

THE BULGARIAN PRESIDENT PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FORMER SECRET SERVICES

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Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov admits to having worked for the repressive secret services of the Communist regime.

Chronology of the scandal about President Georgi Parvanov's past

Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov used to be a secret collaborator of the communist State Security, announced former secret service officer Tsvyatko Tsvetkov two days ago. Having recruited Parvanov himself, the officer used to supervise "Agent Gotse" – the present Bulgarian head of state Georgi Parvanov.

Tsvyatko Tsvetkov is a retired officer from First Main Department of State Security (the foreign intelligence of the totalitarian regime) – the so-called Darjavna Sigurnost, which used to serve the interests of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the USSR up to 1989.

There is a file under the name of "Agent Gotse" in the archives of the National Intelligence Service as well. "It contains nothing but information about me – not a single line, not a single character written or typed by me", confessed President Georgi Parvanov.

The confession was made after nearly two months of pressure by the opposition and the media for President Georgi Parvanov to answer the question whether he has been a collaborator of the communist State Security under the name of "Agent Gotse". President Parvanov, who is about to run for a second presidential mandate this autumn, was forced to provide his own version regarding his collaboration to State Security, as follows: "The file reflects my work as a scientific consultant and editor of the memoirs of an eminent Bulgarian emigrant."

The fact is that the secret services of the communist regime used to actively follow and persecute emigrants in the West, where liquidation of opponents of the communist regime was common practice.

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"Even if I was aware of the fact that the Bulgarian intelligence was involved in the preparation and issue of this book, I would still have done it", declared President Parvanov.

"I knew as early as in 1997 that nowadays President Georgi Parvanov and leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party back then has a dossier under the name of "Agent Gotse", confirmed former Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Kostov in relation to the scandal.

Back in 1989, when the totalitarian regime of the communist leader Todor Zhivkov was toppled down, the Bulgarian Communist Party took the decision to get rid of some dossiers maintained by State Security out of fear of outrage and vengeance. The dossiers of the major agents were hence destroyed, even though there are claims by some experts that the files were filmed and preserved.

The scandal in Bulgaria prompted the media to look for examples from the EU10. It turned out that all of them have declassified the dossiers of their former secret services. On the same day that President Parvanov admitted to his collaboration to State Security, a minister was dismissed in Poland for having worked for the communist secret police.

Surveys show that Bulgarian society is getting more and more adamant about the opening of all dossiers.

The fate of the presidential file

After 10 November 1989, inevitable changes occurred in State Security. Officer Tsvyatko Tsvetkov, who recruited young historian Georgi Parvanov to collaborate to the Bulgarian Foreign Intelligence, resigned. The case of Secret Agent Gotse was archived. The case is so insignificant in the time of panic destruction of dossiers that no one ever bothered to destroy it as well.

1994. Georgi Parvanov – member of the leadership of the Bulgarian Socialist party

In 1994 Georgi Parvanov was elected deputy chairman of the Bulgarian Socialist Party. This same year he also became MP in the 37th National Assembly. That is when the Agent Gotse file is taken out of the archive and moved to the safe of the director of the National Intelligence Service, where it is kept along with the dossiers of other public figures who used to collaborate to the intelligence. In 1997, the file and several other dossiers were passed on to the following director of the Intelligence Service. Upon assumption of his office, the present head of the service, General Kircho Kirov issues a well-grounded exclusive report to President Georgi Parvanov claiming that the dossiers of public figures have been digitally copied by the former management of the service and moved from their previous premises.

1997-2001. Three documents

"In Agent Gotse's file, there were two reports produced by the agent of the First Main Department of State Security (the foreign intelligence). And there was also a denunciation signed by Georgi Parvanov", says Metodi Andreev, former chairman of the Committee for Access to Documents of the Former State Security. In his words, the intelligence officer describes in his first report the first meeting he had with young Parvanov. By that time the future head of state worked in the Institute of History of the Communist Party. The recruiter did not disclose, at that first meeting, the fact that he is an intelligence officer. He demanded Parvanov for his "cooperation and assistance" as a historian for "the composition of a scientific work". In his second report, the intelligence officer reports that he has held a second meeting with his recruit. During this second meeting, the officer already reveals the essence of the matter and discloses to Parvanov that he is working for the First Main Department of State Security (the foreign intelligence). Then, the officer expresses gratitude to Parvanov "for the great job he has done" and offers

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to him to continue his collaboration with their institution. The officer claims that Parvanov has agreed for the intelligence to further use his services. In the file, he says, there was an invoice for a payment made by the intelligence to Parvanov for his first task. This file contained also another interesting document – namely, a text on the Macedonian topic, typed on a typewriter, Metodi Andreev says. In his words, the officer has stated in his written report to his superiors, that “Parvanov accepts to collaborate with the State Security out of patriotic motives, on patriotic grounds”.

The Bonev Committee – “The President didn’t seem worried”

A major issue in this affair is, why did the scandal with so-called Agent Gotze, namely the secret affiliations of present president Parvanov, appear so late, in 2006; why wasn’t this revealed earlier? The answer is given by Bogomil Bonev – former interior minister in the reformist government of Ivan Kostov, and also former chairman, in 1997, of the Committee for Opening the Files of the Former State Security. Bonev comments that Parvanov was invited into the Committee, once his file was discovered. “We were letting all people concerned to read their own files. Parvanov also read his file”, Bonev remembers. In his words, Parvanov – who at that time was leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, did not at all deny his collaboration with First Main Department of State Security. “But Parvanov did not seem worried at all, neither shame-faced; he did not even try to whitewash, or something”, Bonev adds.

2001. The Andreev Committee

The other issue of major importance concerning the file of Agent Gotze is, whether the file itself has been cleaned up, or not, and by whom. Metodi Andreev, former chairman of the Committee for Access to Documents of the Former State Security comments: “This was a file full of documents attached with paper-clamps. These were the reports of the intelligence agents. The papers were not organized into a whole unit, no archive numbers were given. But I can assure you that these reports were authentic reports of the former secret police.” The fact that all these mysterious pages were not enumerated means that it could have been very easy for someone to extract certain most discrediting pages, experts say. If the files concerning the present president’s activity were purged, this must have happened in 1990. It is guaranteed that the files were kept fully intact in the period after 1997, but it remains unclear whether they have been touched in the period 1994-1996.

The majority of the reformist politicians and the democratic opinion-makers in society are unanimous – after president Parvanov acknowledged publicly about his involvement with the former secret police of the Communist regime, he can no more represent the national unification, ergo – he can no more be on the top position of a NATO-member state such as Bulgaria which is also at the EU doorstep. The opposition party Democrats for Strong Bulgaria endorsed in parliament a proposal to create a temporary parliamentary investigation committee; its task being to investigate and clarify the circumstances on president Parvanov’s belonging and affiliations with the Communist intelligence secret

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services. This issue, according to the party, must be clarified before the next presidential elections due to take place in autumn.

Recent polls show:

The public trust in president Georgi Parvanov has decreased with 10 points within the next month – since the scandal of his belonging to the secret Communist police took first appeared. According to sociologists, the so-called Gotze File ruins Pervanov's own public image.

And other poll results:

- 55% of the Bulgarians think that: opening the former intelligence files will not be to the detriment of the state security; 19% believe that the files should not be opened.
- 56% of the Bulgarians think that: opening the files will affect a lot of high-ranking politicians.
- 62% of the Bulgarians think that: the former Communist secret services have the biggest influence among the political parties.