

REDS IN YUGOSLAVIA ATTACK SOFIA TRIAL

Borba, Communist Newspaper, Casts Doubt on Testimony of Two Star Witnesses

PUBLISHES TEXT OF NOTES

Correspondence in 1948 Shows Bulgaria Asked That Ivanov Be Admitted to Macedonia

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Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, March 9—Borba, official newspaper of the Yugoslav Communist party, wrote an unexpected epilogue today to the trial of the fifteen Protestant ministers that ended yesterday in Sofia, by casting grave doubts on the testimony of two of the star witnesses against the defendants.

Borba also published the text of notes exchanged in July and August, 1948, between Bulgarian and Yugoslav Ministries of Foreign Affairs. These disclosed that the Bulgarian Government at that late date sought permission for Yanko Ivanov, head of the Methodist churches of Bulgaria and one of the four principal defendants at the Sofia trial, to enter Yugoslav Macedonia, where his diocese had been extended.

Borba endorsed the Sofia district court's verdict that thirteen of the fifteen pastors had been spies on behalf of the Anglo-American intelligence services. Its ire was aroused, however, by the attempt of star witnesses to link Yugoslavia with the defendants, even in an obscure manner. Borba denounced this attempt as another maneuver by the Communist Information Bureau to discredit Yugoslavia, and then proceeded to impugn witnesses and published the notes exchanged by the Bulgarian and Yugoslav Governments.

The first witness challenged by Borba was Georgi Kulishev, former Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the Bulgarian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. Borba said that Mr. Kulishev's "task was to mention Yugoslavia in his evidence and implicate her in this base affair." Vasil Ziapkov, head of the Congregationalist churches and president of the Supreme Council of the United Protestant Churches of Bulgaria, had called Mr. Kulishev as a witness to testify that he had not divulged the secrets of the delegation to which he had been attached as an expert.

Turned State's Evidence

Mr. Kulishev turned state's evidence on the stand and alleged that Ziapkov had informed members of the United States and British delegations in Paris of the plans of the Slav delegations, according to which Yugoslavia was to ask for reparations from Bulgaria, which she was to renounce later. Mr. Kulishev alleged that the two Western delegations then insisted on even greater reparations from Bulgaria.

Mr. Kulishev let it be understood in his testimony that Ziapkov had some connections with the Yugoslavs that ultimately cost Bulgaria even higher reparations. Borba denounced this testimony as "nonsense" intended to discredit the Yugoslavs.

Borba then attacked the testimony of Kristo Stratev, former secretary of the Agrarian Opposition party who testified against Ziapkov and against Nikola Mihailov, head of the Baptist churches.

Borba said that a "certain Stratev was given the role of saying what he knew in order to prove finally what Yugoslavia was doing." Mr. Stratev alleged in his testimony that Mihailov had told him before the Cominform resolution expelling the Yugoslavs that the "imperialists would penetrate into Yugoslavia," implying he had received direct information on this subject from his contacts among the Americans and the British.

Mentions Exchange of Notes

Borba went on say "The object of this 'evidence' was intended in some way or other to connect Yugoslavia with the imperialists." Borba said that the real truth of this affair was contained in the exchange of notes between the Bulgarian and Yugoslav Governments in connection with the activities of the Evangelical churches in Yugoslav Macedonia.

Borba said: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bulgaria sent a note on July 30, 1948, to the Yugoslav Government in which it requested that on the basis of the decision of the general conference of Evangelical Churches, held in Boston, U. S. A., April 22 to 28, 1948, the Evangelical Church of Macedonia was to be put under supreme supervision of the Evangelical Church of Bulgaria.

"In delivering this note the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended the request of the Bulgarian Evangelical Church, which states, 'In informing you of the extension of the diocese of the chief supervisor of the Evangelical Church of Bulgaria, we have the honor of requesting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give its assistance to the chief supervisor, Pastor Yanko Ivanov, to obtain permission from the Bulgarian and Yugoslav authorities to visit the Evangelical Churches in Macedonia and examine their work, their needs for religious books and arrangements for salaries.'"

Borba said that the Yugoslav Embassy in Sofia replied to the Bulgarian notes in August of 1948, in the following terms: "It would be contrary to the spirit of the Yugoslav Constitution to recognize any kind of supremacy of an international body over Yugoslav citizens when such a decision was taken without the participation and consent of those citizens and the Yugoslav authorities. This principle is fully valid in the case of the decision of the Boston Conference * * * on the question of the religious jurisdiction over Evangelicals in the Federated People's Republic of Yugoslavia."