

15 Churchmen Sent to Prison

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Fifteen Protestant churchmen were sentenced by Communist Bulgaria yesterday on charges of spying and black marketing. Four were sentenced to life imprisonment and nine received sentences ranging from 5 to 15 years. Two who received one-year sentences went free on parole. Story on Page 7.

4 Clergymen Given Life in Sophia Trial

Sofia, March 8 (U.P.).—Four of Bulgaria's leading Protestant clergymen were sentenced to life imprisonment today on charges of espionage, treason and black market currency dealings.

Nine others received prison terms of from 5 to 15 years. Two, sentenced to one year each, were put on three years' parole and freed at once.

In addition, the 15 defendants were deprived of civil rights for varying terms, deprived of some or all property, fined an over-all total of about 10 million leva (\$30,000) and ordered to pay court costs.

Defendants and the prosecution announced their acceptance of the sentences, so there will be no appeal.

The government is now expected to start prosecution of up to 50 more of the total of 138 Protestant pastors in Bulgaria.

Those sentenced today were:

Life imprisonment—Vassil Georgiev Zyapkov, 48, Congregationalist, ranking Protestant pastor in Bulgaria and representative of the United Evangelical Churches for Bulgaria; Yanko Nicolov Ivanov, 48, supreme supervisor of the Methodist Church; Nicola Mihailov Naumov, 49, secretary of the Baptist Church Union board, and Georgi Nicolov Chernev, 46, chief of the Pentecostal Church.

Fifteen years—Lambri Marinov Mishkov, 41, Congregationalist; Georgi Nicolov Vassev, 48, Baptist; Haralan Ivanov Popov, 41, Pentecostal, and Zdravko Ivanov Bezelov, 28, Methodist.

Ten years—Yoncho Nicolov Dryanov, 41, Pentecostal; Ivan Angelov Stankulov, 44, Baptist, and Zahari Spassov Raychef, 50, Baptist.

Six years and eight months—Mitko Mateev Dimitrov, 39, Church of Christ.

Five years—Ladin Ivanov Popov, 36, Pentecostal. He denied the charge of espionage and was not convicted on it.

One year, but freed at once in the courtroom on three years' parole—Angell Georgiev Dinev, 40, Pentecostal, and Alexander Georgiev Zahariev, 74, Methodist.

Haralan and Ladin Popov are brothers. Yanko is a son-in-law of bent, aged Zahariev.

The 13 men facing prison terms were taken back at once to the high-walled central prison to start serving their terms.

Each defendant was assessed \$255 for court costs.