

January 20, 1945

**Record of Conversation of Deputy Political
Counselor of the Allied Control Commission in
Bulgaria K. D. Levychkin with Public Judge Shulev
about the Progress of the Court Trial of War
Criminals**

Citation:

"Record of Conversation of Deputy Political Counselor of the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria K. D. Levychkin with Public Judge Shulev about the Progress of the Court Trial of War Criminals", January 20, 1945, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation, fond 074, op 34, p 115, d 10, ll 47-48. Document No. 40 in Vostochnaia Evropa, edited by G.P. Murashko, et al, vol. 1. Translated for CWIHP by Svetlana Savranskaya. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/118443>

Summary:

Bulgarian Judge Shulev asks for the Soviet position regarding the pending verdict in the war crimes trials of Bulgaria's WWII leaders. Levychkin refused to influence the verdict, saying it was not within the Allied Control Commission's authority.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of Conversation of Deputy Political Counselor of the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria K. D. Levychkin with Public Judge Shulev about the Progress of the Court Trial of War Criminals[1]

Sofia

January 20, 1945

SECRET

On January 20, I received Public Judge SHULEV of the first court trial in Sofia on his request. Before we began our substantive conversation, Shulev informed me that he visited Russia in 1918, likes Russia and its people, had always been a Russofile and a proponent of closest possible relations between Bulgaria and the USSR. Then Shulev said that even though he was not organizationally connected with the workers' party, he was a Communist in his ideas.

Shulev stated that he came in order to find out what was the Russians' position regarding the pending verdict in the war criminals case. (We were speaking about the regents, Czar's advisers and Ministers-defendants in the first trial in Sofia). Shulev informed me that there were differences between representatives of different political parties in the court organs regarding the essence of the pending verdict. Therefore, he would like to know the opinion of the Soviet delegation in order to stand by that opinion in the court.

I told Shulev that that question was not within the authority of the Allied Control Commission. The court organs have everything they need to make a just decision in the war criminals case. The Judges have concrete materials on the activities of the criminals, know the extent of their crimes against the Bulgarian people, and the United Nations, they know the mood of the Bulgarian people. Finally, the court organs themselves are public organs. That is quite sufficient to avoid a mistake in the court's decision.

Shulev stated that the popular mood was unpredictable. The people do not know all the details of court trials. For example, even the Russians think that Bagrianov is guiltier than Muraviev[2], but the court trial gave just the opposite results. Moreover, Shulev said that Bulgaria did not have an independent policy. Its policy was always determined by the USSR policy. That is why they cannot make a decision on their own, and would like to know our opinion regarding the essence of the verdict.

I reiterated my opinion once again.[3] Shulev left unsatisfied.

By the way, there is information that court officials from the farmers' party approached the British and the Americans with similar questions.

K. LEVYCHKIN

[1]. The record of conversation was distributed to V. Molotov, A. Vyshinsky, and to the files

[2]. I. Bagrianov. and K. Muraviev led the last two Bulgarian governments (June 1-September 2,1944, and September 4-9,1944)

[3]. This Levychkin's position reflected the principal position of the Soviet leadership of non-interference of the Allied Control Commission in the work of public courts.

Nonetheless some attempts of Soviet representatives to influence the length of prison sentences of some defendants did take place. In this connection, on January 13, 1945, head of the IV European Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs V. Zorin and his assistant A. Abramov wrote a memorandum for A. Vyshinsky and V. Dekanozov about the work of the Allied Control commission in Bulgaria, in which they denounced such cases.