

sugar is almost always available, though it may cost \$5 per kilo. Here Bulgarians buy their Marlboros and Jack Daniels with crisp \$50 bills—money earned through government contract work abroad (mostly in Iraq or Libya) or, more commonly, through black marketeering. This year, however, Bulgarians with dollars will find themselves in a quandary: As of January 1, the so-called "Corecom" shops are officially off limits to Bulgarian nationals.

In the heat of new hardships, bureaucratic inefficiencies in the country are particularly glaring. Government factories are supposed to produce "luxury items," yet few quality goods make it to the department store shelves. While many Sophiotes can't find apartments, the government is spending millions of dollars on a monolithic showpiece called the Palace of Culture. Finally, although centralized planning theoretically matches supply and demand in the job market, Bulgaria's education system has inadvertently produced too many chemists. Chemistry graduates must often accept an unrelated job for several years before the government can place them in an appropriate position; reportedly and worse yet, some chemists simply sit out the delay. In a country where unemployment, and hence unemployment compensation, is a theoretical anathema, such idleness is costly.

Bulgarians seem particularly irritated by the fact that in the midst of widespread economic difficulties there are those with an excess of goods and opportunities. Some people can easily pay the 2 *leva* cover charge at a swank café (about a third of a day's salary for the average Bulgarian worker). With gasoline hovering around \$4.50 per gallon, most Bulgarians can't afford to own even a Lada. Yet every weekend Party officials drive luggage-laden black Mercedes along cobbled "pedestrian only" streets. The significance of these cars, readily identified by their lack of license plates, is not missed by the people.

Bulgarians observe also that the roads to privilege are often opened by kinship as much as by talent. At thirty-eight, President Zhivkov's Oxford-educated daughter, Lyudmila, heads a Party committee on science, culture, and education, and is a Politburo member as well. Speculation is rife that Lyudmila will eventually assume her father's post. The Bulgarian people seem to view as undeserved her lightning promotions within the Party. She is certainly both intelligent and experienced in paying tributes to "Marxist-Leninist methodology." But Ms. Zhivkova is also twenty years younger than the average Politburo member, and a bit more eccentric than the typical Party woman. A reported believer in astrology and practitioner of yoga, Ms. Zhivkova peppers "Marxist" speeches with talk of the "Eternal" and the "seven-stage harmony of the universe"—not the normal Marxist fodder.

But Bulgarian orthodoxy does not preclude a few isolated contradictions of dogma. After all, despite the Bulgarian Government's professed belief in the "leading role of the Party," Bulgaria—for complex historical reasons—is nominally a two-party state. And despite Marxism's antipathy to religion, Bulgaria traditionally has been fairly lenient with its Orthodox Church. Bulgarian leaders are simply too self-confident to worry much about minor doctrinal contradictions, and the country's political structure is too well entrenched to be moved by popular grumblings. It seems that no matter how scarce sugar becomes, there will always be plenty of young cadres who will report that "Bulgaria and the Soviet Union are sincere socialist friends."

Ellsabeth L. Rosenthal, a freelance writer, has just returned from a trip to Eastern Europe, travelling on a Marshall Scholarship.

EXCURSUS 3

Arthur Dobrin on KENYA: THE SORCERERS' CONNECTION

Japheth is the father of seven and his wife is pregnant again. "All my children won't live until adulthood," he explains. But it is not childhood diseases he dreads. By and large, these have been controlled by modern medicine. "There are people who are jealous of my success. I know that one of my neighbors is a witch. She will cast a spell and some of my children will die."

Japheth is a Kenyan university professor who holds a doctoral degree from an Ivy League college. His fear of witchcraft is not personal, idiosyncratic, or an isolated belief. A recent story in a Kenyan newspaper reported a court case in which one politician accused another of employing witches during his campaign. Claims of bewitchment have become so numerous that it is now a criminal offense to accuse another of being a witch.

Recognition of this belief in sorcery is fundamental to understanding the deadly problem that now confronts Kenya. United Nations estimates indicate that within the next year there may be more than two million starving people in this country of less than sixteen million.

At first glance Kenya seems an unlikely country to experience widespread hunger. Fertile and productive farmland dominates the center of the nation; and under nearly twenty years of stable, democratic rule the standard of living has risen considerably for the majority of the people. But food production cannot keep pace with Kenya's 3.5 per cent annual population growth; and the problem is compounded by cash cropping—where, for example, good land is devoted to growing pineapples for export rather than peanuts for domestic consumption. Since Kenya needs investment capital, it cannot switch dramatically to food production without disrupting foreign trade. Furthermore, the country is burdened by mounting debt repayments from foreign assistance loans.

A belief in witchcraft helps in part to explain why couples continue to have large families in the face of such poverty. A witch is believed to be someone motivated primarily by revenge and jealousy, often a neighbor who casts fatal spells upon those who have become successful. There is no protection against witchcraft, since it is surreptitious and preternatural. It is viewed as a weapon of the weak and the poor. The most one can do to protect against this evil is to have many children, thereby ensuring support in one's old age.

Anthropologists say that the belief in witchcraft appears to be related to stress and anxiety. In a stable social situation accusations of witchcraft are only occasional. But when traditions and customs begin to erode, as today in Kenya, when the world seems a hostile and uncontrollable place, and when individual striving and achieved status replace social cohesion and ascribed position, the belief in witchcraft is intensified. The modern, competitive society that characterizes Kenya has weakened family ties. People feel more alone than ever before and more fearful of the future.

Clearly, Kenya's future is not bright, but it is a mistake to think that ineptitude, corruption, and drought are the only causes of the impending crisis.

Arthur Dobrin, who has lived in Kenya, is author of "The Role of Cooperatives in the Development of Kenya," and the forthcoming Convictions (Orbis).