

ITEM NO. 8075/53

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION
READ AND DESTROY

AH
 4 Aug
 VII/864

BULGARIA

FOREIGN RELATIONS (1500)
Diplomatic Services (1502)

EXILE
Organizations Abroad (1202)
Emigrants (1204)

Curiosity Of The Bulgarian Consul
In MILAN.

SOURCE TRIESTE: Bulgarian in exile in contact with high Bulgarian political and commercial circles.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: current period

EVAL. COMMENT: The Bulgarian Consul in MILAN is GANTOV, former employe of the Bulgarian Legation in ROME, who replaced MOTOVILKOV in February 1953. All persons under reference are known to this office.

* * *

The following is a summary of the main arguments of our talks with the Bulgarian Consul in MILAN and of the subjects in which he appeared to be most interested. One of these arguments was Bulgaria's failure to take part in the MILAN Fair (at the moment of subject of great interest.) Although he talked calmly about this matter, the Consul could not conceal his disappointment in the Italian Government's measures adopted on that occasion, especially after "MICALUDI had been released." Later, however, it became more and more obvious (this will be explained more thoroughly) that MICALUDI was not released in view of the insistent requests of the Italian Government (in that case Bulgaria would have been permitted to take part in the fair) but that he was "sent" with special "tasks."

The "other world" exhibition formed another subject of our talks. Naturally, the Consul sides with the affirmations expressed at that time by the "Unita" with regard to those three photographs allegedly shot in ROME showing three examples of social classes. As known, the views of the "Unita" were published in the "Rabotnichesko Delo." The

over

Consul told me that he had visited the exhibition in MILAN and that he also listened to the record of the voice of Lazar MEVORAH when he talked about his first impressions upon reaching Italy. Here the Consul did not fail to point out the many and great results achieved by Bulgarian industry, the excellent living conditions in present-day Bulgaria, welfare granted to the worker etc. etc.

At that time the electoral campaign in Italy had reached its last stages. The Consul asked various questions about the different social classes of the Italian population, the influence of the priests, the strength of religion, the distribution of the lands, the characteristic production of the various Italian regions and so forth.

But I immediately realized that there was one question of foremost interest to the Consul, i.e., that of the "Bulgarian refugee" in MILAN. The "Maestro" carefully avoided causing any of them any harm, and on the contrary tried to "pour oil on the waters" especially with regard to the "representations" stressed in the famous circular letter. It was strange that the MILAN Consul (like Stoiko IVANKO in ROME about a year and a half ago, as well other Bulgarians "sent" directly from Bulgaria,) had an almost morbid interest in MANDRAGIEV. The probable reason for this interest is that the police authorities in SOFIA appear to consider him a representative of Ivan BAREV's "sub-committee" in MILAN. The Consul was, of course, greatly interested in the ROME "sub-committee." He wanted to know on what the various members of the committee are living, where they get the news published in the two papers (one edited in WASHINGTON, the other one in ROME in Italian,) who writes for these papers, if the names of the writers are written out or only with the initials, or if pseudonyms are used; if the papers are sold at the news-paper stands, whether they are read by the Italians, whether they are written in good Italian, etc. He was also interested in Father GAGOV and his organization. But on the whole, we can say that the Consul appears to be very much in the dark with regard to all these questions. He was most eager to get some news about them, naturally, for the purpose of compiling a detailed report to be sent to the competent authorities.

One evening, at 7 o'clock, I accompanied him to the doctor after our usual lesson. While on our way, we were talking about a subject that interested him so greatly that he gave up his appointment for an injection and we walked until 10 o'clock that night. We were talking about refugees, their possible return to Bulgaria, at least in some cases: the possible issue of regular passports to Bulgarian subjects, the manner in which to convince the Bulgarian citizens of the "excellent living conditions in their country," how to make them believe that the Bulgarian government has no intention to use any measures against them, of the Italian Government's behaviour with regard to refugees and those persons who are in possession of regular passports. On this occasion the "Maestro" used all his influence to make the Consul understand that the refugees were scared by a "false propaganda" regarding the internal situation in Bulgaria, and that he himself would probably reject a regular passport being afraid of possible reprisals on the part of the Italian authorities. In other words, the "Maestro" did his best to convince the Consul that the refugees are the victims of circumstances forcing them to act as they do. The Consul told me that so far nobody had presented himself to the MILAN Consulate, and probably neither to that in ROME, in order to apply for repatriation. The Consul then spoke about the plan to publish a kind of news bulletin on Bulgaria. He suggested to the "Maestro," to translate the whole of BOTEV and a good part of SMIRNEVSKI. As we already noticed in other cases and with other people, this represents the second step in their usual tactics.

At that time, i.e. the beginning of June, the commercial delegation was due to arrive (it is now still here) for negotiations between Italy and Bulgaria. He asked about hotels and decided to lodge the delegates at the "Rosa" Hotel. During that period, the Consul appeared to be very eager to learn something about Italian or Bulgarian persons or firms who had, or still have, commercial contacts with Bulgaria or who might open such contacts. I understood that he was trying to find a firm or a businessman who might be able to export that material to Bulgaria which the "wicked American reaction" had forbidden to be exported. We talked about KALINGIV, MEREGIDEL, MEVORAH

(now he was no longer that dubious individual who had talked badly of his country of origin,) I.T. BALANOV, BERTOLOTTI and many others. It was obvious that he was preparing the way for the delegation, and that he probably wanted to show his fellow countrymen how well informed he is also in the commercial field. Moreover he was interested in our imports from Germany and wanted to know whether the goods imported to Italy remain in the country or whether they are "re-exported" else-where, and if so, to where. Since the delegation arrived in Italy, we have not have much time to meet again (only intervals when the delegation left and returned to MILAN) but nevertheless the Consul continues to be interested in commercial matters. Probably he wants this delegation to report on the excellent preparation of the Bulgarian MILAN Consul. Or maybe he simply wants to give them some information. Except for KOBAKOV, the various members gave the impression (we can state this quite frankly and without being partial) of being capable of anything but carrying on commercial negotiations. During our short talks, we had the impression that they are poor officials who were given orders but are quite incapable of acting on their own initiative.

End.

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION
READ AND DESTROY.