

THIRD SOFIA PASTOR DECLARES HIS GUILT AS ESPIONAGE LINK

Evangelical Minister Sobs Out Incriminations of Spying Against Communists

DETAILS ACTS YEARS BACK

British and American Officials Are Mentioned—Methodist Leader Ends Statement

By M. S. HANDLER
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SOFIA, Bulgaria, Feb. 26—
The Rev. Vasil Ziapkov, pastor
of the First Evangelical Church in
Sofia and leader of the fifteen
Protestant ministers on trial be-
fore a Sofia District Court on
charges of espionage, pleaded
guilty today to all accusations, in-
cluding the charge that he was a
"link" between British and Ameri-
can intelligence services and a
"spy ring."

The Rev. Mr. Ziapkov broke
down completely toward the end
of his confession and became
hysterical.

In declamatory style, sobbing
and trembling, he said he now re-
alized Bulgaria could survive only
with the support of a strong Soviet
Union and that, although capital-
ism was creative, it destroyed its
own creation. He said he was at
the prisoner's bar because some-
thing was wrong with him.

That, he said, is that he had gone
to study in England twenty-nine
years ago. "Black did the rest," he
added.

[The names of Prof. Floyd
Black and his son Cyril, a former
member of the American section
of the Allied Control Commis-
sion, have been mentioned.]

Confesses Enlightenment

The Rev. Mr. Ziapkov said he
now understood that the reason the
Western countries hated Bulgaria
was because Bulgaria was a "quiet
and happy land," while her south-
ern neighbor, Greece, was torn by
civil war.

"I will never forget when I sat
in my cell and listened to public
demonstrations of the simple Bul-
garian people outside," he said.
"They understood the great deeds
of the Communists and that the
success of socialism is a prelude to
the renovation of religion."

Reaching the climax of his con-
fession the Rev. Mr. Ziapkov ex-
claimed: "Death and resurrection.
Everything that is bad and crim-
inal carries death within it. This
trial, this evolution in me is the re-
turn to life through the state se-
curity police and you. It seems to
me that my father, a shepherd
from Kotel, is calling—come back
you, the prodigal son, to your peo-
ple.

"Your indulgence made a new
man of me. I sinned. I committed
many great crimes in my life as a
result of the Americanism in me
and the sectarianism that took
power over me. Comrades, judges,
what will you do with me—a heap
of dust or a new man—one heap
of dust is of no use to anyone but
a man is."

The Rev. Mr. Ziapkov, whose
education in American and British
colleges was made possible by
American missions, confessed him-
self to be a strong admirer of
the Americans and British.

He is a tall spare man with thin-
ning hair and spectacles. He stood
at the prisoners' bar, facing the
judges, dressed in his gray winter
coat. His confession was frequent-
ly broken by sobs and at times his
voice became uncontrollable.

He took the stand at 3 P. M.

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THIRD SOFIA PASTOR AVOWS HIS GUILT

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after the luncheon recess. The morning session, which began at 8:30 A. M., was taken up by the Rev. Yanko Ivanov, head of the Methodist churches, who required almost four hours to complete the confession he began last night. Altogether, the Rev. Mr. Ivanov's confession lasted six and a half hours.

The Methodist pastor concluded his confession with the same appreciation of the methods of the Bulgarian security police as had been offered by the Rev. Nikola Mihailov, head of the Bulgarian Baptist churches.

The Rev. Mr. Ziapkov, who was the acknowledged leader of the Supreme Council of the United Protestant Churches of Bulgaria, made the following allegations of espionage in his confession. He said he supplied Professor Black of the American college at Semeonovo, Burt Andrews of the British Legation, and Cyril Black with information—in 1926.

He asserted he gave Professor Black a list of pro-American Bulgarians. In 1937, he stated, he gave Professor Black a report on the conditions of workers and their relations with the Government.

He said he joined the British and American services after the liberation of Bulgaria, Sept. 9, 1944, and supplied them with reports from one of the defendants on the production of bolts, nuts and screws, Soviet troop movements to the Turkish frontier, the processing of tobacco in the Plovdiv warehouse, the arrival of Soviet barges at Danube ports, political information about the Fatherland Front, various reports on political, economic and social conditions in Bulgaria and on coastal defenses at Burgas, on the Black Sea, after having bathed on the beach.

Instructions Are Cited

The Rev. Mr. Ziapkov reiterated many times he had received specific instruction from Mr. Andrews, Cyril Black and the latter's successor at the American legation. He said he had received instructions to rally Protestant churches behind Nikola Petkov, Agrarian leader who was subsequently tried and executed.

He alleged he had kept the British and Americans informed at the Paris peace conference of decisions of the Soviet bloc although he himself was a member of the Bulgarian delegation. These included, he added, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's statement at a Ukrainian reception that he would defend Bulgaria's rights, that the Slav delegation would defend Bulgaria's request to be recognized as a co-belligerent and that Yugoslavia had decided to increase her reparations claims against Bulgaria.

He alleged he had sought to obtain American and British intervention against the Bulgarian Communists and related an alleged conversation during the Paris conference with Cavendish Cannon, a member of the United States delegation and the present Ambassador to Yugoslavia. The Rev. Mr. Ziapkov went on in this vein discussing what he described as political missions, political intrigues and "espionage at specific instructions of the Anglo-Americans."

Western observers point out that the new Bulgarian law on state secrets enacted last autumn is all-embracing and retroactive. The published lists of secret information include every conceivable aspect of Bulgarian life with the possible exception of arts. It is sufficient for a Bulgarian to discuss internal conditions and even give the exact address of a garage to be accused of espionage.

Moreover, the law is retroactive. This explains why many of the acts confessed by the Rev. Mr. Ziapkov and others that would appear to be routine conversations are punishable under the law. That is why the Rev. Mr. Ziapkov and other defendants go back more than twenty years to establish their confessions of criminal activity.

Ivanov Conclusion

In his conclusion, which threw a sharp light on why he decided to confess, the Rev. Mr. Ivanov said in part: "When I was arrested, I came face to face for the first time in my life with Communists in power. Their treatment of me, their desire to help me and not force me, was a new experience.

"These people sat next to me to converse with me, to convince me to achieve the understanding that I must open my heart and speak. I want to mention a little incident.

"When I was giving my testimony to a girl I mentioned that I had not eaten any grapes. Immediately she arranged it and grapes were brought to me.

"I told the Communists they made mistakes, but what is good in them is that they always confess their mistakes. I lacked that spirit. I see now in the Communists people who are ready for self-sacrifice, who work twenty-four hours a day not for self-interest, and now I have learned that I am not afraid of the Communists.

"I was convinced of the real feeling of humanity in the Communists. I was on the wrong road. I must declare I am not afraid of you as I was before.

"I must declare that I know you will do everything possible according to the laws of the country to give me the possibility to know the Communists better, to learn about them and to give me the possibility to work for the well-being of our country and our republic of Bulgaria.

Before he was led away, the Rev. Mr. Ivanov was asked by Judge Konstantin Oundjiev: "Were you tortured by the Security Police?"

He replied: "No, neither morally nor physically as I have explained before."