

Translated from French

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PART C (2)

34. A former university professor, ~~an~~ ^{and government} official, who was a member of the

Communist Party, stated:

"..... I was arrested in August 1949 For ^{the first} three days I was quite alone and isolated in my cell. For three days I banged on the door and shouted, "It is a mistake; why am I here?"

Later I was taken before a colonel whom I knew by sight, ^{and} who had returned from Moscow in 1946. He asked me to confess that I was a traitor. At that time he gave me no details about the accusation.

From August 1949 until November 1950, that is to say for about eighteen months, I was kept in solitary confinement in an underground cell measuring about two by three metres. It was very damp, and sometimes there was water up to my ankles. When my health began to deteriorate, I was moved to another cell, not quite so bad, and was given a little more to eat. I was, however, constantly alone except for a short period when another prisoner was put in with me - probably to report anything I said.

*This was not used in the
stencil copy - copied
from English
official
record*

In the meantime a judicial ⁱenquiry had been opened, and I was sent for from time to time during the first month. Since there was no light, I never knew whether it was day or night. A gaoler brought me food at regular intervals; ^{to} sometimes when I thought it was night I realized my mistake because food was brought, and then the hearings began.

The purpose of the judicial ⁱenquiry from the ^{very beginning} first was undoubtedly to induce me to confess that I had been a British agent.

Secondly, they wanted me to confess that I was a Yugoslav agent.

Thirdly, I was asked to confess that I was a French agent.

The fourth accusation was that the American F.B.I. had ~~given me~~ ordered me to blow up the Hungarian Foreign Ministry.

They tried to make me confess all that, not by force but by persuasion.

I was on my guard and refused to sign any such statement.

I was subjected to torture which was rather less painful than is usual.

The heyday of violent, cruel physical torture ~~had~~ was over. That had been in June and July. At the time when I was questioned many others before me had already confessed, and torture and cruel treatment were no longer the principal methods used; ^{to} too much stress was not laid on them.

INDENT

~~Moreover~~, I should ^{also} say that many of my accused fellow-prisoners said more or less as I do: it was not the physical torture that was the worst but the isolation in the cells.

~~This~~ ^{it, but while} ~~may~~ may seem strange and extraordinary to those who have not experienced ~~it~~. I will not say that it was pleasant, ~~but~~ I preferred to be taken out and knocked about; ^{at least} I saw human beings, I had some contact, I tried to defend myself, I struck out with my fists, but I was not in my tomb, in my crypt where there was not a soul, not a sound.

Some years later I met ~~some~~ people who had undergone the same ordeal. They said, ^{that they had} ~~I~~ felt the same; it was not ill-treatment or blows which ^{had} affected ~~them~~; ^{those had been} ~~us~~; ~~they were~~ a relief, almost an amusement. The police admitted that ill-treatment and blows were not very successful. Many criminals have agreed that they were unavailing. That is not the best way to obtain results.

They said to us: "If you are a true Communist you must accept the sacrifice that is asked of you. Accept this sacrifice. It is for the future, it is for the good of the Party. Do not forget that perhaps you joined the Party ~~in~~ clandestinely ~~and~~ as a resistance movement during the German occupation; you were prepared then to sacrifice even your life in the struggle for the

I N D E N T

You can achieve that liberty only through the Communist Party;
liberation of the country. Now you have an opportunity to show ~~the same~~ *your*
spirit of sacrifice.

"There is no question of losing your life. It will all be arranged in
private. A ~~term of punishment~~ ^{sentence} will be decided on. The judge will pronounce
sentence. After the sentence you will be returned to your family, without
publicity. It is not so serious a matter as you think. You will have
everything you wish except freedom to travel.

"If, on the other hand, you are not willing to sign a confession, then
by your refusal you will be disobeying the Party's orders and showing yourself
unwilling to do as the Party commands; then beware.

"Your primary duty is to sign."

They also said: "After all, it is not such a serious matter. In a week
you might be a corpse; that may happen if you do not sign. If you sign, it
is understood that nothing terrible will happen to you."

Thus, to cut a long story short, after a year and a half I signed. I no
longer cared whether what I had signed was true or false. That experience had
sufficed to awaken me. When I signed, I had ~~become~~ ^{been} very cynical. I said to
myself, "I have had enough of it, I cannot endure these conditions any longer."

IN D E N T

I did not think about prestige or about the possibility of seeing my family again. I did not count upon it, but all the same I expected to receive a letter. It no longer mattered: either I should be killed, executed, or else I should be sentenced. I said to myself, "perhaps that will be better, I shall see people, even at the hearing," and with a certain cynicism at the end of eighteen months, I said I would sign anything the Party asked me to sign.

Naturally, the physical conditions improved at once; I was given a better cell, and my food improved.

The hearing lasted two weeks. I was given newspapers, magazines and books and was promised that after the hearing and the ^{Trial} ~~inquiry~~ I would be allowed to write to my family.

We had discussed the kind of sentence the judge would pronounce. I had been told what questions the judge would ask me and how to reply.

The judge was a weak man; he was going to muddle everything up, confuse the evidence and understand nothing, but I was told to take no notice, to reply to the questions asked, the replies had been supplied, everything had been arranged, ^{and I was to} ~~that I should~~ make the replies in the order ^{in which} they were given to me. I was not even to listen to what the judge asked.

INDENT

It was like a film, the whole trial was a farce. The judge asked me different questions from those I expected. I was quite embarrassed; many times I had to stifle my laughter. He asked, "How old are you?", and I replied, "Yes, at Budapest." That was the reply it had been arranged I should give to the first question.

That is how the case was heard.