

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Yugoslavia  
SUBJECT Review of Events Leading to Election of New Serb Patriarch

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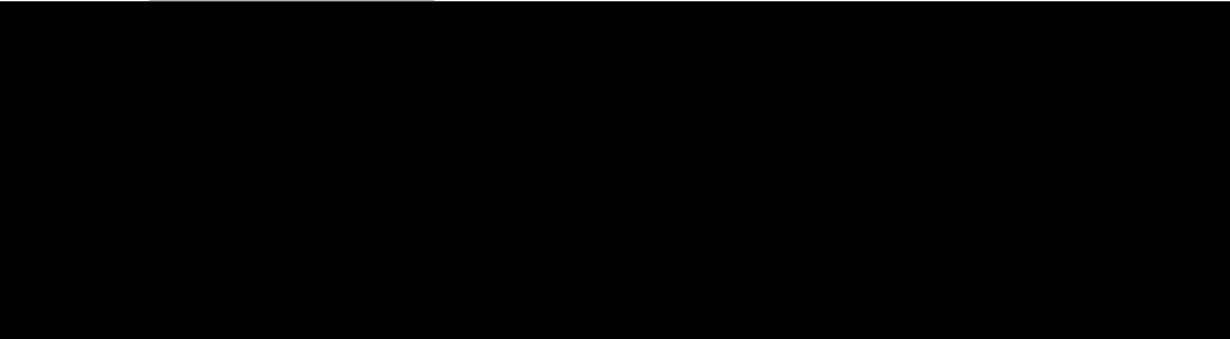
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- The First Election: The election of a new Serb Patriarch was originally scheduled for 10 June 1950; however, because an electoral quorum was not present at the time, the election could not be held. The Government, through various devices, hindered the travel of many of the members of the electoral council to Belgrade and prevented their arrival in time for the scheduled election.
- At this first meeting of the electoral council, Bishop Vikentije Prodanov did not enter into consideration as a candidate for Patriarch and was not being supported as such by any group. The main reason for this was that in earlier discussions among the clergy, Archbishop Josif Cvijic had opposed the recommendation of Prodanov as candidate.
- The Holy Synod allegedly had the intention of proposing as candidate the Archbishop of Mostar, Nektarija Krulja. However, the Government made known its dissatisfaction with Krulja and threatened to make trouble for the Church if he were appointed. As a result, Bishop Georgije Zubkovic allegedly defeated the proposal to appoint Krulja as a candidate of the Holy Synod.
- This attempt to appoint Krulja having failed, the Holy Synod took the stand that a Patriarch should not be appointed but the Holy Synod should take over the responsibilities of administering the Church. Meanwhile, the Commission for Religion decisively announced its opposition to these proposals to the Presidency of the Yugoslav Government and declared that the proposals were not in line with the 1947 Constitution of the Serb Church as drawn up by the Holy Synod after the separation of the Church and State. It was then decided that a new date would be set for the selection of a candidate for Patriarch.
- The Second Election: In order to be sure of the success of its plans to weaken the strength of the bishops, the Government interned Archbishop Josif Cvijic in the Zic monastery. This action was a blow to all bishops who, at least temporarily, were filled with consternation.
- Bishop Vikentije Prodanov, following the failure to elect a Patriarch at the first scheduled elections, announced to all bishops and archbishops that he did not want to be considered for the Patriarch candidacy.

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7. At the second election of 30 June, there were three candidates: the bishop of Zletovo-Struma, Vikentije Prodanov, who received 34 votes; the archbishop of Zagreb, Damaskin Grdanacki, who received 2 votes; and the archbishop of Crna Gora, Arsenije Bradvarevic, who received 25 votes.
8. Bishop Vikentije Prodanov was one of the regime's candidates. His election to Patriarch met with the displeasure of the Church and of Serb political circles. Prodanov is usually referred to in unflattering terms and it is the opinion of many Serbs that he will serve the wishes of the Communist regime.\*
9. Action taken and contemplated by Patriarch Prodanov as of 6 August 1950: Archbishop Josif Cvijic has been relieved of all responsibilities in the administration of the bishopric of Zic and, furthermore, he is not recognized by the archbishop of Skoplje. Cvijic, who is called the churchman most rabid in opposing the Communist Government, now has been effectively neutralized by the regime.
10. In the very near future, the Patriarch intends to send Bishop Vladimir Rajic to Skoplje. Rajic, the bishop of Prizren, is also the administrator of the bishopric in Skoplje and his ideas coincide with those of Patriarch Prodanov. The purpose of Rajic's proposed visit to Skoplje is to come to some agreement with the Church and political circles on the question of a Macedonian Church.
11. The clergy in Macedonia have united and formed the Brotherhood of Orthodox Clergymen in Macedonia, and it will be the objective of this group to have three Macedonian monks elevated to the rank of bishop who, with the Macedonian Church Council, will elect a Macedonian archbishop. This would be the first step in separating the Macedonian Church from the Serbian Orthodox Church and the establishment of an independent Macedonian Orthodox Church.
12. On 3 July, on the occasion of the visit of the board of directors or supreme committee of the Brotherhood of Orthodox Clergymen to Patriarch Prodanov, Reverend Milan Smiljanic requested of the Patriarch that the Macedonian Church question of a free and independent Macedonian Church be given prompt attention.
13. It is expected that, in a very short time, Patriarch Prodanov will decide to hold elections to appoint new bishops to replace Bishop Irineja Djordjevic and Bishop Nikola Velimirovic, both of whom have emigrated. The Tito regime had brought pressure to bear on the deceased Patriarch Gavrilko to replace the above two bishops but Gavrilko refused to do so.
14. It is also intended to appoint a new bishop to Banja Luka to take the place of Bishop Varnave Nastica, who is now imprisoned in Zenica.
15. The election of Patriarch Prodanov, in source's opinion, will certainly provoke clashes in the Serb Church and will end in a split within the Church.

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Comment: From all indications, Patriarch Prodanov will cooperate with the regime but he will meet with the opposition of the Holy Synod. The Patriarch's sympathies are clear from the following examples:

- a. On 2 July, immediately following his election to Patriarch, he made a statement to Tanjug in which he promised to take action on three major problems and solve them to the satisfaction of the regime.
- b. Following his election, the Patriarch visited the President of the Presidium of the FNRJ. On the following day, 6 July, he visited the President of the Serbian Presidium and also the President of the Serbian Government. These courtesy calls are not in line with the practice of the Serb Church.
- c. On 3 July, he gave audience to the leaders of the Union of Orthodox Clergymen, a brotherhood of pro-partisan clergymen which the Holy Synod has refused to recognize. The Union, in its newspaper, now praises the new Patriarch.