

satellite regimes, to punish them for their shortcomings, to compel greater sacrifices under the shadow of fear, to produce scapegoats and to provide an opportunity for the Soviet Union's favourite propaganda of hatred against states, organizations and individuals of the free world.

The particular trial of which I am about to speak took place this year from September 29 to October 3 and forty persons were brought before the tribunal. Among the six principal defendants were Dr. Evgen Bossilkov, Bishop of Nikopol and Senior Bishop of the Church in Bulgaria, and several leading educators. These six principal defendants were charged with having created an organization for the purpose of overthrowing the Bulgarian Government by means of a coup d'état and with the help of foreign intervention. The other defendants were accused of having aided their efforts in varying degree. All defendants, without exception, were found guilty. Four were sentenced to death; two, to twenty years' imprisonment.

These, in brief, are the bare facts of the case. Fortunately, in spite of the tight censorship which surrounds Bulgaria, there is available further evidence as to the way in which the trial was conducted which enables us to judge for ourselves how little the trials resemble the proceedings of a civilized court conducting an impartial enquiry.

From the beginning, the guilt of all the defendants was assumed by the Bulgarian press, in the speeches of Communist leaders and in the very wording of the indictment. The following statement by the Bulgarian Minister of the Interior, made just before the trial, is typical of the tone of the entire proceedings. "Let all who oppose the Communist regime know", he said, "that the People's Rule, through the divisions of the Ministry of the Interior, is able to put everyone where he belongs, and to deal mercilessly with all who try to hinder our efforts. Neither God nor their imperialist masters can help them".

The entire trial lasted only five days. On the first day all preliminary procedural questions were disposed of and the interrogations of the first fifteen defendants was completed. The witnesses, thirty in all, were all heard on the morning of the last day, when the Court not only heard the speeches of the counsels for the prosecution and the defence, but also delivered its verdict. And this in a trial in which there were no fewer than forty defendants!

No attempt was made to establish a convincing case on the basis of adequate evidence. Apart from the so-called confessions of some of the accused and the testimony of witnesses, many of whom were themselves prisoners, the material evidence produced to show that the defendants were preparing an underground resistance movement consisted of two small radio transmitters, one automatic carbine, two revolvers, one old hunting gun and some medical supplies. I believe the members of the Committee will agree with me that this is hardly the armament for a revolution!

This so-called trial was clearly another calculated attempt similar to those which have been made in other countries behind the Iron Curtain to crush the Christian churches in Bulgaria and reduce them to complete