

December 13, 1979

Violence Between Baathist and Communist Iraqi Students in Bulgaria

Citation:

"Violence Between Baathist and Communist Iraqi Students in Bulgaria", December 13, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, BSTU, ZA, HA II, 22602. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114445>

Summary:

In December 1979, the Bulgarian Intelligence Service reports to Berlin on a tense series of situations regarding Arab students studying in Sofia. After several fights break out between Ba'athist and communist students, resulting in many severe injuries, the nation of Iraq decides to recall a large number of its students studying in Bulgaria.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Telegram Nr. 1611

Sofia, 13 December 1979

Sender: Sofia - Mitew [Bulgarian Intelligence Service, Ministry of Interior]

Addressee: Berlin - [General] Damm [Ministry for State Security]

Copies: Vlcek, Daczi, Chometovsky

[probably intelligence services of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland]

Dear Comrade Damm!

We want to inform that relations among the Iraqi students in the People's Republic of Bulgaria -Baathists and communists- have become extremely tense as a result of domestic conflicts in the Republic of Iraq. In June 1979 there occurred some violent clashes between them.

The organs of the Ministry of Interior and respective state institutions implemented a couple of preventive measures and officially admonished the most active instigators.

Notwithstanding that, on 1 December this year a new incident occurred at a celebratory event for the occasion of the national holiday of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. It was held in the large room of the youth club within the student dormitory complexes near Sofia. About 200 students from several Arab states participated. Near the end of the event a scandal occurred which led to a mass brawl among Iraqi students. As a result, [redacted] (member of the Baath Party) got severely and seven other people were lightly injured. All injured received immediate medical treatment, and the severely injured underwent successful surgery.

Through their timely intervention the Ministry of Interior organs stopped the scandal and prevented further consequences.

Unfortunately, due to ongoing provocative actions and the behavior by most participants from the 1 December incident, a second mass brawl occurred in the morning of 3 December in a dormitory of the Institute for Foreign Students. During this fight Kemal Halil Ibrahim, member of the Baath Party, student of the preparatory course, was killed [thrown out of the window]. Several people were injured. Two of them were brought into hospital; they are no longer in critical condition.

In the afternoon of 4 December a group of Iraqi students suddenly attacked at a bus stop in the student dormitory area Iraqi citizen Falah Takial Saraf, member of the Communist Party, and killed him with a knife. This individual had entered the People's Republic of Bulgaria as a tourist on 20 November 1979 to visit his brother, a student who lives in the dormitories of the Institute for Foreign Students.

Information we recently obtained demonstrates how Iraqi intelligence services are eager to conduct targeted activities among the groups of Iraqi students who study in socialist and other countries. They want to compromise the communists, to provoke and to blackmail them. In individual cases they even want to physically liquidate identified active members of the communist party. There is sufficient reason to believe that those recent incidents in Bulgaria between Baathist and communist students are results of those activities. Organs of the Ministry of Interior, in close collaboration with administrative and Komsomol organs in charge, have implemented further measures to prevent a spread of incidents. We have increased protection for the embassies of some Arab states and the United States of America. Measures have

been implemented to prevent potential complications, demonstrations, and so on.

In response to our measures, the government of the Republic of Iraq has recalled a major part of Iraqi students and its ambassador. It also froze trade relations with the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Our Number: 1477/79.

With socialist greetings,
Mitew