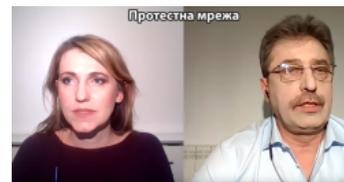


Tzvetan Vassilev: I suspect that Rosen Plevneliev and Ivo Prokopiev supported Delyan Peevski’s attack against Corpbank in 2014 because of their own problems with the prosecution

February 3rd, 2020



Radosveta Vassileva and Tzvetan Vassilev

In [Part II of “Myths and legends about Corpbank,”](#) Tzvetan Vassilev makes a number of shocking revelations — why Rosen Plevneliev, Bulgaria’s President at the time, preferred Delyan Peevski over him and supported the attack against Corpbank, how the Bulgarian central bank (BNB) hid information that at the end of June 2014 fourteen Bulgarian banks stopped all payments, how he had an arrest warrant issued for “Peevski’s murder” (which never took place), how Biser Lazov maintained contacts with EconoMedia before June 2014, etc.

Plevneliev’s secret meetings with General Prosecutor Sotir Tsatsarov and BNB’s Governor Ivan Iskrov

During the summer and fall of 2014 [MP Valeri Simeonov and Boyko Noev talked about various secret meetings](#) at which the fate of Corpbank was decided before the start of the visible part of the attack with the so-called Peevski “murder plot”. They talk about various configurations — a meeting between BNB’s Governor Ivan Iskrov and the leader of DPS Ahmed Dogan, a meeting between President Rosen Plevneliev, General Prosecutor Sotir Tsatsarov and Governor Ivan Iskrov, etc.

Tzvetan Vassilev has previously explained that Rosen Plevneliev’s obsession with him dates from way back, but highlights new details. Peevski told him that Plevneliev, believing that Vassilev was supported by DPS, made attempts to persuade DPS not to support him any further. Moreover, according to Delyan Peevski, Plevneliev had shared that he had “nothing against Peevski”, but he believed Vassilev was “a threat to the national interest.”

“Obviously Mr. Plevneliev preferred Mr. Peevski over me. The results of this preference can be seen today,” Vassilev said.

The banker stressed that there was no doubt that Rosen Plevneliev was familiar with the scenario for the destruction of Corpbank, albeit not with all details. He argues that those plotting against Corpbank needed the support of more influential people because Corpbank was a systemic bank and Plamen Oresharski’s government was about to fall. As part of the preparations of the attack against Corpbank,

Vassilev believes he was also framed before the US Embassy in Bulgaria.

Vassilev defines Plevneliev's role in the attack against Corpbank as "considerable," and believes that the transcripts of the official meetings about Corpbank at the presidency in the summer of 2014 are indicative of this. *Editor's Note: Rosen Plevneliev refused to make the transcripts public in violation of the law and despite numerous inquiries. These meetings were attended by Tsatsarov, Iskrov and others.*

The banker suspects that Rosen Plevneliev and Ivo Prokopiev were "further motivated" to support the attack against Corpbank in 2014 because of a prosecutorial inquiry into their offshore companies allegedly involved in money-laundering from Doverie and Kaolin. Vassilev believes that these investigations were temporarily interrupted, but not terminated because, as we now see, people are starting to talk about them again.

"Mr. Plevneliev and Mr. Prokopiev have made the wrong calculations that if in 2014 they supported the Peevski's attack against Corpbank, they would solve their issues with Bulgaria's Prosecutor's Office," Vassilev argues.

The run on Corpbank — why did the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) participate in the scenario to induce panic among the depositors?

The visible part of the attack against Corpbank in June 2014 had two peaks. The so-called "Peevski murder plot" was put into use on 13 June 2014 (Friday). The "news" that Tzvetan Vassilev planned to murder Peevski and that special forces raided his offices first appeared in the tabloid PIK. Then it was picked up by Peevski's media and by media pretending for objectivity, such as the Economedia editions. What is striking is that [Bulgaria's national radio \(BNR\) also came up with tabloid-inspired headlines](#). This is when the run on Corpbank started.

On Monday, 16 June 2014, Bulgaria's central bank (BNB) sent a special representative to Corpbank to monitor the panic. Mass withdrawals stopped on 17 June 2014. This is when the second part of the scenario was put into use. Media, which are not affiliated to Peevski, received an anonymous letter by someone who presented himself as an employee of Bulgaria's central bank. The letter is written with grammar mistakes and has the typical features of manipulations crafted by Bulgaria's secret services. The "employee" complained that there was something deeply wrong with the central bank. The first media to perceive this as newsworthy was the Bulgarian National Radio which [published the letter in its entirety on its website and discussed it on air while explicitly making a reference to Corpbank](#). This is when the second wave of mass withdrawals started. Between 13-18 June 20% of Corpbank's assets were withdrawn in total, so by the afternoon of 18 June 2014 the bank needed liquidity help. The central bank refused.

Radosveta Vassileva is surprised that the BNR was also involved in the scenario to cause panic among depositors. She is also astonished that these [“articles”](#) were written by a journalist perceived as serious — Sylvia Velikova. Vassileva is also shocked that the BNR failed to cover Sotir Tsatsarov’s comments that he made a mistake and that there was no plot to murder Peevski while they published several articles about this “murder plot”.

Tzvetan Vassilev stressed that the attack against him and Corpbank was “very carefully planned” because its organizers were afraid that it might fail. That is why, they attracted a lot of people on their side — the media of Mr. Prokopiev, the media in which Delyan Peevski had influence through various people such as BTV (through Krassimir Gergov), Nova TV (through Silva Zurleva and Didier Stoessel), BNT (through Vyara Ankova), BNR, etc.

Tzvetan Vassilev believes that Delyan Peevski had direct influence over BNR’s director at the time — Radoslav Yankulov. In this context, it seems Ms. Silviya Velikova simply complied with BNR’s policy at the time. “It was a matter of national interest to bankrupt Corpbank or, at the very least, to destroy me,” the banker joked.

Hollywood script

According to Vassilev, this scenario is "like a Hollywood movie" and its main purpose was to eliminate him, including physically if possible. The banker also shared an unknown fact — the Prosecutor’s Office had issued an arrest warrant for him for the so-called murder plot even though subsequently they said they made a mistake. In addition, thugs from the gangster circle of Mitko Karatista were going around Sofia to “look for him.”

Vassilev emphasizes that none of the organizers of the attack against Corpbank had any idea what the consequences of these scenarios might be. The panic started among Corpbank’s depositors, but it quickly reached other banks. The banker shared a fact which was intentionally concealed by Bulgaria’s central bank — on 27 June 2014, fourteen Bulgarian banks stopped payments. First Investment Bank was in the worst shape. *Editor’s note: The central bank provided a huge liquidity injection to FIB thus applying dual standards vis-à-vis Corpbank to which it refused a liquidity injection.*

“I have always said that the organizer of this attack is Delyan Peevski. However, Bulgaria’s institutions like the Prosecutor’s Office and the Bulgarian secret services (DANS) are complicit with him. Their actions threatened the national security and the security of Bulgaria’s banking system,” Vassilev stressed.

Kapital’s “analysis” from 13 June 2014

On 13 June 2014, at the end of the day, Capital (Kapital) published an article which, according to Radosveta Vassileva, was curious for many reasons — slanderous allegations, mutually exclusive claims (the same paragraph claimed that Corpbank was a pyramid and that it had assets worth BGN 10 billion), etc. One sentence made a strong impression on her — Capital stressed that “witnesses” of a public argument between Peevski and Vassilev said the two argued about Peevski’s indirect debt to Corpbank. Was there such a public dispute and who are these witnesses who gave this information to Capital before 13 June 2014?

Tzvetan Vassilev commented that when he was interviewed by Zornitsa Markova in 2016 (a *longtime journalist of Economedia, part of the KTB Files project*), she showed him that she was in possession of reports which Biser Lazov prepared for him and for Peevski only. In this light, from the perspective of logic, the eyewitnesses of Kapital can only be Biser Lazov and/or Delyan Peevski. Vassilev said that he had been told that Biser Lazov maintained warm ties with Kapital for years.

Regarding Capital’s analysis of 13 June 2014, Vassilev stressed that he suspected a connection between Economedia and the organizers of the attack against Corpbank because he could not explain this article in a different way. “Suddenly, the rhetoric of Economedia became the same as Peevski’s rhetoric,” maintains Vassilev because Economedia had never referred to Corpbank as a pyramid before 13 June 2014. Subsequently, after they realized that it was illogical to call a bank with so many assets a pyramid scheme, they started insinuating that Corpbank operated illegally as an investment fund even though Bulgarian law does not distinguish between commercial banks and investments banks and it is up to the management to choose what strategy it would pursue.

Vassilev also remembered other examples of provocations organized by Ivo Prokopiev’s journalists. For instance, in 2010, journalists from Economedia had bought one Corpbank share each, so that they could attend the yearly meeting of the General Assembly of the Shareholders. They asked strange questions which are not typical for such meetings — they asked the second biggest shareholder SGRF why it invested in Corpbank, they asked why the bank would distribute dividends, etc. *Editor’s note: Tzvetan Vassilev discusses the main provocations and manipulations crafted by Ivo Prokopiev’s media in Part I of “Myths and Legends about Corpbank”.*

Protest Network

On 11 June 2014, members of Protest Network also attended the yearly meeting of the General Assembly of Corpbank’s Shareholders of KTB, as they had bought one share each. They were publishing posts how they would attend this meeting on social media all day long. Of course, Economedia covered their posts as newsworthy items. In this light, it is interesting to take a closer look at Nikolay Staykov’s Facebook post of 21 June 2014 after Corpbank was put under special supervision (Staykov is a member of Protest Network). He ignored the run on the bank (20% of Corpbank’s assets were withdrawn in the span of 5 days) and claimed that Corpbank was a problem ignored by the prosecution and the secret services. He also thanked prominent members of Protest

Network for working so hard to expose Corpbank.

"There is no doubt that Protest Network was seduced and then abandoned. They were very proud when they submitted a complaint to the prosecutor's office. I have no doubt that they were encouraged to submit this letter in some way, so that it could be used as a basis to start an investigation and to combine it with the absolutely criminal letter signed by the anonymous witness," Tzvetan Vassilev underlined. "In practice, their letter of complaint, which was mainly against Delyan Peevski and Nikolay Barekov, was used in the dirty games of the Prosecutor's Office aimed at destroying Corpbank," he added.

The banker is convinced that Protest Network have been used. Of course, some of them are still very proud because they think they have contributed to a "very important job." Yet, others are disappointed and have distanced themselves. It is also interesting to see the subsequent career path of some of them — Kristian Koev (DPS spokesperson), Theodor Mihaylov's sister (now member of the regulating body for media), Yvette Dobromirova, etc.

Regarding Nikolay Staykov's Facebook post of 21 June 2014, Tzvetan Vassilev believes that the post shows criminal intentions: "With this post, in fact, he showed that there was an organized attack against Corpbank. Staykov is basically saying — see, we worked so hard, so that you are finally convinced that the bank should be closed. In addition, the banker added: "It is absurd that it is the job of the prosecution and the secret services to interfere with the loan policy of a bank. This nonsense was subsequently invented by the Prosecutor's Office for two reasons — to justify their actions from June 2014 and to facilitate the theft of Corpbank's assets after its closure," the banker noted.

"Monitoring loan policies is within the realm and powers of the central bank. There are many cases in around the world of banks' violating certain rules. There may also have been violations at Corpbank. But in general, these problems are solved with fines and/or administrative sanctions. Banks are given deadlines to comply with these rules and so on," Vassilev explained.

Tzvetan Vassilev does not think that Nikolay Staykov has the necessary knowledge and background to understand these issues. He was left with this impression after he met with Staykov in Belgrade — he noted he neither had knowledge of Corpbank's policies and activities nor of banking law in Bulgaria.

"I believe that Corpbank's investments through SPVs only contributed to the increase in the value of its assets, respectively, the protection of its clients' deposits," Vassilev stressed noting that in this way the bank had direct control of the management of the companies which received loans and thus could make sure they returned them. *Editor's note: Prior to Corpbank's forced closure, the bank had control over these SPVs. Subsequently with the help of Corpbank's temporary supervisors and receivers in bankruptcy, these SPVs passed into the hands of the Borissov-Peevski circles and Biser Lazov.*

Vassilev also commented on Nikolay Staykov's assertions that without the Raykov-Plevneliev methodology on what Economedia calls state money, the damage from Corpbank's closure would have been much bigger: "Money of state-owned companies did not constitute more than 5% of Corpbank's assets." *Editor's note: [Vassilev commented on the manipulations regarding state-owned companies and the absurdity of Plevneliev Raykov's methodology in the first part of his conversation with Radosveta Vassileva.](#)*

The "investigation" into the Corpbank case by Bulgaria's Anti-Corruption Fund (Nikolay Staykov)

Radosveta Vassileva wonders why after Economedia had information about Delyan Peevski's indirect debt before 13 June 2014 and after Tzvetan Vassilev himself spoke about this debt in his interview with Svetoslav Ivanov during the bank run in June 2014, Nikolay Staykov (former Journalist of Economedia) showed interest in these loans only in 2019 as part of the team of the Anti-Corruption Fund. Why are these facts presented as an "investigation" and big news?

"I do not know the reason for the sudden interest of the Anti-Corruption Fund, and in particular of Nikolay Staykov, in Peevski's debt. I did not hide this debt," Vassilev commented while emphasizing that reducing Corpbank's case to a battle between him and Peevski, as it seems convenient in some circles, is not serious. "Two oligarchs, you see, got into a fight and Corpbank went bankrupt. Wait, if the prosecution had not intervened, would Corpbank be bankrupt? Do you think that if Corpbank had not gone bankrupt, Mr. Peevskiy would have been able to escape from this debt, which has now been forgiven him? Never!," Vassilev asked rhetorically.

Vassilev said he applauded ACF's interest in the Corpbank case, but it seems it is a little belated. "It is much more important to take a look at what happened to Corpbank's assets after its closure than to look at Peevski's debt. You cannot ignore Vivacom (Bulgaria's largest telecom), which is currently being sold for 1 billion and 300 million euros, and to say that there were no assets in Corpbank. You cannot say that Grisha Ganchev was the owner of CSKA and that he offered Petrol to Georgi Samuilov considering Ganchev did not pay a penny for Petrol to Corpbank. You cannot talk about Avionams, which was bought by the state for only 14 million euros, while at the same time Avionams had assets for more than 30 million euros and had a contract to repair NATO MI-17 for 180 million dollars. You cannot be a dumb witness to how Peevsky is trying to steal Dunarit with the help of the state," the banker exclaimed.

"Why do they keep talking about a Vassilev-Peevski dispute? I have no dispute with Peevski now. Currently, Peevski, with the help of the state, is robbing Corpbank's depositors and, of course, Corpbank's shareholders. This is not covered in any way by the so-called objective media. And I know why. If they acknowledge the real value of the assets that Corpbank practically controlled, they will acknowledge that they lied that Corpbank was a pyramid," the banker emphasized.

“Through the prism of Corpbank, we see the complete disintegration of the Bulgarian state. Now many people have started speaking openly about the dictatorship of the prosecution. However, I warned about this in the summer of 2014,” Vassilev concluded.

What else did Tzvetan Vassilev share with Radosveta Vassileva? [Part II of “Myths and Legends about Corpbank: Radosveta Vassileva asks Tzvetan Vassilev” on Tzvetan Vassilev’s YouTube channel is available here.](#)

In case you missed Part I, [you can find a summary and a link to the YouTube video here.](#)

Biography for the curious ones: Radosveta Vassileva holds PhD in Law from University College London. She has two Master’s degrees in Law (LLMs) — one from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and one from Sciences Po Paris. She holds a BA in International Relations from Tufts University (USA). When she is not focused on her scholarly research, she writes articles for international media or she blogs and vlogs. In 2019, Bulgaria’s Ministry of Finance issued an emergency press release in response to one of her blog posts. The government often engages its royal cohort of journalists to respond to her articles – traditionally with tarnishing materials.