

EAST GERMANY

AUG. 15, 1950

BEHAVIOR OF POWERS' FATHER CRITICIZED

Berlin, East German Home Service, Aug. 17, 1950, 1830 G.E.-L

(Dieter-Kroeber commentary)

(Excerpts) The first day of the Powers trial has already proved a huge flop for those who tried to make political capital out of it by working on people's tear glands to further their anti-Soviet propaganda in the interest of the cold war. Powers was caught red-handed, and in view of the crushing weight of evidence had no choice but to plead guilt.

The first day also showed the world what all the vicious twaddle about alleged brain washing is worth. What we saw today was a fit, suntanned young man, who during his three and a half months in custody even gained weight, and who faced his judges calmly and self-assuredly. Powers in his testimony tried to raise as many extenuating points as possible; he contradicted the public prosecutor whenever he thought he could minimize his deed--in short, he behaved like a man who fights for the most favorable outcome of a trial for himself.

His motive was money. He was fully aware of the risks which his contract with the espionage authority implied, for which he first reconnoitered the frontiers of the USSR and on May 1, 1950, took off on a flight across the country to photograph military and other installations using special cameras. This was clear from his bearing in the Hall of Columns today. He also seems to have realized meanwhile that his provocative flight wrecked the Paris summit conference and caused a marked deterioration of the international situation.

He, the political illiterate who learned about the USSR only from the horror tales of the U.S. monopoly press, who took so little interest in politics that he never went to the polls, is apparently beginning to see that he was merely the cheap tool of unscrupulous politicians who have made provocations and espionage policy toward the socialist camp their official doctrine. As his confession today shows, he knows that this does not absolve him of guilt.

People in Moscow view with some distaste the behavior of Powers' father, who thinks that his great hour has arrived and keeps busy being photographed in all kinds of grief-stricken poses, and who already has in his pocket a profitable contract with the scandal-mongering rags, TIME and LIFE, in which he may be expected to tell a soul-stirring super-story.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

DATE 12 SEP 1985

25