

**December 13, 1989**  
**Letter by Ognyan Doynov to Delegates of the People's Assembly**

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**Summary:**

Letter by Ognyan Doynov to delegates of the People's Assembly criticizing Zhivkov and his retinue and calling for those who worked under Zhivkov to give way to new leadership

**Original Language:**

Bulgarian

**Contents:**

- English Translation

ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY,

In reality, our economy is in a very dire situation. The diagnosis of the disease was very precisely defined at the last Plenum of the Central Committee.

There is no doubt that everyone is responsible for allowing the government of Socialist Bulgaria to become absolutist and autocratic. Everyone who has participated in the totalitarian machine, regardless of the field in which he or she has worked, is culpable to one degree or another for the grave deformations in the society and the economy of the country.

I do not underrate or hide my own political and personal culpability.

First, I admit responsibility that, as a former member of the Politburo, I voted for the dismissal of many capable comrades whose main fault consisted in the fact that Todor Zhivkov saw in them rivals and pretenders for his position. The fact that I am not aware of even one occasion during the whole period that I was in the government when someone stood up or voted against such unjust dismissals does not excuse me.

Second, I cannot help but be ashamed that, together with others, I have participated in the panegyric praising of Todor Zhivkov's personality, virtues, and achievements.

Third, I bear a distinct guilt that I did not stand up against the unjust decisions concerning the life and plight of the Bulgarian Muslims. No one has given us the right to determine by decree their ethnic origin and to deprive them of the freedom to choose their own names. The sacred democratic right of every individual to be a member of the ethnic group that he or she believes they belong to cannot be abolished. So many family and personal tragedies were created that we will not be able to wash away the shame and disgrace of these deeds in the near future.

Fourth, I definitely do not wish to overlook my own responsibility for the sectors of which I was specifically in charge, because it is precisely my work there and the modest contribution that I made in those sectors that justifies my conscience for remaining a politburo member for 11 years. [...]

His [Todor Zhivkov's] true attitude towards me started showing strongly and openly after the end of 1985. He began to prepare my dismissal. He and his retinue endeavored for three whole years to manipulate public opinion through improbable rumors about me that were spread according to instructions by the centers for disinformation at the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs]. It was alleged, and always from "reliable sources," that I possessed several luxurious villas each of which were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars; that I had a great

deal of money, foreign currency; that I took bribes; and many other [allegations].

In less than three years after 1986, it was decided that I would be removed from various positions as each time I was demoted to a lower and lower rank and a narrower field of specialization. Two out of five such decisions were never realized because they were revoked. I remained for more than 5 months without a work appointment. Eventually, I was appointed chairman of one of the numerous associations. [...]

We know in whose hands the entire legislative and executive power of the country was concentrated and to whom the responsibility for managing the economy was entrusted. This was and still is Georgy Atanasov.<sup>42</sup> Did Todor Zhivkov take away all his rights and leave him in a limbo? Is it not his responsibility above all for everything that happened, even for the endless reorganizations which led to chaos in the economy? Was he not the person who dismissed many capable economic activists by falsifying their actual economic results. We all remember the case of Ivan Andonov from Farmahim.

Much could be said about his [Atanasov's] economic incompetence and primitivism in working in the economic field.

I also want to address A. Lukanov and to ask him whether he feels himself the main culprit for the tremendous increase in the foreign debt. Who managed the currency commission? The privileged and [Todor Zhivkov's] retinue lined up to run this commission: Todor Zhivkov, Grisha Philipov,<sup>43</sup> Georgy Atanasov. Invariably, Andrei Lukanov was either its chairman or its operative manager. [...].

I propose that G. Atanasov, A. Lukanov, and P. Pachov immediately hand in their resignation from all posts and duties currently occupied in order to avoid being disgracefully expelled later. [...]

I have spoken seriously and made serious accusations. I am prepared to answer to them. Those who accused me of being one of Todor Zhivkov's retinue should not hide behind anonymity, behind the flag of the Party and the country.

I do not call for revenge, but for justice. Hatred is a destructive force. We need love and optimism now in order to go forward.

In the past, there was a ready scenario for a speech such as mine. The voters were advised to request a recall of their people's representative. This was followed by prison and, as a result of the imprisonment, a lack of access to any documents with which a person could defend himself or herself.

Let us now see how this matter will be dealt with in democratic conditions.

Now, if we want the new-born democracy to survive, I propose that a parliamentary commission with the wide participation of public organizations and the mass media hears out everyone who is being accused or has something to say. In this way the members of Todor Zhivkov's retinue could be revealed as well as the real culprits responsible for the present situation.

Justice could be served only by uncorrupt people who will not take advantage of their power in order to hide their own shame and disgrace.

All of us who worked in the days of Todor Zhivkov, both good and bad, ought to leave and give way to new and young people, morally and mentally unburdened by the horrid deformations which we lived through.

13 December 1989

Ognyan Doynov

[Source: Archive of the Bulgarian Parliament, Sofia. Document obtained by Jordan Baev.]

42 Member of Politburo (1981-1990); Prime Minister (1986 to Jan 1990).

43 Secretary of CC BCP (1972-1981, 1986-1989); member of Politburo (1974-1989); Prime Minister (1981-1986); member of the State Council (1986-1989).