



Bulgarian Pastors called "dirty-crying cowards" and "squealing little rats" by communist newsmen at recent trials held in Sofia, the ministers had "confessed" to charges of espionage for the United States and Great Britain but were ridiculed by the commie press.

NO SIGNS OF DRUGGING

Why Defendants Confess So Readily in Red Trials

(Editor's Note: Richard Kasischke covered the Sofia trial of 15 Bulgarian Protestant pastors and here gives his impressions of why defendants in Communist trials confess so readily.)

By RICHARD KASISCHKE

Berlin (AP)—What makes defendants confess so objectively and volubly in those trials staged by the Russians and their eastern European Communist satellites?

Nobody can say for sure except the secret police who obtain the confessions and the defendants—such as remain alive. But the police won't talk and the defendants are not approachable or can't talk freely.

But at least a corner of the dark veil was lifted at the most recent of these trials—at Sofia, where 15 Bulgarian Protestant pastors were tried on charges of espionage for the United States and Great Britain and other offenses.

The observations of this reporter and other western observers admitted to this trial appeared to rule out such theories as drugging and hypnotism.

The more logical explanation appeared to be a combination of (1) duress, involving threats of reprisal against the defendants' families; (2) a wearing inquisition and (3) persuasion—a subtle injection of Communism.

In the 13 years since the Moscow trials of 1936-38 many an anti-Communist victim has stood up publicly to denounce himself as "vile" and "rotten" and "heinous." Many a man has called himself a once-benighted soul who now sees "Communism in its true light." He has only one wish—to "be spared my life and a chance to help in construction of the socialist state."

The peep behind the "confessions" curtain afforded western observers at the seven-day Sofia trial was limited. They could not speak in jail or in court but they could see them daily on the court floor below and they did not look drugged or hypnotized.

But Communist governments can also throw a terrific fright.

tors' depositions at what they called a "preliminary inquest before the judge of instruction." This is a sort of pre-trial.

Under the Napoleonic code a defendant is presumed guilty until he proves himself innocent. In the U. S. and Britain he is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

The Communists take this at least one step further. They arrest a political opponent, put the screws on him in confinement to get a "confession." So when he appears at public trial—if that is granted him—he has only one chance. That is to plead extenuating circumstances and beg to get off with less than the maximum sentence. A position of full repentance helps, he is told.

not used on them. The Sofia defendants all reacted in court in apparently normal manner.

Besides duress there is "persuasion" to make defendants talk. Some of the Sofia pastors talked so much they got their stories mixed—claiming to have conferred with U. S. and British representatives who weren't in Bulgaria on the dates mentioned.

Correspondents got to only one defendant after the verdict. He was the Rev. Angel Dimov, 40-year-old Pentecostal pastor released on probation after getting only a light sentence for allegedly spreading anti-government rumors. Dimov returned home from court a free man and said:

"I was questioned for two months before I made my final statement" (in the police pre-trial). "I was told in the beginning that I would get a light sentence if I confessed. I got better food and a softer bed after I made my confession. My statement in court that I was well treated was quite a sincere one. I was well fed and given plenty of books to read.

"I was worked on sometimes by a single interrogator, sometimes by teams," he continued. "I was confronted suddenly with evidence taken from the other accused a few hours earlier and my own evidence was used immediately on the others.

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Col. Alexis Yelissarov, Russian deputy commandant of Berlin, once put this succinctly to the American commandant, Brig. Gen. Frank L. Howley. Speaking of Russian trials, Yelissarov said: "We don't bring a man into court in order to acquit him. We bring him in merely to determine his degree of guilt and his sentence."

In other words, Communist police tell their political captives, first off: "You've had it. Better sing loud and long if you want to get off easy. And anything you can tell us about your co-defendants may help you get off easier."

Then the defendant may be reminded by interrogating police that he has wife and children and hadn't he better think of them? Several of the Sofia pastors indicated this line had been used on them when they begged the court for mercy in the name of their families.

Yet drugs apparently were

used on them. The Sofia defendants all reacted in court in apparently normal manner.

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North County High Juniors Giving Play

Hubbard—The junior class of North Marion Union high will present "Spooks and Spasms" Friday evening at 8 o'clock. The play is a mystery comedy in 3 acts with ghosts, kilters and secret panels. The cast includes Joyce Hawkins, Donna Schei, Carole Blake, Darlene Leimbach, Charlene Dew, Joan Young, Ed Kelley, Calvin Aho, Steve Treitsch, Keith Heverly and Ramon Vredenburg. James Saum is directing.

Silverton Justice Court Sets Trials

Silverton—Local Justice court cases include Vernon J. Gingrich, "overwidth load," \$10 and costs; Raymond Nevin "overloading," \$75 and costs; Delbert King, "basic rule," \$5 and costs; E. B. Ekman, "double parking," \$2.50 and costs.

George Kuschnick, depositing debris on property of another, entered plea of not guilty, trial set for 10 o'clock May 6.

Other cases coming up for trial that day are: Chester Storruste, reckless driving charge and a civil action, Credit Bureaus vs. James Underwood.

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