

Moscow's 'Greater Bulgaria' project sets pogroms against Turk minority

by Konstantin George

Since last summer, and with vastly increased intensity in the last two weeks of January, Bulgaria has been engaged in a massive forced "Bulgarization" pogrom against its 800,000-member Turkish ethnic minority. In village after village inhabited by Turks, armed state-security goons have attempted to coerce Turkish-minority Bulgarians to change their names from, say, Mustafa Ates or Ibrahim or Ali Kocakerim to "Ivan Ivanovich Christov." These pogroms have provoked violent ethnic riots and disturbances, brutally suppressed by Bulgarian army and security units. The entire area around the city of Momcilgrad, one of the centers of the Turkish community in Bulgaria, is now sealed off to all outsiders.

According to well-informed Turkish and East European exile sources contacted by *EIR*, at least 140-160 Turks have been massacred by the Bulgarian authorities recently. West German press accounts speak of a death toll between 40 and 160, while Turkish newspapers talk of "no fewer than 160 and up to 800 deaths." These occurrences signal the reactivation of both Russian and Soviet-directed "Greater Bulgaria" expansionist policies in the Balkans and West Asia, echoing the postwar Stalin era.

At that time, against a backdrop of territorial demands on Turkey issued by Stalin and Molotov for Soviet control of the Turkish Straits (the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles) and the Northeast Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan (adjoining Soviet Armenia and under Czarist rule from 1878-1914), the Soviet-installed regime in Bulgaria forcibly expelled or coerced into emigration between one-third and one-half of the Turkish ethnic minority then living in Bulgaria.

In parallel with that pogrom, Bulgaria advanced annexationist claims against its two other non-Soviet-satellite neighbors, claiming the Yugoslav and Greek provinces of Macedonia, and the Greek province of Thrace bordering on Bulgaria and European Turkey.

Last March, the Soviet and Bulgarian armed forces, in their joint exercises "Soyuz-'84" ("Alliance-'84"), rehearsed a blitzkrieg seizure of European Turkey and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

The current Bulgarian atrocities have sparked an official letter of protest from the pro-American Turkish president, Gen. Kenan Evren, to Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov, de-

manding a cessation of such state-run coercion and violence. Evren, during the Korean War, was commander of the much-decorated Turkish Brigade that fought alongside U.S. and U.N. forces; he was military ruler of Turkey from 1980-83. During his tenure as Turkey's ruler, he achieved distinction for stamping out the large armed gangs of both extreme right and extreme left terrorists, as well as Kurdish separatists whose late-1970s terror wave killed thousands and brought Turkey to the brink of civil war. Evren's coup saved Turkey. The military seized about a million illegal arms from the insurrectionaries, ranging from pistols to mortars and heavy machine-guns.

It is directly relevant to the analysis of the Bulgarian pogrom now under way that the bulk of those weapons seized, which flowed throughout the decade of the 1970s, reached Turkey through Bulgarian and Syrian centers of embarkation. That is, the two Soviet client states of Bulgaria and Syria, both with well-documented "Greater Bulgaria" and "Greater Syria" pretensions, were officially lending their territories, port and trade facilities, and intelligence agencies to the Nazi International-Soviet policy goal of breaking up Turkey. In both cases, a strategic weakening or break up of Turkey is a key component in the advancement of "Greater" Bulgaria and Syria policies.

It should be recalled in this context that Bulgaria was a voluntary ally of the Nazis in World War II, and in that capacity was rewarded by Hitler, who granted Bulgaria every territorial claim expressed in the "Greater Bulgaria" repertoire. Under that arrangement, Hitler's junior partner, Bulgaria, annexed or occupied: Yugoslav and Greek Macedonia, the Nis region of Yugoslav Serbia, the southern part of Romanian Dobrudja (the area between the Danube and the Black Sea), and Greek Thrace. Bulgaria was a unique ally in one clinically crucial respect. It was the only one of Hitler's junior partners which never declared war on Russia, and refused to contribute one iota of effort to the war against Russia.

This documentation provides a stunning note of irony to the ongoing Soviet campaign against so-called "German revanchism." If the Soviets were not hypocrites, but honest in dealing with "the revanchist question," Moscow would leave West Germany alone and focus on its ally and satellite, Bul-

garia. Of all the states that fought on the side of the Axis in World War II, only Bulgaria harbors revanchist territorial aspirations.

Arms and drug smuggling

The Bulgarian and Syrian roles in the mass arming of extremists and separatists to reduce Turkey to chaos and fragmentation were well documented in a lengthy series of articles in the early 1980s in the leading Turkish dailies *Mil-liyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, in background briefings given to *EIR* by Turkish experts on the matter, and most recently, by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration report issued in July 1984 on Bulgarian involvement in the international arms and drug traffic.

The DEA reported that “the largest single source of Western foreign exchange” for Bulgaria in 1982 was arms sales, which amounted to “9% of total Bulgarian exports.” The DEA report also singled out Bulgaria’s role as an arms supplier during the 1974-75 period launching and feeding the Lebanese civil war which raged in full force during 1975 and 1976: “Prior to the Civil War in Lebanon, in 1974 and 1975 Bulgaria sold several shiploads of arms to right-wing Christian militias. . . .”

The ties of the Assad regime in Syria to certain dirty factions among the Lebanese Christians, including the Chamoun clan and the Franjeh clan based in the northern Lebanese port of Tripoli—in the Syrian-occupied part of Lebanon—are well documented. The DEA report states further: “Kintex [the Bulgarian state trading company] chiefly has supplied weapons through Turkish traffickers to leftist terrorist groups in Lebanon and Turkey.”

The Lebanese civil war demonstrates how the “Greater Bulgaria” and the “Greater Syria” operations, both undertaken with Moscow’s blessing, actively supported each other. The Lebanese civil war, which Bulgaria played a key role in fueling and promoting, opened the way for Hafez Assad’s Syrian army intervention into Lebanon in 1976, ostensibly to “bail out” the beleaguered Christian militias. That the Syrian invasion saved some lives is true. But that, of course, was not Moscow-asset Assad’s motive. The 1976 Syrian military occupation of large parts of Lebanon (where they remain to this day) marked the decisive first step down the “Greater Syria” expansionist road.

Assad, as is well documented, plays a Soviet surrogate role as the key supplier and transshipper of arms to Khomeini’s Iran for use against Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War. One of the latest major examples of this, covered recently in the West German newspaper *Die Welt*, is the transfer by the Soviet-allied Mengistu regime in Ethiopia of F-5 fighter aircraft—supplied to Ethiopia by the United States during the Haile Selassie period—through Syria for refurbishing and final shipment to Iran as badly needed replacements for Iran’s force of F-5s, depleted by four years of war losses against Iraq.

Project ‘Kurdistan’

Nothing brings into clearer focus the close operational ties of Moscow’s “Greater Bulgaria” and “Greater Syria” assets than their joint support for Kurdish separatism, with the goal of using the “Kurdish card” to assist in the break-up of Iraq and Turkey.

The Kurds inhabit an area encompassing Western Iran south of Iranian Azerbaijan, the northern mountains of Iraq along its borders with Iran, Turkey, and Syria, and South-eastern Turkey along Turkey’s border with Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The number of Kurds in Turkey (there officially called “Mountain Turks”) is estimated at between 6 and 8 million.

In late August—at about the same time that Sofia launched the “Bulgarization” campaign—armed bands of Kurdish guerrillas using territory in Iraq and Iran as sanctuary, began “hit-and-run” attacks against isolated Turkish army patrols and mountain villages in eastern Turkey. These attacks, which continue into the present, have killed dozens of Turkish soldiers and villagers.

The guerrilla war is now in a tiny, embryonic form, with such “pinprick” attacks posing no threat per se. It is, however, the first time since the Greek civil war of the late 1940s that an armed insurgency, aided by Soviet surrogates, is under way in the mountain regions of a NATO ally. As in the transformation of the Greek civil war from the mere pinprick attacks of 1945 to a full civil war by early 1947, all that is required is a political decision by the Kremlin to have its surrogates undertake the appropriate escalation in support of the insurgents, who already have secure sanctuaries on Iranian and Iraqi territory.

That the two Soviet surrogates Bulgaria and Syria are the key logistical backers of Kurdish separatism (Kurdish separatism politically being a pet project of the Swiss-based Nazi International and Moscow) is well documented. Bulgaria’s role as a key base of operations for Kurdish separatists has emerged on numerous occasions. One such example was the “airline shuttle” flights organized by Bulgaria’s Balkan Air, planeloads of Kurdish political activists flown from Sofia to Stockholm’s Arlanda International Airport during 1982, where they all asked for political asylum in Sweden. This “Kurdish shuttle” was exposed in the Swedish newspaper *Aftonposten* at that time.

The Turkish mafia is based in Bulgaria, at the center of massive international arms and drug smuggling, and the recipient of much well-deserved publicity around the 1981 Agca-Antonov assassination attempt against the Pope. This Turkish mafia is largely a Kurdish mafia. As the DEA painstakingly asserts in its report: “Smugglers are permitted to conduct their activities within and through Bulgaria. In effect, Bulgarian officials, through Kintex, designate ‘representatives’ to operate as brokers who establish exclusive arrangements with smugglers. . . . These representatives and smugglers are non-Bulgarians, *primarily composed of Turkish nationals of Kurdish ethnicity* [emphasis added].”