

The General intelligence Department of the Red Army in Bulgaria for the German Attack on the Soviet Union

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The General Intelligence Department of the Red Army In Bulgaria For the German Attack Onr the Soviet Union; The present statement enlightens the created network in Bulgaria by the General Intelligence Department of the Red Army. The information of its agents for the prepared aggression against Soviet Union by fascist Germany during the summer of 1941 is also analyzed

Key words: The General Intelligence Department, residency, agents.

INTRODUCTION

The fire of World War II started with the aggression of Germany against Poland on 1st September 1939. An impressive military confrontation between the three centers of forces - English-French block, German and Soviet unions was outlined in Europe. Bulgaria and the Balkans still stayed away from the theatre of warfare till the end of 1940. The military machine of Wehrmacht directed westwards and France capitulated on 22nd June. In the beginning of the autumn the same year, taking the advantage of new international political situation, Bulgarian diplomacy achieved its biggest success of peaceful revision of the Treaty of Neuilly and solved the return of South Dobrogea to the mother country.

EXPOSITION

At the end of September 1940 the attack of Italy to Greece transferred the heat of war to the Balkans. The clouds of war also gathered over our country. On 1st February 1941 the convention Noybahaer, this provided that the support of German army in Bulgarian territory would be for German expense, was signed in Romania [9, p. 291-292]. On the next day the military protocol between Bulgarian headquarters and German high command was signed. This protocol assured Bulgarian army wouldn't be engaged in military actions together with Wehrmacht and Germans were committed to defend Bulgaria from "eventual counterattacks" by neighbours, Great Britain or Soviet Union. New similar agreement was signed on 15th February. According to it both armies of Bulgaria and Germany saved their independent self-management until the neighbours started eventual hostilities. In the case of neighbours' hostilities both armies would be ruled by the headquarters of field marshal List. Bulgarian army didn't intend to attack Turkey and Greece but if our country took decision of preventive actions, Bulgaria should ask Germany what to do [9, p. 292]. English intelligence got information that German specialist with aim to prepare the invasion of Wehrmacht in Bulgarian territory had been already settled in our country. Up to English sources there were around 4000 German "specialists" in Bulgaria. On 9th February 1941 Churchill delivered a speech on radio London in which he made analytical overview of Balkan situation and declared the following: "I think that now Bulgaria is going to make the same mistake. If this happens, Bulgarian peasantry, Bulgarian nation who has the great respect not only from England but from USA will be pressured for third time for 30 years to participate in an unnecessary and disastrous war." [8, p. 112].

Last attempt to change the foreign policy orientation of the country made the legal opposition. The leaders of it sent a letter to the king on February 1941 with which they insisted of audience with the monarch but Boris III declined with the pretext that they wanted a meeting as leaders of parties which didn't legally existed [2, p. 53].

On the night of 21st to 22nd February the police tried to arrest the leader of BANU "Pladne" G.M. Dimitrov who had been accused of conspiracy inspired by English intelligence. Dimitrov succeeded to escape from the police and after several days of hiding in a chest he was sent by a trunk as a diplomatic luggage of English legation to Istanbul and in this way he saved himself [9, p. 114].

Connection of Bulgaria with the German military machine prolonged with an accelerated pace. Up to 21st February 1941 277 German soldiers from a wrecking division "Brandenburg", disguised in Bulgarian military uniforms, guarded 24 strategic objects in the country in order to guarantee the passing German army against eventual sabotage actions. On 26th and 27th February German radiomen were situated in the "air-alarm service" on the southern border [11, p. 292]. And on 1st March the Prime Minister B. Filov signed the Tripartite Pact in Vienna and Bulgaria joined the countries from the Axis [13, p. 254-355].

After this act Great Britain decided to suspend diplomatic relations with Bulgarian government. Bulgaria stopped diplomatic relations with Poland, Belgium and The Netherlands. Distinct pro-German line of Bulgarian state leadership also provoked retaliation from American side. On 3rd March 1941 President Roosevelt blocked Bulgarian assets in American banks [10, p. 460].

On the opposite side German pressure against Bulgaria increased. On 8th April Ribbentrop pressed the minister plenipotentiary in Berlin Draganov that 3 Bulgarian divisions would occupy Vardar [13, p. 290]. The Balkans was already in the centre of the military fire. On 17th April Wehrmacht realized the plan "Marita" and Yugoslavia signed unconditional surrender. Athens fell on 27th April. On 1st June the Germans also conquered Crete and in this way the occupation of Greece ended [11, p. 400].

After German invasion in the Balkans the existing situation of the region was favourable for Bulgarian aspirations for national unity. The entering of Bulgarian army in Macedonia began on 19th April. The convention Claudius - Popov was signed on 24th April 1941. It enabled Bulgaria to administrate the so called "new lands" [11, p. 396]. And on 8th May Sofia was informed that the Reich had allowed Bulgaria to undertake administrative Thrace including Thassos and Samothrace [12, p. 57]. Boris III became "the king unifier" and the ruling circles in the country were euphoric of bloodless realization of the national ideal. However World War II was already in an initial phase and yet the big German clash with Soviet Union was oncoming. Although the non-aggression pact Ribbentrop – Molotov from August 1939 between the two forces, the suspicion between them increased. As a result the activities of their intelligence services intensified. Bulgaria as a German ally became an object of intelligence activity of the General Intelligence Department (GID) of the Red Army.

The legal residency of the General Intelligence Department (GID) in Bulgaria was managed by the assistant military attaché in Sofia major L. P. Sereda ("Zeus"). He had at his disposal not so bad agents represented by Y. Berberov – "Margarit", T. Berberov – "Belvedere", D. Georgiev – "Yugo" and so on. Sereda sent detailed reports to the Centre on the eve of the German attack on the Soviet Union. [5, p. 219].

It was announced in the first report that Yugo had received precious information by metropolitan Stefan who on 25th April 1941 had talked with a German general in Kyustendil. [5, p. 220]. Sofia metropolitan Stefan – a consistent Russophile and Slavophil - also gave information. He participated actively in the rescue of Bulgarian Jews in 1943. He was elected for a Bulgarian exarch in 21st January 1945. He resigned on 6th September 1948 because he disagreed openly with the policy of the Communist rule of People's Republic Bulgaria to the Christian church. He was interned in village Banya, Karlovo's, where he died in 1957 [1, p. 212-231; 7, p. 5 and the following].

The information, which metropolitan Stefan had given, regarded to the following: taking the advantage of the euphoric mood of the army and inside the country, the Germans prepared an attack against the Soviet Union, the officers of the army of field marshal List, situated on the Balkans and those, who knew Russian, were recalled from Berlin for special training and after that they were going to be sent to the border with the Soviet Union. It also was provided white guards knowing Ukraine to be sent for their help; German intelligence in Soviet Union worked at full speed and gave abundant information

for all questions which German military intelligence was interested; Germany wouldn't permit signing a contract between Turkey and the Soviet Union [14, p. 121].

On 9th May 1941 major Sereda sent a message to the Centre which he had received by Margarite the previous day by the majors and the message was that German troops had been sent officially to West Macedonia passing through Turkey. It was also outlined in the message that 60 German divisions had been concentrated on the Soviet-Polish border. Unambiguously it pointed that Germany had been preparing to start military actions against the Soviet Union during the summer of 1941 until harvesting. It was expected to start incidents on Polish-Soviet border at the latest two months. The German strike would be at the same time to the territory of Poland, on the sea against Odessa and from Turkey to Baku. The vedette and submarines of German fleet had been concentrated on the Danube. [14, p. 179].

Sereda had received the data for the location of the German forces in Turkey also by Boevoj. Boevoj was in fact Bulgarian citizen, the Soviet intelligence, Alexander Peev, who from 1941 till April 1943 was the leader of the illegal group which had performed assignments from the Soviet general intelligence department. He was sentenced to death on 22nd November 1943 [6, p. 232]. However Sereda thought that only the information for the movement of the German troops to Turkey had been true and he was not sure for the other part of the information's authenticity and it could be difficult to check it [14, p. 179].

Sereda sent a coded program to the commander of the Intelligence management in the General Staff of the Red Army on 14th May 1941 in which he had given information received by Belvedere on 12th May. This information had claimed that there had been a meeting between King Boris III and field marshal Brauhich in Thessaloniki in the first days of May. There had been discussed the behavior of Bulgaria in case of starting a military conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union. The activities of fortification of the Black Sea coast and the necessity of sending aids to Finland were also discussed. Belvedere hadn't received the details of Bulgarian position to the future Soviet-German conflict. The activities of fortification of the Black Sea coast had been predicted to begin at the end of May. And Bulgaria would help Finland by giving all Russian rifles in the country. [5, p.221].

It became clear from the same information that 42 infantry division deployed in Shtip would be relocated in Dedeagach. The moto division with the identification marks "goat head", situated in the region of Dragoman and Pernik, received the order to deploy itself in Romania on the border with the Soviet Union. Belvedere confirmed that there were German military troops in Turkey. He supposed that minimum 3-4 divisions were in Turkey on the way to Syria. Belvedere was 30 km away from the Greek-Turkish border in the region of Dedeagach and he himself was observing the movement of large German troops to Turkish border during three days. Sereda didn't insist on the authenticity of the given information but he thought that the most credible information was the movement of German troops to Turkey because he had received the same evidence by another source. His neighbour, a resident of intelligence network, separately received the same information by his own source. [5, p. 198].

In spite of the legal residency of the General Intelligence Department there were illegal residencies of the military Soviet exploration in Bulgaria which were managed by Al. Peev ("Boevoj") and P. Shatev ("Kosta"). Pavel Potsev Shatev had taken part in Thessaloniki bombings of the "gemidzhiite" in 1903. He had been captured and sentenced to death. Later the sentence had been changed in a perpetual exile. He had been amnestied in 1908 after the Young Turk revolution. He worked as an intelligencer of the Comintern in Vienna in 1923. He helped the Soviet intelligence during World War II. He was arrested and sentenced to death again in 1942 but afterwards his death warrant was replaced with 15 years in prison. He became free after 9th September 1944. He became a member of the Macedonian science institute in 1945. He was elected the same year for the attorney general in the first Macedonian government. He was demoted after the exacerbation of the relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948. In 1949

he was arrested as “a potential enemy of the country” and was eliminated from the politics. He stayed in prison 11 months in Skopje and then he was interned in Bitola. He was found dead in Bitola landfill in 30th January 1951 [3, c. 235; 4, p. 729-730]. The information of P. Shatev and Al. Peev was very interesting and unambiguously hinted for the movement of the German army to the Soviet borders.

It was outlined in the notification of P. Shatev from Sofia from 15th May 1941 to the Head of the Intelligence Department of the General staff of the Red Army that the infantry, vehicle and motorcycle troops of 12th German army had been transferred by the rail from Greece across Sofia to Romania. The prepared rail documents by the border authorities in Dobrugea showed that these troops had planned to go to Germany but in fact they directed to Romania. Shatev claimed that according to the information received by the commandant of Stara Zagora new German troops were expected to arrive there. And on 20th May Bulgarian military troops would go to Greece as occupation troops. Bulgarian soldiers who had spent 15 days leave were called in the army from 10th May. [5, p. 211].

It was described a broader picture of the concentration of the Wehrmacht troops on the northeast in the notice of Peev from Sofia from 27th May 1941. According to his information German divisions, artillery and accoutrements constantly moved from Bulgaria into Romania towards to the Soviet border by the pontoon bridge and the ferry of Rousse, by the pontoon bridge of Nikopol and by the barges in the region of Vidin. [5, p. 221].

CONCLUSION

It becomes clear from the exposition that the orientation of Bulgaria at the beginning of World War II towards the forces of the Axis activated the Soviet intelligence in the country. Here the General Intelligence Department of the Red Army had a reliable intelligence network which gave authoritative information for the movement of the armies of Wehrmacht in the Balkans and respectively the direction of big military German troops towards the Soviet border. General Intelligence Department received such information also by the residency of the other East European countries. On the other side is the question what kind of preventive measures the Soviet country government took for stopping the future German attack.

Notes

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The paper is reviewed.