

Pastors Admit Guilt Before Bulgaria Court

Implicate U. S. Attache, Women Educators at Opening of Spy Trial

By Edward M. Korry

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Sofia, Bulgaria, Feb. 25.—Two Protestant church leaders pleaded guilty in open court today, and blamed Americans for their plight, at the start of the trial of 15 Evangelical churchmen charged with espionage, treason and black marketing.

The Rev. Nikola Naumov, president of the Supreme Council of the United Evangelical Churches of Bulgaria, shouted and wept as he testified.

Mopping his tear-stained face with a handkerchief, Naumov denied that the state security militia had mistreated, beaten or "burned" him since his arrest in December and said:

"I advise all waverers to go the the state security people for re-education."

The Rev. Yanko Nikolov Ivanov, second defendant to go on the stand, was still confessing his guilt when court adjourned.

3 American Contacts Named

Naumov and Ivanov mentioned as their chief American contact Cyril Black, formerly in the American legation and now at Princeton University. They named also Melaney Turner, dean of the American Women's College, and Helen Cooper, her successor, as agents of Black.

Naumov, emphasizing the pressure of American influence in Bulgaria, included financial magnates like "Rockefeller," whom he named as a Baptist, and "Ford," a Methodist. He said he and his associates received large sums from the World Council of Churches.

It was unlike the trial in Budapest of Joseph Cardinal Minds-
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Two Pastors Detail Guilt As Sofia Spy Trial Opens

zenty in that foreign correspondents and foreign diplomatic observers were freely admitted. There were loud speakers to aid hearing. The leisurely pace of the trial contrasted with the speed of the Mindszenty trial.

Court President Constantine Undjev opened the trial shortly after 8:30 a. m. By the time court adjourned at 8:15 p. m., the pattern had been set for all defendants to proclaim openly the guilt which, the prosecution said, they had admitted in pretrial statements.

"Do you plead guilty?" asked Undjev. "Thell the truth and only the truth. If you tell the truth, the court will take into account that you are repentant."

"I confess I am guilty," Naumov said in a clear voice. "I am sincerely sorry for what I have done."

For hours, Naumov confessed, admitted, recanted, renounced.

Naumov's voice cracked at times as he said that he had been well treated since his arrest and said he had been won over by the "good behavior of the security officials."

Again and again, Naumov praised the Communist-led Bulgarian state.

Naumov said that from the fall of September, 1944, when Bulgaria surrendered to the Allies, he obtained and delivered economic, political and military information to "foreign intelligence" agents. The government charges they were Americans.

First Report Brought \$350

Naumov said he received \$350 from Dr. William Coon of the Baptist Missions for his first report and sold the dollars on the black market to get funds for his church organization. He said he received instructions from Protestant churchmen in the United States, Switzerland and elsewhere to supply information and fight communism.

Later, Naumov said, he received instructions from Cyril Black, then secretary of the United States political mission here, to "bring your reports here" instead of taking them to Coon.

Black, Naumov alleged, "asked me to bring him information on military factories" among other things.

Naumov, 49, 6 feet tall and robust, left the stand at 4:30 p. m. after cross-examination and Ivanov was called.

Ivanov, supervisor of the Methodist Church in Bulgaria and vice

president of the Supreme Council of the United Evangelical Churches of Bulgaria, promptly admitted his guilt and brought the name of Russia into the trial for the first time.

He said he had been brought up "under American influence" and that this "and other things helped me to agree to act against communism and against the Soviet Union."

Ivanov, 48, is slight, lame and bald. He spoke in a clear steady voice, in contrast to Naumov, but he became hoarse as he talked on and on.

Ivanov said he set up an intelligence service for Black.

"Cyril Black asked us to supply information telling of the people's dissatisfaction with the government, rumors about concentration camps, the work of the People's Courts and so forth," Ivanov said.

"Black further instructed me to collect information about Soviet forces in Bulgaria, their attitude toward the people and the people's attitude toward them."

Ivanov said this information was sent to Black through Dean Melaney Turner of the women's college, and later through Dean Helen Cooper.

In return for this work, Ivanov said, Black at his request "managed to arrange for our pastors to receive a regular salary." He said he received about \$90 a month and additional awards for "special tasks." He said Black also arranged to send parcels from the United States.

Alleges U. S. Attache Paid Him

At various times in 1945, Ivanov said, he received money from Robert Strong of the American legation.

Bringing in the name of Nikola Petkov, opposition political leader whose execution for treason was a world sensation, Ivanov said:

"Black asked me early in 1945 to arrange an appointment with Petkov so that Petkov might be encouraged to leave the fatherland front (the government bloc) in order to carry on a more effective campaign in behalf of America."

Ivanov will continue his testimony tomorrow.

The American official observer at today's hearing was Mrs. Mary Johnston, legation press attache. John Sanders, acting British press attache, represented his country. Both understand Bulgarian.