

LL  
10 Jun  
V - 1249BULGARIAETHNIC MINORITIESPRIVATE PROPERTIES

Expropriation

Liquidation of Private Enterprise

JUSTICE

Sentences

Lawyers

CORRUPTION"They Took Everything I had..."

SOURCE ISTANBUL: Interview with a 55-year-old Turkish ethnic emigrant from TOLBUHIN.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 1946 to 1950.

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"I owned a leather factory north of TOLBUHIN, which had a yearly capacity of processing from 25 to 30,000 sheep skins and 500 cow hides. The capital of my factory amounted to seven million Leva with 1,600,000 Leva as reserve capital at the 'Torgovski' (Commercial) Bank. Furthermore, I had an inventory of raw materials and finished products amounting to three million Leva.

"I knew that the Communists were looking for an opportunity to seize my factory, as in the early stages of Bulgaria's communization the Party was very careful before taking drastic economic actions, which might have a negative effect on the population. The opportunity came when one day in 1946, the Communists found hidden in the warehouse of a Bulgarian merchant 20 leather pieces. Allegedly, the merchant had bought them from my son Enver and kept them in his warehouse without declaring them in his statement to the official Communist authorities.

"For the Communists that was enough evidence. They arrested my son and sentenced him to 10 years in prison. The sentence was not passed by any court, but was merely a decision following a meeting of the local 'Otechestven Front' (Fatherland Front) organization. I hired a wellknown SOFIA lawyer by the name of BAKIRDJIEV (fnu) and paid him 200,000 Leva. He went to the proper Party authorities and by bribing them with 100,000 Leva succeeded in changing the sentence from 10 to six years. After four years at hard labor, my son was released.

"But that was only the beginning of our troubles. In 1947, they confiscated my factory and all my private property

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BULGARIA  
(cont'd)

and after three years, when we were ready to emigrate to Turkey, they forced me to pay 200,000 Leva as 'unpaid taxes' for the factory they had confiscated three years before....."

EVAL. COMMENT: Matter corresponds with similar information, but the cited case is UNCONFIRMED.

*Be more detailed in Evaluation*