



The Letter from Bulgaria

2007 – 08/09

May 2007

To "Ivan"¹...

The Saga of «the Opening of the files» from the Secret Services

I didn't imagine first that writing about this subject would be so "not simple".

Also, I was one of the "observed ones". I didn't have anything to hide, being a most ordinary person.

A lot of memories are resurfacing as I write, and rewrite, these lines. They are a story in themselves!

The second "disturbed" night because of this subject came 24 years after the first one, when some of the dearest people to me confided that because of me they found, long ago, some doors "closed" to them. Was it all?

Did others from the beloved ones face the same situation or even worse? Is a question tormenting my mind from time to time.

Now that the files are individually accessible I am also humanly wondering about the content of mine and if I would experience a similar situation as the German writer Hans Joachim Schädlich who the day he had access to his file of the Stasi discovered that the one spying on him was no other than his "brother".... Stupidly maybe, I am wondering also about the wisdom to "want" to see eventually my file considering my very poor cardiac condition. Is it really worth it?

While reading what follows, please keep in mind that I do fully share some opinions expressed in the following pages:

- 1. Those having worked for the Secret Service in the "Old Days", did definitely serve their country. Of course in a different perspective from today, but served their country. Therefore they deserve respect and discretion about their contribution to the Safety and Security of the Nation.*
- 2. This is not the case for those having spied on their next. No respect doesn't mean no forgiveness because these times had been very trying.*
- 3. Every "observed one" has the right to know about his personal file and more would be inappropriate.*

On May 22 it will be 60 years that the former State Security was created. President Parvanov will officially commemorate the event as stated in the media. The outcry from the Opposition is of course very loud....

SIX MEP CANDIDATES IN BULGARIA COLLABORATORS OF SECRET POLICE

Six Bulgarians registered as candidates for the European Parliament turned out to have been collaborators of the former communist secret police and the former Bulgarian people's army before 1990.

On April 25, the committee on the declassification of former communist secret police archives published its research and findings on the 145 candidate MEPs in the May 20 elections.

The committee was elected by Parliament on April 5 to open the archives of the former communist secret services and check all candidates for public posts for ties to these services.

Only one right-wing party's name was on the list. The Union of Free Democrats (UFD), led by former Sofia mayor and current MP Stefan Sofianski, had cause to worry, because UFD candidate Georgi Belchev appeared on the list of collaborators. However, Belchev's dossier had been destroyed. In the period 1990/91, a series of dossiers were destroyed on the orders of the then-interior minister General Atanas Semerdjiev who was among the leading figures in the former Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP). Today, all that remains to show that Belchev had an affiliation with the former communist regime is a piece of paper in the archive that notes that Belchev had a file. Minutes after the announcement of the list of six, it became clear that Belchev was no longer a candidate.

Belchev was "free" to decide his own political future, said Borislav Balgarinov of the Bulgarian People's Union (the party is the UFD's main partner in the elections). By the end of April 25, Belchev had not commented.

The other five alleged collaborators were Sevdalin Atanasov of the Green Party; Yunal Lyutfi of one of the minority parties in the ruling tripartite coalition, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF); and two candidates from the European Socialists Platform – Bulgarian Socialist party (BSP) and Movement for Social Humanism coalition, Evgeni Kirilov and Boyan Choukov. Last but not least was Krastyo Petkov of the list of the Citizens Union for New Europe. Petkov was a lifelong leader of one of the biggest labour unions, KNSB, and formerly was a BSP MP.

Hours after the list was published, the first comments emerged.

"I was in a secret navy unit in Sozopol for the period between 1986-1989," Atanasov told Bulgaria's Focus news agency. "Back then we had to work with classified information. Our unit guarded missiles and that is why our work was secret. It was what we did, absolutely normal," Atanasov said. His background should not only not harm his campaign but should help because he had been serving his country, Atanasov said. "I was a conscript sailor and the committee should know that, I was not a collaborator," he said.

He remained a candidate.

¹ He tried during the summer 1980 and finally gave up, recognizing that I was worthless....



That Lyutfi's name was on the list was not news for him or for the Bulgarian-language media. Lyutfi is currently Deputy Speaker of Parliament and as such he has been checked several times and has announced that he had a file in the former State Security archives. Lyutfi refused to comment, saying that the matter was "old news". In 2001, the then ad-hoc committee on the opening of communist archives said that Lyutfi had one of the largest files (four volumes) in the archives of the communist services. He used the names "Mourad" and "Sider". Lyutfi is last on the MRF list and, going by opinion polls, has no chance of being elected to the EP.

For the other three "collaborators", the news is unlikely to harm their campaigns. It is a fact that the BSP is the successor to the BCP, which ruled Bulgaria from 1944 to 1989. More than half of the current prominent BSP members pursued at least part of their careers under communism as BCP members. This is the case with Kirilov and Choukov. Kirilov was born in 1945 and was a diplomat under communism, which at that time meant close ties with security services. Just like that of Belchev, Kirilov's dossier was destroyed in 1990. However, in 2001 the ad-hoc committee said that Kirilov had been recruited by the communist secret service in 1978 when he was 33. He had the codename "Manchev". Kirilov is fifth in the BSP election candidate list, which gives him a strong chance of being elected to the EP.

Choukov is also from the diplomat school. Born in 1952, Choukov was a diplomat in France and Spain. Currently, he is a professor at the Military Academy in Sofia. "I am proud of what I did for my country back then," Choukov told Focus without actually saying what he did. "I worked for Bulgaria's national security and feel no guilt about it," Choukov said.

The last on the list, Petkov, had not commented by the end of April 25, but his position as the leader of KNSB for several years and his position from 2001 to 2005 as a BSP MP, left no doubt about his political affiliations. The 2001 committee identified Petkov as agent "Elenkov".

The list of the six emerged four days after most parties officially started their election campaigns.

....

http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/six-mep-candidates-in-bulgaria-collaborators-of-secret-police/id_22174/catid_5

***The end of the Saga could be announced, finally the Law voted, the Commission established and the first "mission" achieved with celerity and "effectiveness" as very quickly 6 of the candidates to the MEP Elections are declared "former collaborators of the State Security".
And the lid was to return quickly on the pot...***

Bulgaria, Russian Federation to sign Classified Information Protection Agreement

5 May 2007 | 16:06 | FOCUS News Agency

Sofia/Moscow. Bulgaria and Russian Federation's governments are to sign an Agreement on Mutual Protection of Classified Information, the State Commission on Information Security told **Focus News Agency**.

The agreement is to be signed on May 8th in Moscow during a visit of an official Bulgarian delegation headed by PM Sergej Stanishev.

The draft agreement defines the main terms used in the text, sets out the classification levels for information security, measures for protecting classified information, ways of exchange. What is also included is regulations providing for the regime for formalizing classified contracts, procedures for international visits, rules for processing classified information, and regulations stipulating what to do in case security measures have been violated.

It is planned to sign the agreement for an unspecified period of time. The draft says past classified information protection agreements formalized between the two states will remain in force unless they run in the face of this one.

The Open Society of George SOROS organizes in Sofia a conference on "the crimes of Communism" in August 2005. The "files" are of course one of the discussed subjects.

The "subject" is then already an old story since in 1997 a law had led to the revelation of 150 names of agents, but in 2002, the lid had, well, quickly found again its logical place.

At the end of June 2006 Krasimir Karakachanov², Yunal Lyutfi³, Petar Beron⁴, the Head Mufti Mustafa Hadji are publicly stated by the Minister of Interior to have been members/collaborators of the old State Security, this, following the formal request of a journalist concerning 47 personalities of the political world, the higher level of Justice and the spiritual Heads of the country.

"Selective" opening of the files is decried by much as like being able to harm the President of the Republic.⁵

10 days later, Minister Petkov recognizes that the files of the "patriots" must be preserved but that there is urgency to open the others as pressures are done via the files, and there will be always as long as the files remain secret.

²Leader of the VRMO, Macedonian moderate nationalist party pro Bulgarian.

³Vice President of the Party directed by Ahmed Dogan, party primarily representing the interests of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

It should be noted that the list presented by the Party at the European Elections of 2007 was the only one fully balanced.

In addition, even if the affiliation with the old State Security is history, the facts announced by the Commission (4 bulky files – the most all those examined – and the use of 2 pseudonyms) lead to some comments:

- The use of 2 pseudonyms lets consider multiple activities with an internal precaution of anonymity (the right hand not having to know what makes the left hand), which still reinforces the importance of the person
- Was he implicated in the sad business which led in its time 300000 Turks to leave Bulgaria towards the end of the Jivkov time?
- 2007 is the announced year of the retirement of Ahmet Dogan, generally the number 2 of the party takes the continuation, if such is the case, **towards who will go his "fidelities"?**

⁴Secretary of the very young CDC during the changes of 1989/1990, he was elected on the lists of ATAKA at the last parliamentary elections. He sits at the Parliament as independent since his independent candidature for the Presidential Elections of 2006.

⁵Approaching then the end of his 1st mandate.



The debate on this subject is launched within the governing coalition and the opinions are as divided as fluctuating.

August 10, Karakachanov publicly recognizes its membership of the old State Security, but as expert of the Macedonians questions⁶ and not as agent/delator. August 30, 2006, the parliamentary debate opens on the subject, and on September 2 the text is approved in 1st reading.

Bojedar Doichev is found dead on his place of work on November 16, 2006. For 25 years he had occupied the place nearest to the "files".⁷

His violent death⁸ and the fact that a London Internet site announces his death before the authorities of the country starts a virulent polemic as the hardly started parliamentary debate precisely relates to that of what he was in charge for a very long time.

The BBC evokes the death and wonders about the possible bond with the potential revelations about 2 affairs:

- The death of Georgi Markov with the famous "Bulgarian umbrella",
- The attempted murder against Jean Paul II

The Washington Post rebounds on the affair and indicates that the Bulgarian opposition requires explanations, speaking about "cover up" by the power in place.

The National Intelligence Service⁹ speaks about unpleasant coincidence, no more. The opposition blames the Socialists, the NIS and the President of the Republic¹⁰ to delay the free access to the files.

The media report **the state of shock** of the family of Bojedar Doichev at the burial faced with the assertion of the suicide for personal reasons.

Very quickly tongues loosen....

Atanas Atanasov, old member of the NIS now member of the opposition in Parliament ensures that the time taken by the authorities to make public the death of Bojedar Doichev is the guarantee of something abnormal. For him the opening of the files is concerned because certain are given missing.

Serafim Stoikov, a friend of Doichev ensures that he will have been put under such a pressure that it did not remain to him else than the suicide to not do what somebody wanted to force him to.

Bojedar Doichev had the responsibility of the files post 1989 and the secret files of the *Foreign Intelligence Directorate* since 1991.

2 other suicides took place at the same time and information, there, was remarkably occulted:

- Lubomir Nachev, retired from the Ministry of Interior, committed suicide after killing his mother in Karnobat,

- The Director of the service of Intellectual Property of the General Directorate of the Fight against the Organized Crime would have also given himself death.

It is the moment that the New York Times chooses to evoke the fact that in 1989, following the fall of Todor Jivkov, 46% of the files of the collaborators and 3% of those of the supervised people would have been destroyed.

Ahmed Dogan is annoyed finally and complains about the Socialists for obstruction.

November 30 it's finally over, the Law is voted¹¹ in 2nd reading. The names of the former collaborators of the State Security which would still be in public office and politics will be published on Internet.

However, the day before, General Semerdjiev leaves temporarily his retirement for simply recalling that following the events of Poland, some active precautions were taken up to the extreme assumption of a popular uprising.

All was photocopied and microfilmed and is in a known secret place of the successive Ministers of Interior.

The Secret service does not have and will not have problems to function.

The files "destroyed" with the fall of Todor Jivkov are thus well there and available.

Ivan Kostov recognizes that those which worked in the past for the old State Security before 1989, in fact, defended the country from "an other" point of view, in comparison with today.

December 2, Ahmed Dogan still pushes for a total opening, 2 days later, governmental coalition obliges, the opening will be selective and inter alia, the Ambassadors and the members of the Secret service "will be protected"¹². In the Parliament, confusion is total following this "last minute swing" whereas the NDSV was also in favor of the total opening.

December 5, Vasil Zikoulov, former Head of the Secret service denounces "uncontrolled" openings of files throughout the preceding summer and affirms that the citizens are entitled to the access to their file, and that stops there. To name those which served their country would be a shame.

The same day the Prime Minister once again contributes to the debate while inviting to prudence and reminds that he has to secure a sound working capacity for the Secret Service and Military Intelligence.

In addition, Dimitar Kostov, a former ambassador does not find anything abnormal with the fact that collaborators of the Secret service integrate the diplomatic corps.

On his side, Ivan Kostov, Head of DSB ensures being convinced that Brussels is at the origin of these never ending debates.

December 6 the media launches a last-ditch struggle for the unconditional opening, in vain!

⁶Studies and other work produced by him must be in the files and consolidate the statements

⁷Head of the Department of the archives and secret files of the old State Security like *National Intelligence Service*, its contemporary "substitute".

⁸Officially suicide with his service weapon

⁹"successor" Organization of the old State Security

¹⁰The NIS is under his authority

¹¹In 1994 a law had been voted on this subject and a Commission had followed in 1997. In 2002, the whole was stopped....

¹²The files will have to be stored in a different place from that of the others and protected by suitable equipment and personnel and with a restricted access



December 7, 2006, last reading, the text is finally voted.

The files are declared accessible to the researchers and the Western media continue to dream of the assassination of Markov and the attempted murder against Jean Paul 2. 29 categories of people will see their files accessible. The people on posts after July 16, 1991¹³ will see their files protected.

The same time, Germany shows the way...: 54 civil servants of the Bithler Behörde¹⁴ are announced as former members of the Stasi. They are kept because they contributed to clarify this dark period...

The example is also given to us of the German writer Hans Joachim Schädlich who the day when he had access to his file of the Stasi he discovered that the one spying on him was not other than his brother....

Whereas the New York Times underlines with accuracy that the problem is general for the old communist world and that Bulgaria will have long delayed to take care of the problem, especially that the shock waves still arrive, even for the countries having tackled the question early.

New blow at mid December: a 2nd suicide¹⁵ close to the files of the Secret service: Ivan Rakov who took care to leave a letter to explain his gesture: personal reasons, of health.

January 9, 2007 Evgueni Dimitrov, vice President of the commission of the secret files which was removed in 2002 ensures that the opening of the files will reveal names of people who currently push most for the total opening because these people are gravely mistaken thinking that the files "were cleaned" of their names. He quotes the Polish example with the revelations concerning the clergy, difficulty which also arises in Bulgaria.

The following day, the Metropolitan of Varna, nr 2 of the Bulgarian Church¹⁶ considers it necessary to make a solemn statement to deny any personal bond with the old State Security and asking for the Ministry of Interior to attest it officially.

Dimitrov also explains that the old State Security did not do anything to try to help the nurses imprisoned in Libya.

Three days later, Ivan Chobanov, Directeur of the Secret Service is thanked and replaced by his assistant Ivan Drashkov.

The outgoing one was a close relation of Boïko Borissov, current Mayor of Sofia.¹⁷

"Indiscretions" speak about the 2 Bulgarian drivers decapitated in Iraq in 2004 who would have been implicated in a traffic of amphetamines and which were victims of an Iraqi supplier also collaborator of the Bulgarian Secret service. The 2 unfortunate ones would have been the "pawns" used to put pressure on the Bulgarian interlocutors of the Iraqi. A secret mission of Chobanov and Borissov at the Iraqi border having failed, they would have been sold to Islamists for their "PR".

January 17, the Attorney General opens an instruction for murder concerning the "suicide" of Bojedard Doichev!

January 19, new changes, at the Ministry of Interior.

Newspaper SEGA speaks about "Scandal at the Kingdom of the Shades", "kingdom" under the authority of the President of the Republic which controls it all. Many ensure that changes of this nature and this scope at the Ministry of Interior precede usually great transformations at the economic, political, power level and business in Bulgaria¹⁸....

Muddy water floods flow as many actions to preserve the command of the control sticks, of government, of the world of information and the business.

At the end of January, we learn a posteriori that little before the vote of Law, December 4, there was a "closed door" meeting which was decisive for the content of the text.

It was so given to see that the lobby of the old Secret Service has still a strong position within the BSP and that probably exists a node of relations of interdependence and mutual aid gathering old agents of the communist Secret service, various traffickers, gangsters of all hairs, criminals and assassins who control key positions in the public office, like the famous "final" joke according to Pelevine:¹⁹

The Volga stops abruptly and the deluxe jeep which rolls behind it, bumps in it. Following the shock the front of the 4 X 4 is botched. Holding a pump rifle, a hefty maffioso leaves the jeep and starts to knock hard with the gun on the rear window of the Volga. From inside someone lowers the window of the door and, surprise: the Volga transports a Colonel from the FSB. The maffioso starts: "Oh! Comrade Colonel, I knock, I knock, you do not open the door, I wanted simply ask where I must deliver the money...".

¹⁸ Any relation with the events of this May 2007!?

¹⁹ Viktor Olegovitch Pelevine is a Russian writer. After a training of engineer in electromechanics at the energy Institute of Moscow, it follows a literary seminar of creation.

Pelevine keeping a little away from the media, one knows few things about him. It started to reach notoriety with the publication of the yellow arrow, of *OMON-Ra* and of news.

Figurehead of the current Russian literature, its work is translated in many languages including Chinese and Japanese.

The accounts and the novels of Pelevine often rest on fantastic or absurd elements: passenger train without stop nor known destination (*the yellow arrow*), character evolving/moving in a world transformed into universe of video game (*the Prince of Gosplan*) or living a parallel life in the form of insect (*life of the insects*)...

The oneiric aspect of its work makes of him a heir to a Russian literary tradition which one can make go up in Nicolas Gogol and who would include Mikhail Boulgakov de *Coeur of dog* or *the Master and Marguerite*.

The accounts and the novels of Viktor Pelevine are woven references to the everyday life in Russia and the USSR and with the popular culture (video games, American groups of rock'n'roll, Brazilian televised series).

The myths of the Soviet official culture (Tchapaïev, cosmonauts) as well as the considerations of a mystical nature inspired by Buddhism are also very present. This mixture leads some to qualify the work of Pelevine of postmoderne.

Saturated with references multiple and bathing in the absurdity, the texts of Pelevine are of a great satirical range. The author however abstains from well informing his readers on the direction to be given to his work. Generally choosing on the narratif process of internal focusing, it generally lets to us foresee reality only through the glance of a character who delivers neither his thoughts nor his emotions. Necessarily subjective character of any perception of the things and besides a recurring topic in the work of Pelevine.

Wikipédia source

¹³Official date of the end of the State Security.

¹⁴ Organization in charge of the archives of the STASI

¹⁵ Approximately 3 weeks after that of Bojedard Doichev

¹⁶ Considering the advanced age and the bad health of the Patriarch Maxim, it is him who directs the Church of Bulgaria

¹⁷ But Secretary-general of the Ministry of Interior under the Sakskoburgski government



***The adventures were still many and often unbelievable for the definition of the mode of nomination of the Members of the Commission of the Files just like for the Designation of its members.
It took several more months....***

The final word, very revealing, knowing that the army of civil servant any State needs for its administration can't be changed overnight, we will leave it to Andrei Lukanov²⁰

Minutes of the session of the Plenum of the Bulgarian Communist Party – November 16, 1989

...

Next to take the floor was comrade Andrey Lukanov who stated that he did not intend to make a speech because he had already participated in the Politburo session and fully supported the proposals presented. He only wanted to share several thoughts in connection with comrade Dimitar Stoyanov's speech (not from a personal perspective). He expressed his enthusiasm for what was happening at the Plenum. [He was also glad] that the roots connecting us to the most glorious moments of the Bulgarian Communist Party's historic course were not destroyed. I am satisfied, said comrade Lukanov, with [Stoyanov's] self-critical spirit, with his declaration of loyalty to the Party cause, loyalty that I do not doubt because of his rapidly evolving position. Nevertheless, this speech requires a commentary. It is not that I want to put comrade Stoyanov in a more distressing situation, I would certainly not wish anyone to feel the way he is feeling now.

In my opinion, the main problem here is that despite his self-criticism, comrade Stoyanov failed to comprehend the major issue in question—that, voluntarily or not, he became the voice and vehicle of a failed administrative system, of a historically rejected style of political governance. Under his direct leadership and with his active participation, the merger of the staff of the CC of the BCP with certain specialized structures in the National Security Services rapidly approached realization. This symbiosis, rarely seen in the practice of the fraternal communist parties for several decades, was pursued to guarantee the affirmation and perpetuation of the regime." [...]²¹

²⁰See a preceding newsletter....

²¹[Source: DC BCP Records, Bulgarian Central State Files, Sofia, Fond 1b, Opis 65. - Document obt enu by Jordan Baev.]
Translation of English by the writer of this letter
www.wilsoncenter.org/cwihp/documentreaders/eotcw/891116.pdf