

CHURCHES ASSAIL 'SPIES,' SOFIA SAYS

**Bulgarian Communist Journal
Quotes Denunciations of 15
Seized Protestant Leaders**

SOFIA, Bulgaria, Feb. 22 (AP)—

The Communist party newspaper *Babotnichesko Delo* quoted various Bulgarian Protestant churches today as denouncing fifteen Protestant churchmen accused of spying for the United States and Britain.

The churchmen are scheduled to go on trial here Friday. The Government has announced it has confessions from some of the accused.

The Communist newspaper published a resolution attributed to the council and board of the Hungarian Congregational Church, which is headed by Vassil Ziapkov, one of the accused. The statement said:

"We are surprised and profoundly shocked by the treacherous activity toward our motherland by a group of Evangelical churchmen, among whom is our pastor. We most energetically condemn this activity. We declare that we stand together with all the Bulgarian people behind our Fatherland Front Government."

The newspaper attributed this statement to the Sofia Baptist churches:

"The fatherland authority and [Communist Premier Georgi] Dimitrov's constitution gave us full religious freedom. We are disgusted and condemn the treacherous activity of our United Church's leaders and pastors."

A declaration attributed to Bishop Krikor of the Armenian Church said:

"Being witnesses of the conspirative activity of some Protestant church leaders, we express our indignation at their treacherous activity toward the Bulgarian people and state."