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## **Ötvös István**

### **Show Trials in the Communism**

The Communists regimes in Central European countries strictly followed the soviet model after the WWII. The economic system, the decision making structure, the one-party system, whole life-organization became similar when the Communist Parties came into power in the East part of Europe.

This was true in the sphere of judicial system. During the Soviet "great terror" in the '30, the Stalinist era laid down the principles how they could use the law to annihilate the political enemies, and reorganize the society. The most important leader of the Soviet jurisdiction system, Andrey Vyshinsky summarized his ideas of it. He pointed out that the law was the most relevant "weapon" against the "enemy of the Soviet state". In fact the Soviet courts has no really evidences against the political enemies. That's why Vyshinsky used an absolutely new formula in show(case) trials. As he put it, the plea agreements were absolutely enough to pronounce a death sentence, too.

Followed Vyshinsky's conceptions in the great terror period the Soviet courts sentenced many million Soviet habitants as an "enemy of the nation", or "enemy of the Soviet system". Many show trials were organized against communist leaders, important intellectuals. The system of GULAG was established after the Soviet revolution, but in this decade it was grow up rapidly. The penal servitude became the part of the Soviet economic system and ordinary experience for the mass of the Soviet habitants.

When the Red Army occupied the East European countries, including Hungary the mass terror became the part of the everyday life.

Approximately not less than one million Hungarian were beard off to the deportation camps, and finally to the Soviet Union. Most of these people were captured as prisoner of war although they were underage for military serves, or women.

After the WWII the Communist Parties started to march toward the power, but the local societies did not supported the political transformations. Many groups of the society, the farmers, the members of the middle class, and most of the factory workers rejected the one-party system, and wished a real democracy. The Hungarian and Czechoslovak political life shows it clearly, because both of these countries had free elections in the after war period. Both of these election ware won by the non-Marxist parties. The other countries in the eastern bloc there were not free elections, the Communist parties became the members of government by a clear Soviet order.

If we focus on the Hungarian political development after the WWII, we can see the clearest model how the Communists use the law to convert the society. After the Hungarian free elections in 1945, when the Communists reached only 17% of the votes, the Communist leadership had to face to them weakness. In this situation the Communists started to lean on the political police. In 1945-46 they successfully got the political police under them control. This was the first step to adopt the soviet model of the show trials. It seemed the most necessary condition to bring the politicians and the people to the courts. The reorganised, and politically controlled political police could force the prisoners to sign the plea agreements, which was necessary to convict them.

At the end of 1946 the Hungarian political investigators started a great action against the Hungarian governmental party. The show trial which was organized by them had political reason. The most popular Smallholders Party meant great obstacle for the Communists. The wishes of the Soviets and the Hungarian Communists got stuck in the resistance of the right wing parties. That's why the political police swung into action against them.

The investigation what was started at Christmas of 1946 visualized a wide network conspiracy. This was exactly the conception of the Communist, who supposed a connection between the Smallholders Party's leadership and the head of the "conspirators". This conspiracy had never existed. When the members of this visualized conspiracy many years later got out from the prison wrote down them memoirs, and told the story

how they were extracted confession of the conspiracy. On the other side, many detectives of the investigation department heard testimony to physical and psychical tortures of the victims. Undoubtedly these tortures forced the prisoners to make testimonies about the crime which never had happened.

When this investigation was finished and the prisoners had to stand against the court many of the prisoners thought the courts justified them. But the political police had controlled the courts, and the judges who afraid of the revenge of the Communists did not seek the true. The courts settled for the plea agreements, and convicted these people. When the "conspirators" were sentenced, the Communist Party turn this case in a new direction, and gave a political reason for it. They pronounced that the "conspirators had a political background of the non-Communist Smallholders Party, and they forced to the Prime Minister to scuttle. When the Smallholders Party's Prime Minister abandoned his position, and emigrated from Hungary, and many members of this party became prisoner, a new election was pronounced. This election was organized by the Communist leded Ministry of interior Affairs, and was used many unlawful crafts.

After the new election of 1947 the Communist Party became stronger than earlier, but they had net enough MP's to seize the power. But they did not despair in this situation. They had a well tried equipment to solve this political problem: the political police and the courts.

In the next few years many Hungarian intellectuals, non-Communist politicians were framed by way of the political police. The wide scale of these people were sentenced by courts, too. The Hungarian leader of the Catholic Church, members of the Smallholders Party, Social Democrats, or leaders of the great companies became prisoners. The courts sentenced them one after the other, and never searched the background of the prosecutions. If the political police passed somebody to the courts, the sentence seemed finished story.

It is well known, how the Soviet regimes took out of the people, if it was necessary for the political reason. But this story was different, because the courts masked these processes legal events. Using the litigations covered the facts of the injustice.

In 1949, when the Communists came into power in every Soviet Bloc countries, this case turn into a more wrong scene. The political debate between the Soviet Union and the Communist leded Yugoslavia

became a very hard political war. That's why in many Eastern European countries started to organize great show trials against Communist leaders who attended the Yugoslavian leader, Tito's wishes. The biggest Hungarian show trial became the part of this international pay-off. These trials wanted to purport: Tito not a really good Communist but he is alliance with the Western European countries and the USA.

The technical implementation was similar than the earlier Hungarian trials. The political police's staff used very violent instruments. The physical and psychological violence suppld the prisoners, who signed them plea agreements, and confessed in the court they served Tito, and the international imperialism. The political police in according with the courts forced this people to the jail, or sentenced to death. Not only in Hungary, but in Bulgaria, Romania, or Albania were organized the show trials against Tito, and many trusty politicians lost them life, years, families.

As we see below, the jurisdiction system of the Communist countries was built to the power of the political police. This investigation apparatus made the judicature, and the courts only a slave for the Communist political aims. Nobody could be live in secure, because the truthless arraignment was the most common solution against the political enemies.