepolski, the Commander of one of the Sofia Guards regiments. At the same time the Head of the Army's Political Administration, Maj. Gen. Metodi Hristov, was dismissed and downgraded to the post of lecturer in history in a Military Academy. He was succeeded by a Maj. Gen. Todor Nenov, of whom little is known except that there is no record of his participation in the partisan movement in an important capacity. This was the period of rumours about Trnski's fate: it was said that he had been arrested as a Titoist, that he had fled to Yugoslavia, and even that he had been shot. It was said that he would be brought to trial, and that among the charges would be that he "brought about the death of Georgi Chankov's wife in the partisan battle with the Police in June 1944".

14. Whatever the truth about these rumours - and it seems likely that many of them were officially inspired - Gen. Trnski certainly disappeared in May 1951, and was not seen again until after Stalin's death. The incident is significant because it bears the marks of a "group purge" - that is, of Soviet suspicion of disloyalty of a definite group - the partisan leaders who were in closest contact with the Yugoslav partisans on the Bulgarian-Yugoslav frontier in the area of Trn. It also implies that the Soviet authorities were prepared to re-admit Gen. Kinov to the fold, as a Soviet officer, although not Bulgaranov or Kopchev, who seems to have been in command

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of a provincial garrison in East Bulgaria at this time. It is also interesting to note that in this period of Trnski's disgrace, several former Republican or even pre-war officers were recalled to the Ministry of Defence or the Military Academies. They included Maj. Gen. Sirakov, Lt. Gen. Marinov, Lt. Gen. Hristo Stoikov and Maj. Gen. Vladimir Ketskarov.

15. Towards the end of 1952, Gen. Mihailov formally gave up his post of Deputy Minister of Defence, but since he continued to act as 'Joint Minister' and to wear uniform on all occasions, this was probably of little significance. He was succeeded by an obscure individual called Maj. Gen. Avgust Milchev, who seems to have been mainly a technical expert. Altogether there can be no doubt that as the Stalin era drew to a close with the feud against Yugoslavia as bitter as ever, the influence of the ex-partisan element in the Bulgarian Army High Command was being restricted. Key posts were passing into the hands of Soviet officers and professional experts rather than to men who had survived the partisan warfare of 1943-44. The following chart shows how far this process had reached by Stalin's death in 1953 :

Minister of Defence:	Col.Gen. P. Panchevski	(Soviet officer)
1st Deputy Minister:	Lt. Gen. A. Grekov	(Soviet officer)
2nd Deputy Minister:	Maj.Gen. A. Atanasov	(Soviet officer)
3rd Deputy Minister:	Maj.Gen. A. Milchev	(?career officer)
Chief of the General Staff:	Maj.Gen. I. Buchvarov	(?career officer)
Head of Ops. Section:	Maj.Gen. D. Popov	(ex-Republican)
Chief of the Political Department:	Maj.Gen. T. Nenov	(?)

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Director of Artillery:	Maj.Gen. Antonov	(?career officer)
Director of Armour:	Maj.Gen. Penchev	(?)
Director of Air Force:	Lt.Gen. Zahariev	(Soviet officer)
Director of Engineers:	Lt.Gen. Staribrotev	(career officer)
Director of Signals:	Maj.Gen. Kirchev	(career officer)
Director of Personnel:	Maj.Gen. Dinov	(partisan)
D.M.I.	Maj.Gen. Z. Georgiev	(partisan)
"Vasil Levski" Academy:	Lt.Gen. Kinov	(Soviet officer)
First Army:	Maj.Gen. Dikov	(partisan)
Second Army:	Maj.Gen. Vrachev (replaced Dyakov in 1952)	(partisan)
Third Army:	Maj.Gen. Dzhurov	(partisan)
Frontier Guards:	Maj.Gen. Panov	(partisan)

THE POST-STALIN PERIOD

16. Developments in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin in March 1953 had one administrative effect on the Bulgarian defence forces: the withdrawal of the Frontier Guards from the Ministry of the Interior, and their subordination to the Ministry of Defence. From the autumn of 1953/ ^{there was} an easing of the position of those ex-partisans who had fallen into disgrace in 1951. The press began to report the activities of Maj. Gen. Kopchev, who spoke in various garrison towns in the Third Army area, and gave the impression that he was once again Chief of the Political Department of an Army. But it was only after the Soviet Government had made the first moves towards healing the breach with Yugoslavia that significant changes occurred in the Bulgarian High

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Command. First of all, the two recently appointed Deputy Ministers of Defence, Atanasov and Milchev, were relieved of their posts: Atanasov became Head of the Civil Air Fleet, and Milchev apparently went to Moscow as Bulgarian M.A. On 2nd March 1954, Lt. Gen. Grokov died after a long illness, and thus all these Deputy Ministerial posts fell vacant. They were filled by :

1st Deputy Minister: Lt.Gen. I. Kinov
 2nd Deputy Minister: Lt.Gen. Z. Zahariev
 3rd Deputy Minister: Maj.Gen. Y. Panov

Gen. Panov simultaneously handed over command of the Frontier Guards to his deputy, Maj. Gen. Slavcho Chakurov, another ex-partisan. In September 1954, there was a round of promotions in the higher ranks, including :

Army Generals: P. Panchevski
 I. Mihailov
 Col. Generals: I. Kinov
 V. Stoichev
 Lt. Generals: S. Trnski
 Y. Panov
 I. Buchvarov
 D. Dikov
 D. Dyakov
 I. Vrachev
 P. Iliev

Slavcho Trnski made a triumphant return to the post of Head of the General Staff Academy "Rakovski", which he still holds. Another / ex-partisan

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ex-partisan, Gen. Peter Ilicv, returned from a provincial garrison to be Director of Training.

17. Meanwhile, in the summer of 1955, further changes took place. It was decided to disband the two tank divisions which had been formed in 1948-49, and to group the armoured forces in three or four tank brigades, subordinate to the Army commanders. The Army was re-deployed away from the Yugoslav frontier, and the divisions there were reduced in strength in order to build up the divisions and brigades in the south and east. There was a change also in the Political Department. In July 1955, Lt. Gen. Panov became Chief of the Department in succession to Gen. Nenov, thus being the highest-ranking officer ever to hold this post.

18. The year 1956 brought the April Plenum of the C.C. of the B.C.P. at which the Premier, Chervenkov, was replaced by Yugov. This too had its repercussions in the Army, although it is probably too early to assess their full significance. Shortly after the plenum, Gen. Kopchev began to appear at meetings in Sofia, and there were rumours that he and Gen. Panov were expressing criticism of the Chervenkov regime in speeches. It was even suggested that Gen. Panov had paid a visit to Moscow. Then in December 1956, a new Chief of the Political Department appeared - a Maj. Gen. Misho Mishev, another ex-partisan. Gen. Panov disappeared, and it was widely reported that he and Kopchev had been downgraded and reprimanded for their political attitude. There is no confirmation of this, except the fact that the Chief of the General Staff, Gen. Buchvarov, was described in January 1957 as a Deputy Minister of Defence. It is also believed that

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Fanov's successor as Commander of the Frontier Guards, Gen. Chakurev, has been replaced by Maj. Gen. D. Dimitrov.

19. Finally in this section, there is an interesting report which sheds light on the case of Gen. Trnski. According to this report, Gen. Trnski accused two officers of the Internal Troops, Maj. Gen. Dvoryanov and Col. Stanchev, of falsifying evidence against army officers. They were placed under arrest on 15th June 1956 and tried by Court Martial on 20th July, presided over by Army-Gen. Mihailov. Trnski, who obviously referred to the story that he had been responsible for the death of Chankov's wife in 1944, apparently won his case, and the two officers were downgraded and posted to the provinces. This report, which bears the marks of authenticity, shows that the same relationship exists in Bulgaria between the Army and the Internal Troops as in the Soviet Union.

CONCLUSIONS

20. A. Control of the Bulgarian Army is vested firmly in the hands of two officers whose loyalty to the Soviet Union has not wavered, and who survived two purges between 1949 and 1953. They are Army-Gens. Panchevski and Mihailov, who appear to act as a kind of two-headed Minister of Defence, even in spite of Mihailov's new Government assignment as Minister of Communications. According to their records, there is every reason to believe that these officers will carry out Soviet orders whatever they may contain.

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- B. On the second level, there is some reason to believe that the 1st Deputy Minister, Gen. Kinov, an interesting and not unpleasant personality, and undoubtedly an efficient soldier, is susceptible to doubts on Soviet policy, and may be influenced towards Bulgarian nationalism of the kind attributed to the ex-partisans. His association with Bulgaranov may have brought about his temporary eclipse in 1949-50. Kinov has great influence in the Army, and could be a key personality if Soviet control ever weakened.
- C. The ex-partisan element, of which Gen. Slavcho Trnski is the somewhat flamboyant leader, is enjoying a period of popularity in the Army, which includes a great deal of recent (1956-57) publicity about its wartime activities. However, as the case of one of its members, Gen. Panov, seems to show, the Party control is by no means relaxed, and any serious sign of independence will not be tolerated. Nevertheless, the partisans are well entrenched in the Army, particularly in field commands, and the Party control may well have to operate through a system of divide and rule.
- D. The republican officers' element no longer exists in the Army. However, it should not be
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forgotten that there are quite a considerable number of former Generals and Colonels in retirement who can feel nothing but resentment at their treatment at the hands of the Communists. They commanded the troops in the fighting in 1944-45, but were discarded as soon as the ex-partisans, whom they despise, were pushed through military training. At the moment these retired officers have no influence, but they should not be completely disregarded, especially since some are still under 50.

- E. There is no evidence that there is any group in the Bulgarian Army which is pro-Yugoslav or pro-Tito as such. Most of those partisans who were in touch with the Yugoslavs during the war emerged with little friendly feeling for them, and the Bulgarians are by tradition inclined to be envious of Yugoslavia.
- F. Anti-Soviet feeling derived from Bulgarian nationalism is probably latent throughout the Army, not least among Party members with the longest service. It should be remembered in this connection that there is no very great gulf between the Soviet officers, who were partisans in 1923, and the partisans of 1944, as in other Satellite armies. Many of the partisans of 1923 feel themselves merely the predecessors of the partisans of / 1944,

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1944, and this is a bond making for national feelings among the Soviet officers, which should not be overlooked. In a crisis, this bond might cause the Soviet officers to throw their weight on the side of the 1944 partisans.

G. Finally, the following list shows the main personalities in the Bulgarian Army in February 1957 :

1. Soviet Officers:

Army-Gen. Peter Panchevski	Minister of Defence
Army-Gen. Ivan Mihailov	Minister of Communications, but with close contacts with Army.
Col.Gen. Ivan Kinov	First Deputy Minister
Lt.Gen. Z. Zahariev	Deputy Minister

2. Ex-Partisans:

Lt.Gen. Slavcho Trnski	Head of General Staff Academy
Lt.Gen. Yonko Panov	? Deputy Minister
Lt.Gen. Diko Dikov	Commander of First Army
Maj.Gen. Velichko Georgiev	Commander of Second Army
Lt.Gen. Dobri Dzhurev	Commander of Third Army
Lt.Gen. Dyako Dyakov	Deputy Chief of the General Staff
Maj.Gen. Boris Kopchev	?
Maj.Gen. Zdravko Georgiev	D.M.I.

/ Lt.Gen. Peter Iliev

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Ex-Partisans (cont.)

Lt. Gen. Peter Iliev	Director of Training
Maj.Gen. Dimiter Dimitrov	Commander of Frontier Guards
Maj.Gen. Misho Mishev	Head of Political Department
Maj.Gen. T. Anev	Commander of First Guards Division

3. Career Officer:

Lt.Gen. Ivan Buchvarov	Chief of the General Staff
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4. Retired Officers:

Maj.Gen. Stoyan Trendafilov
 Maj.Gen. Lyubenov
 Maj.Gen. Harizanov
 Maj.Gen. Hubenov
 Maj.Gen. T. Ganev
 Maj.Gen. Dotsev
 Maj.Gen. Taraleshkov

5. Party Positions.

Ivan Mihailov	Member of the Politburo and Central Committee
Peter Panchevski	Candidate Member of the Politburo and member of the Central Committee
Ivan Kinov	Member of the Central Committee
Yonko Panov	Member of the Central Committee
Diko Dikov	Member of the Central Committee

/ Ivan Buchvarov

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Party Positions (cont.)

Ivan Buchvarov	Member of the Central Committee
Z. Zahariev	Candidate Member of the Central Committee
Slavcho Trnski	Candidate Member of the Central Committee
Velichko Georgiev	(?) Candidate Member of the Central Committee

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