

# **Defense Against Communist Interrogation Organizations**

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

*Some guidelines for secret agents.*

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The suggestions offered herein for practical defense against Communist interrogation organizations are designed to be used very selectively and with caution in the briefing of anti-Communist secret agents running the danger of Communist imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> Because some of the tactics outlined could be of use to other categories of persons, such as prisoners of war, political prisoners, and noncombatants, this study is offered with the reservation that it is not to be construed either as a modification of official US Government doctrine or an exhaustive treatment of the Communist system of prisoner management and exploitation.

## **The Importance and Techniques of Preparation**

Most of the available guidance on this subject is too much concerned with the tactics of the conflict between the prisoner and his interrogator

after arrest, and not enough with the preparations that the endangered agent can and should make in advance. His preparations are very often decisive in determining the outcome of his resistance effort. The agent must be prepared physically, organizationally, and mentally.

Among the most important physical preparations is to separate oneself as far as possible from incriminating materials such as commo plans, one-time pads, radios, secret inks, weapons, special cameras, documents, and money in bulk. Linkage to incriminating persons must be adequately covered, and all the standard procedures of operational security and conspiratorial discipline must be understood and maintained. Plans for emergencies must be worked out in advance and *rehearsed*. These plans should be set up for use under unfavorable conditions, when one is under surveillance or suspicion.

Organizationally speaking, the agent should have made all possible arrangements for the support and safety, rescue or warning of his family and others dependent upon him. He should have set up some system whereby his sponsors will learn of his arrest—if it occurs—at an early date, so that they can begin to help him. He should have arranged a simple code for concealing information in any letters or messages he might be able to send to his family, if the family is wining of his secret activities or affiliations.

This is a grim subject, and part of the mental preparation—a most important part—consists in accepting and living with these possibilities. An agent conditioned to face them honestly is likely to be far more capable and careful than the chance-taker who hopes somehow to get by without self-discipline and without the intensive preparation that is the only way to success in any clandestine operation. The agent should have studied the security service and interrogation systems operating in his area and should have prepared himself against surprise. The agent must prepare and thoroughly rehearse his cover story and his fall-back cover story for his status, action, and associations, and backstop them as far as possible. He will usually be able to get help with this work from his sponsors. There is an inward, or psychological aspect of imprisonment for which the prisoner must be fortified. Prisoners with a high ideological motivation are able to defend themselves and to continue to struggle against the opposition longer than others, even under conditions of extreme hardship. Persons who have strong religious beliefs are able to resist much more effectively than those with a weak faith or none. A person undertaking the dangerous work of the secret

agent should in any case develop an ideological basis. If not religiously inclined, he should review in his mind the great cause of human freedom and the price that others have willingly paid to defend and advance it. Patriotism, the welfare of families and friends, and concern for his own future self-respect, all help to reinforce the will to resist. Very few persons are aware of how much hidden strength they actually have. The medical profession, which has the opportunity to observe persons fighting for their lives—often against incurable ailments—can testify to the fact that, when a person makes up his mind to resist, he can accomplish miracles.

## The Arrest

It is, of course, essential that the agent, as a standard procedure, maintain a level of preparation for arrest. However, since he has to take chances in order to accomplish anything, it becomes important to know something of the signs of impending arrest. History is replete with accounts of agents arrested with incriminating evidence in their possession *long after they themselves had good reason to expect arrest.*

Any change, however subtle, in the attitude of persons with whom one is in everyday contact must be fully reviewed as to possible causes. From the point of view of preparation, the agent should carefully study people with whom he has casual contact, such as an apartment house janitor, a storekeeper, a barber, for example. In a totalitarian country, people of this sort are keenly alert. If they have been approached under some cover by a local security officer to provide information about the agent, they will have received a tremendous shock and their attitude toward the agent is bound to change. He may observe signs of fear, sudden prying curiosity, avoidance, or even unusual pleasantness, on the part of such persons. He may have nothing but a feeling that their attitude has changed. Such warning signs should never be ignored.

If the agent is carrying out proper countersurveillance procedures he may detect signs that he is under observation. Although one would think that an agent detecting such signs would take strict measures to remove evidence, in many cases he has simply continued on his way—often with unfortunate results.

From time to time the agent may detect that his quarters, or his place of work, have been tampered with. He may discover articles out of place or missing, or signs of the rumpling of clothing in drawers, and the like. There are simple methods of so arranging various objects that their movement can be detected. Very frequently, the secret search of one's premises is an important warning that one is suspected. However, inquisitive persons and thieves also engage in this kind of activity.

The arrest or disappearance of confederates or accomplices is, of course, a warning that no one could misunderstand.

It is often possible for the sponsor of a secret agent to warn him through some prearranged system of communication that he should suspend operations, flee immediately, or the like. *The most careful preparation and planning is essential to assure that the agent will be able to verify the authenticity of a warning, as well as to understand it correctly.* From time to time persons have been trapped by "warnings" fabricated by the local security service and intended to stampede them into some unwise action. Persons who should have known better have fallen for such simple tracks as an anonymous telephone call from "a friend," an anonymous letter dropped into the mailbox or shoved under the door, even a visit by an unknown well-wisher. Of course, in the areas where resistance to Communism is high there will be a person here and there who, out of the goodness of his heart will assist an enemy agent. But in the vast majority of cases, in a totalitarian country, fear of the consequences and general suspicions of everybody effectively prevent people from helping each other secretly—which is one of the main reasons why totalitarian governments survive.

Arrest occurs in two basic forms: overt and secret. In overt arrest actions, the Communist services tend to use a good deal of manpower to bar escape and to crash into the rooms of the suspect with the minimum loss of time. Occasionally they will have access to the keys to the suspect's lodging and use them for even swifter invasion of the premises. Sometimes these services deliberately create a great fuss during the arrest action, presumably in order to intimidate and impress the population. Arrest in this form indicates the intent of the authorities to liquidate the operation and formally charge and sentence the persons apprehended. The agent is advised to plan his resistance toward minimizing the offense, trying to get the charges changed to criminal charges and in general to aim at leading the arresting authorities to conclude that commoncrime is in fact the principal activity of the

arrested persons.

In case of overt arrest, the prisoner in Communist hands in a civilized area can expect standard criminal processing, including photographing and fingerprinting, body search, replacement of belongings with a prison uniform, medical check, a hot shower bath, and assignment to a cell under close guard. In case of espionage suspects, these procedures will be very thoroughly carried out. The arrestee can expect to confront one or more interrogators for a long time to come.

In the case of secret arrest, quite a few of these procedures may be omitted. The prisoner may find himself in a safehouse, and the physical search may concentrate on depriving him of the means of suicide. The search for evidence may thus be a good deal less thorough than it might otherwise be. There may be evidence of concern for his state of mind in many cases; but in others the sternest and most thorough processing will occur. The prisoner should keep alert to every nuance of the processing, as he can often gain clues as to how much is known and what is intended. He should be particularly alert if he is left in the company of talkative guards or "fellow prisoners" for long periods of time, as these persons will in all probability be plants trying to elicit information from him, and influence his attitudes.

In secret arrest operations, the person detained is usually accosted on the street by a number of men who "escort" him to prison or a safehouse as inconspicuously as possible. *Secret arrest as a rule means that the arresting service has plans which require that the fact of the suspect's arrest be concealed as long as possible.* This does not necessarily mean he is to be turned loose to be used as an informer, for the intent may only be to gain time and avoid scaring others before arrests can be made. It may mean that the arrestee is expected to provide evidence leading to the identification and arrest of persons not yet known to the security service. Occasionally a person is arrested on trumped up charges in the hope of getting him to provide evidence against himself by surprise and under high pressure. The possibility also exists that the arrest has been undertaken secretly in order to avoid embarrassment if the prisoner has to be released for lack of evidence later—that is to say, the arrest is a bluff. But in a good percentage of the cases there is a substantial prospect that the person detained may be let loose to function as a doubled agent, and the arrested person should take comfort from this circumstance and plan his defense accordingly.

# Interrogation

While the prisoner is being processed into his cell, last minute preparations for his interrogation will be under way. The interrogators who are to deal with the prisoner will be putting the finishing touches on their interrogation plan and examining the materials recovered during arrest and body search. Frequently, the prisoner will not be interrogated for some time after entering his cell. During the interval the prisoner should review the main points of his cover story and of his fall-back story and decide what his attitude toward the interrogators will be. He may be fed, briefed on the rules, and allowed to go to sleep, only to be suddenly awakened and hurried off to an interrogation cell.

If the prisoner has been *secretly* arrested, his handling can vary widely. He may not be searched. He may be brought to a safehouse. He may be given a very friendly reception. On the other hand, he may be subjected to very harsh and violent treatment, in an effort to force or frighten a confession out of him. Harsh or violent treatment and hasty interrogation are indications that the arresting authorities are on a "fishing expedition" and do not really have sufficient information and evidence in hand.

*In the initial stages of any interrogation it is best for the prisoner to play the role of a well-intentioned, but confused and innocent victim.* The jails are full of prisoners who made the mistake of being clear and precise in their replies to seemingly harmless questions. The first thing every interrogator has to determine is whether his prisoner can tell a straight story about anything, or whether he is in a state of confusion. Prisoners are under no obligation to collaborate with their captors by exhibiting good memories and making coherent statements. This is the time to forget as much as possible.

In *all* interrogation sessions, the prisoner should try to discover the following:

- a. What is known about him; more specifically, what evidence does the interrogator have? Even Communist interrogators have to have

evidence to convict suspects, and they seldom have as much as they pretend to have. Nothing should ever be admitted unless the evidence that the interrogator exhibits is overwhelming. In such cases the admission should be framed in such a way as to mislead the interrogator as to the true nature of the evidence. *One should never assume that the case is hopeless and that one might as well tell all.*

b. Where did the interrogator get his information? The prisoner often overlooks the fact that the interrogator may let slip information which will indicate who betrayed the operation. By feigning stupidity and confusion and pretending not to understand questions, the prisoner may maneuver the interrogator into making further disclosures which may indicate the source of the betrayal.

c. What are the intentions of the authorities? By the time the prisoner is in his cell, he will have many clues to analyze: The arrest procedure, the search procedure, the remarks which the arresting authorities may have made within his hearing, and other circumstances preceding the arrest which he may call to mind. Thinking these things over as calmly and as thoroughly as possible can help the prisoner to plan his defense.

d. How much importance do the authorities attach to the prisoner? When the prisoner faces his interrogators, he can gain valuable clues as to how much effort the opponent intends to make in his case. He may find himself confronted with an expert interrogator who knows the prisoner's language and background very thoroughly, or he may find a relatively inexperienced and ignorant interrogator working against him. The type of custodial handling, such things as the number of persons making the arrest, the speed and efficiency of his handling, the level of rank of officers dealing with him, all provide clues in this direction.

In the period before arrest—and certainly before interrogation—the prisoner should have made up his mind as to what facts he must conceal at all costs. Such facts would include: the identity or hiding places of other agents, the hiding places of items of evidence, the true objectives of the operation, and important information concerning his superior officers and his sponsoring organization.

# Some General Rules

The rules which will help a prisoner to deal with his persecutors fall into two general categories: rules concerning attitudes and psychological defenses, and rules covering practical actions and defenses.

The first psychological rule is never to give up hope, no matter how desperate the situation appears to be. One must always bear in mind that the opponent is not only human but in all likelihood under heavy pressures of doubt and handicapped by fragmentary information. In espionage matters so much is cloudy and confused in even the clearest cases, that prisoners who know the game can frustrate their opponents—if they persist.

The second psychological rule is to view oneself in custody *as continuing the fight with other weapons and on another basis*.

The third rule is to view oneself as a patriotic hero fighting to free his people. After all, the soldier fights in groups, from which he draws courage. The secret agent generally spends most of his time fighting singlehanded without this type of strong support. His fight is waged against great odds; hence he deserves extra credit for heroism—not condemnation as a "cowardly spy." One's own evaluation of oneself tends to get across to associates—and guards and interrogators are *de facto* associates of a sort, who may come to respect the prisoner who respects himself in spite of themselves. The safest pose is the pose of calm equality: "We are both doing our duty according to our principles."

Rule four is in many ways the most important: Care must be taken not to slip insensibly into the attitude that there is no world except the prison, no future, and that the time scale of the prison is all that counts. It must consciously be remembered that there is another world and that one day the prisoner will have to face that world and its rewards or punishment. Liberation may be very sudden and soon—then what?

Rule five is to remember one's own importance. The agent, confronted with the vastness of the prison and the clandestine activity, tends in any case to come to consider himself and what he does as unimportant. This is both a harmful attitude and an error: the agent is often very important and never unimportant. He can within limits continue to have an effect upon the world even while tied hand and foot, possibly even a

greater effect than when he was at large. He cannot know what is going on behind the scenes of the opponent's organization. His case may be a *cause célèbre*, or even the subject of international negotiations. The prison administration, however, will make every effort to make him appear to himself as the forgotten man.

## **Combatting Environmental Influences**

The tactics of most Communist services are designed to weaken the prisoner through relatively simple but highly effective methods. "Brainwashing" as commonly understood is an inexact notion. The prisoner can expect to be confined in a bleak and uncomfortable cell illuminated with a very bright light 24 hours a day. He will be under constant observation but unable to communicate with anyone. He will be required to obey minute, irritating, and senseless restrictions. His food supply will be inadequate and particularly deficient in vitamins. He will be deprived of sleep, required to sleep in a certain position when he does get a chance to lie down, and may have to stand for many hours on end. Interrogators and others will suggest that he is guilty of all sorts of things and may alternate their treatment with sudden, unexpected interludes of kindness and even friendliness. The alternation of this treatment, especially when one is not prepared for it, can induce a state of mind gravely weakening the power to resist. Many former prisoners have stated that they were most weakened by friendly approaches after a long period of hardship. They found themselves forgetting that the interrogator was their enemy. They found themselves accepting the idea that they had to exonerate themselves and rehabilitate themselves, succumbing to intense feelings of guilt.

The interrogators, while they have a great deal of latitude and authority over the prisoner's situation, nevertheless would get into trouble, possibly quite serious, if the prisoner died or became demented or crippled as a result of the treatment he had been subjected to. The interrogator is not all-powerful. Prisoners should eat whatever food is placed before them to sustain their strength. With a little practice, however, some persons can vomit at will, and it could be effective if the prisoner suddenly did so upon the interrogator or in his presence. No interrogator enjoys close and continued contact with a prisoner who has

lost control of his bowel movements. Fainting is sometimes an effective gambit. This interrupts the interrogation and creates time-wasting interludes while the prisoner is revived. The prison administration takes care to forestall attempts by prisoners to commit suicide. However, people have committed suicide in prison through dashing their heads against the walls, through biting their wrist arteries open, through inhaling items of food causing strangulation, and through other ingenious methods. There is nothing to prevent the prisoner from experimenting with suicide attempts in such fashion as to alarm the interrogator, and it takes a pretty determined interrogator to avoid making the prisoner's lot easier when this threat becomes evident.

Immediately upon imprisonment the prisoner should devise some method of keeping track of time. This is most difficult if there is no daylight in the prison cell. The prison schedules and routines are often deliberately varied in order to distort the prisoner's sense of time. The prisoner can pass the time he records very profitably by engraving upon his memory, through the process of repeated recall, important details about his opponents which will be valuable later on. Unless the prisoner makes a conscious effort to memorize these details, when he gets out of prison he will usually be unable to recall important facts, dates, and the like. The prisoner should memorize the features and mannerisms of the interrogators, particularly unusual items such as an accent, a deformity, or some striking habit. He should attempt to find out as much as he can about the building in which he is housed, particularly its location. He should attempt to become familiar with the guards, who in a sense are also prisoners. The "friendly" guard, of course, is usually a provocateur, so he should be told nothing of significance except what the prisoner wants to reach the ears of his interrogators. However, cultivation of the guard can be used to elicit interesting details from him and may enable the prisoner to ease his own lot a little. Now and then the guard will be found who is in fact sympathetic to the prisoner. The prisoner should attempt to identify the vulnerabilities of interrogators and, of course, always look for clues as to their identity. The intelligence services of the free world are very well informed as to the identities of interrogators and can match the information the prisoner supplies with the information they already have to identify the interrogator fully later.

People captured by Chinese or other Asian Communists may find themselves imprisoned with a group of "reformed" prisoners, rather than isolated. The other prisoners are under heavy pressure to "reform" the victim. They will endlessly argue with him, plead with him, and abuse

him, exerting moral pressure, and surrounding him with an ideological environment that will cause him to feel deserted, guilty, and hopeless. A person caught in such a situation can play for time, as this process takes days and often weeks to be effective. He can also use the situation to create confusion. For example, he can tell different individuals "in confidence" very different stories, and if he is good at dealing with people, he can create feuds amongst the people seeking to "reform" him, playing one off against another.

The effects of isolation and inactivity quickly weaken all—especially persons who are congenial and like human company. We all depend to a great extent on our associates for moral support and for a feeling of reality. When held in a dark cell, all alone, day after day, the desire for human contact, which can be satisfied only by the interrogator, grows very strong in many persons. Worry becomes an incessant companion. The tendency to see the interrogator more and more in a heroic light and as a friend also develops. Most prisoners expect to find the enemy to be vile and revolting, and their resistance is greatly weakened when they discover that the interrogator can be a fine, clean-cut, idealistic, and quite charming person. The best defense against this approach is to keep telling oneself this is just another trick. If one can develop insight into one's own human weakness, much of the effect of this trick will be lost. The prisoner should realize that it is normal for a person in isolation to feel that he is losing his mind, to feel extremely guilty, to feel terribly lonely and anxious. The prisoner's fear that he is losing his mind is the best guarantee that he will not lose it.

The personal equation in the relationship with the interrogator must be borne in mind. Most people do not have dominant personalities or great powers of leadership and persuasion. Some interrogators have a great deal of such power. They are persons who exercise natural authority over others, and the prisoner will find himself emotionally affected by the demands of such commanding persons. Here again, insight into one's own weakness is the best defense.

It is also particularly hard to resist the blandishments of an interrogator who is obviously convinced of the justice of his own cause, and sincerely attempts to "reform" the prisoner. It is well to remember that some of the most sincere persons in history have been the most vicious, such as, for example, Adolf Hitler. Sincerity is no guarantee of the justice of a cause, but unless one is on one's guard against it, one can become persuaded.

As long as possible, and certainly until the pressure becomes intolerable, the prisoner should stick to his cover story. If he has worked up a plausible story, and has learned it reasonably well, and has lived his cover, he may be able to make the interrogator believe it. This happens more frequently than most people think. The interrogator is just another human being. In any case, as the interrogation proceeds, the prisoner can elaborate and develop the legend or cover story, especially if he has had the foresight to appear to be very confused and mixed up in the beginning. If gaps in the cover story become apparent, the prisoner can think up lies to insert. As the interrogation proceeds, he can rehearse these lies with the interrogator until the prisoner himself begins to believe the story. If, after a long time, the prisoner is forced to make a false confession he can use his fall-back cover story and go through the same routine as he did with the first story. Finally, if and when the prisoner is brought to admit that the fall back cover story was a lie, *he should go back to the original cover story*, telling the interrogator that he had told the truth the first time and then had been forced to lie and now can think of nothing but to tell the truth. It should be noted, and remembered, that the truth would quite possibly not be believed in any case. It has been the experience of many prisoners who, at an early stage, made a truthful confession, *that they received the same treatment as if they had lied*. The reason is that the opponent expects the prisoner to lie and very often has no way of telling how much of his story is true and how much is false, most cover stories being a mixture of truth and falsehood.

During interrogation it is well to try to distract the attention of the interrogator from sensitive items of information. This can be done by pretending to conceal information of secondary importance in such a way as to get the interrogator interested in prying it out of the suspect. For example, a prisoner who has no confederates can tell his story in such a way that the interrogator will conclude the prisoner must have had help. Eventually the prisoner can involve innocent person—preferably persons loyal to the regime—thus causing the investigative apparatus to waste a great deal of energy and, quite possibly to arrest and interrogate persons who cannot possibly provide assistance.

## **Combatting Arguments**

The prisoner can expect to be assailed with many arguments, all intended to persuade him to cooperate. One argument that is frequently effective is the statement: "We know all about your activities anyway. What I am doing is giving you a chance to explain and justify yourself." While this argument seems silly to a man who is not in prison, it has been extremely effective with many prisoners. Threats and promises are often made in a linked fashion. For example, the prisoner may be told he will be executed as a war criminal unless he cooperates, in which case he may be redeemed and even allowed to go free. Particularly effective is the trick of minimization. The interrogator takes the position that the prisoner was a dupe, really did not intend to commit a terrible crime, was victimized by his superiors, did not understand what he was doing, and so forth. The interrogator says that he fully understands the prisoner's activities and reasoning and might do the same if he were in the prisoner's shoes. This technique is quite effective in inducing a prisoner to make small admissions. Once such small admissions have been made, they are used to pry more and more information out of the victim.

Another argument which is very effective when several persons in the same network have been arrested is based upon the natural distrust people have for each other. The interrogator will say or imply that the other persons arrested have long since confessed, putting the blame on the victim now being interrogated. The prisoner is then asked what he has to say in his defense, and if he believes he has been betrayed, he may easily fall into the trap of trying to put the blame on his accomplices. The only safe rule, no matter how overwhelming the evidence may be that others have confessed, is to stick to the story, and under no circumstances to attack one's associates.

Political arguments are often effective, especially against prisoners who do not know the inside story of Communist activities. People will be confused by long quotations from political authorities attacking their beliefs. It should be remembered that the devil himself can quote Scripture to his purpose. Often quotations from very great men, such as Abraham Lincoln, are twisted and edited to suit such purposes. Very effective is the "inevitable victory of Communism" approach. The prisoner is told that soon his homeland will be occupied by Communist forces and that he will be personally responsible for what happens to his family and friends if he does not cooperate. He will be told that Communist success is only a matter of time, and that he is wasting himself trying to prevent it. He will be told that he is pulling the

chestnuts of other countries out of the fire, that he is a dupe of the capitalists, that his superiors are quislings and that the only way out is for him to help his enemies.

A particularly dangerous interrogator is a convert to Communism who was formerly on the prisoner's side of the fence. He can say, "I used to believe the same way that you do. I changed my mind for such and such reasons, and you can do the same." The convert can persuade the prisoner to hope that he too can be redeemed by conversion. After a long and miserable time in prison, this temptation becomes very strong. The best defense for the prisoner is to remember that conversion under duress is always suspect, and that, if the man interrogating him is a genuine convert, the circumstances of his conversion could not have involved duress.

A prisoner can sometimes waste a great deal of the interrogator's time by long and involved descriptions of trivial affairs and matters. This is particularly effective if, *from the beginning*, the prisoner has used complicated constructions and confusing *non sequitur* in his explanations. When stopped in a rambling discourse, the clever prisoner flounders and gets mixed up, loses the thread of what he was saying and then winds up starting at the beginning once more. Most interrogators tend to let the prisoner talk in the hope that he will say something of value. In most Communist prisons the interrogator is required to report the prisoner's statements in writing. The more confused and rambling the information is, the more time-consuming and repulsive the task of transcription becomes.

In some circumstances it may be profitable for the prisoner to tell the interrogator that the day may come when the interrogator—like a number of the Nazi Gestapo—may find himself on trial as a war criminal. Some interrogators fear this ultimate fate. A prisoner can sometimes profitably attempt to involve the interrogator in an ideological discussion. Most Communists render lip service to Marxist ideology, but know as little about Marx as the average religious person knows about the Bible, the Torah, or the Koran. It does no harm to ask for Marxist literature. Anything which will delay or sidetrack the interrogation can be useful. Sometimes such literature will be supplied on demand, and the ingenious prisoner can contrive to waste the interrogator's time and energy in fruitless ideological discussions. The prisoner who knows the laws pertinent to his case can often quote it to help himself. Communist law is usually a farce, but it is a farce that Communists are expected to

maintain.

## **Warning**

In all cases, whether or not the prisoner undertakes to arouse the curiosity or the fears of the interrogator, great care must be taken not to arouse personal hostility. One of the most foolish and dangerous things a prisoner can do is to incur the personal hatred of the guards or the interrogators.

It is customary in most Communist prisons for the prisoner to be required to sign the written protocol of each day's interrogation. If the prisoner has had the foresight not to carry specimens of his own handwriting with him, he can sign the protocol in a distorted handwriting (which he should have memorized). However he signs, he should always first write, "I have read this document," and then cross his signature over this line of writing. This is legal in most Communist prisons and hinders the use of the signed protocol as if it were a signed confession. To the limits of his ability, the prisoner should refuse to countersign documents written in a language he does not understand.

## **Coping With Interrogator Tricks**

In addition to environmental influences, direct accusation, and moral pressure, the prisoner will have to deal with a great many tricks of the interrogation trade. There are so many of these that a full catalogue is impossible. Most of the tricks, however, are relatively simple, and once one has studied the pattern of trickery and types of common tricks outlined below, one should readily be able to spot most of them. It should be noted that these tricks are not confined to Communist interrogators, but are used by police and other interrogators all over the world. The defense suggested will be discussed in connection with the individual approaches.

A most obvious trick which is still surprisingly effective is to ask the

prisoner why he thinks he has been arrested. The trick is very simple and very often provokes the prisoner into making disclosures which the interrogator had never suspected. The best defense is some statement which fits into the cover arrangement. If, for example, the prisoner is posing as a national of some other country, he may infer that he has been arrested because it is the policy of the local government to persecute citizens of his country. Whatever explanation the prisoner volunteers should be along the line of imputing persecution, or error, or blackmail, or some other discreditable motive to the arresting authority. This is part of the basic posture of the prisoner of rejecting any implication that he could be guilty of an offense. As always, the reply should not be conspicuously clear. It is always safe to say one has no idea, but this reply is negative, and attacking is usually a biter defense.

Sometimes the prisoner will find himself accused or suspected of activities in which he has never engaged. This can be a trap, for it is quite possible that the prisoner, in his haste to establish an alibi by proving where he really was at a given time, will provide the arresting authorities with information of great importance which they did not have and may not even have suspected to exist.

Sometimes elaborate scenarios are set up to induce the prisoner to believe that he is not, or not yet, under interrogation. For example, he may find himself awaiting processing in a cell with two or three other "prisoners," one or more of whom are actually informers. These persons will seek to involve him in a harmless conversation. The wise prisoner never forgets that *there is no harmless conversation in prisons*. The prisoner may be asked to fill out some simple form concerning his belongings, and involving notification of relatives, employer, or friends. By filling out such a form the prisoner may provide the interrogator with a specimen of his handwriting and often a great deal of useful information. If forced to fill out any forms, the prisoner is well advised to use a distorted handwriting and to put in false or misleading information. Occasionally an interrogator will pose as a technical specialist. That is to say, a "guest" of the interrogation staff will be left alone with the prisoner on the pretense that the interrogation has been interrupted to "talk shop." Depending on the cover story that the person under interrogation is supporting, he should or should not go along with this trick.

A particularly devastating trick is to compel the prisoner to tell his cover story or legend backwards. It is, therefore, a good idea, when memorizing

a cover story, literally to learn it forwards and backwards.

When a question of alibi arises, that is to say, a determination of where the prisoner was at a certain time, the prisoner who has not lived his cover is especially vulnerable. For example, the prisoner may state that at a certain time he was at a certain hotel in a certain city. The interrogator makes a note of this and then, after some hours or days have passed, calls the prisoner in and says that he has investigated the alibi and asks the prisoner whether he noticed any unusual event during his alleged stay at the hotel. Conversely, the interrogator may tell the prisoner that at the time he was supposedly at the hotel, there was a hold-up or some other spectacular event. This he will do in the course of a "conversation" and the prisoner, in his effort to sustain his alibi may go along with the interrogator's fabrication and so trap himself. The interrogator, of course, may not let the prisoner know that he has been trapped. The best defense of a prisoner who has not been at the place he claims to have been is to plan in advance to claim a place where he could have been sleeping at the time something unusual occurred. He could, for example, in the hotel situation, easily have missed even a fire in some other part of the hotel through being asleep.

The interrogator may have an enormous file on his desk and look into it from time to time as if reading about the prisoner. He may speak as if he knows a great deal, dropping names, mentioning addresses, even telephone numbers. This type of technique can be exploited to the prisoner's advantage, for the interrogator, in his efforts to impress the prisoner, may let slip many valuable items of information, including the extent of his own ignorance.

Some interrogators have success with very simple tricks such as staring silently at the bridge of the suspects nose. This gives the suspect the feeling that the interrogator is looking through him. Most persons cannot stand a sustained silence. The wise prisoner will simply sit and stare back.

Sometimes interrogators resort to very persistent and detailed questioning about matters about which the prisoner has no knowledge, with the result that, when a question is slipped in to which the prisoner can provide a satisfactory answer, he will feel relieved and let fall information he should keep to himself.

Sometimes a prisoner is plied with questions which make no sense.

Most persons worry about losing their minds or at least self-control in such situations and naturally assume that they themselves are slipping, when in fact the interrogators are deliberately talking nonsense. It is a good idea to play around with this trick to keep the interrogator talking nonsense as long as possible, as this gains one time.

On occasion prisoners are stripped naked and made to stand before one or more interrogators for long periods of time. Sensitive individuals find this extremely trying. We all rely upon our clothing to sustain our image and our status. One good defense against this kind of thing is to begin to cough and sneeze and tremble and to show preoccupation with the physical rather than the mental result of such indignity.

A common expedient is to upgrade the prisoner's living conditions as he becomes more cooperative. He may begin prison life in a dank or mosquito infested cell and advance to a cell which may even have a carpet and a private toilet. He may be confined with other prisoners who pretend to have a dreaded disease, such as tuberculosis, a venereal disease, or a skin disease, or even leprosy.<sup>2</sup>

A prisoner of importance may fund himself in the hands of a "medical" specialist who gives him psychological examinations and may tell him he is on the verge of insanity and suggest that he take some injection. Everyone has heard rumors of the use of truth serums and other debilitating drugs, "brainwashing" drugs, and the like, and many persons are disposed to feel that no one could blame them for confessing when confronted with or injected with drugs.

As a matter of fact, a determined person can successfully resist truth serums and other chemical gadgets. It is obviously very frightening to be visited by a *soi disant* medical specialist suggesting shock treatments, nerve resection, frontal lobotomy, or castration as a means of "helping" the prisoner to become "normal." These expedients lose their effectiveness, however, if the prisoner realizes they are tricks, and that a prison administration will not usually countenance any such activities.

The Cuban interrogators have used a particularly devastating expedient to break the will of prisoners who resist: the false firing squad. A common variation of this trick is to have the prisoner brought out to witness the execution of some other prisoner. Sometimes the execution is real and sometimes it is staged. He then is told his turn is next, he is blindfolded and led to the stake, a volley of blank cartridges is fired. The

effect of this is naturally overwhelming, and is heightened when the prisoner is told, after he discovers he is still alive, that the next time he may not be so lucky and then he is given one more chance to tell his story. One defense against this trick is the knowledge *that he will not be executed as long as he has not provided the information the regime seeks*. As a matter of fact, prisoners nowadays are seldom executed without some form of trial, even in Communist areas, because of the effect upon the prison administration of allowing too much arbitrary mistreatment of prisoners. As far as is known, Communist services make little use of electromechanical "lie detectors" or polygraphs, apparently because the general hypocrisy and paranoia of Communist societies make it impossible to get reliable results. On occasion some trickery employing a machine represented to be a "lie detector" may be employed. The person interrogated is best advised to deny any imputations by the machine that he is lying.

A variant of interrogation trickery that is as old as the hills but still traps many persons is the "good guy", "bad guy" trick. This is worked as follows: One interrogator consistently harasses, insults and badgers the suspect, accusing him of lying, threatens him with violence, pushes him around and in general behaves very badly. The other interrogator is a friendly and rather well-intentioned man who plays the role of the friend of the prisoner, attempting to restrain the "bad guy" and protect the prisoner. Eventually the prisoner is left alone with the "good guy" who then attempts to win the prisoner's confidence by condemning his colleague. Strange as it seems, many a prisoner falls for this trick. Most persons are now aware of the existence of mirror windows or two-way mirrors and realize that someone may be watching them. Ordinary mirrors, however, are occasionally used so that the interrogator can watch the prisoner and his reactions while appearing to look elsewhere. The interrogator may go to some other part of the room to fumble with a drawer or some other object and casually make a remark to the prisoner which contains frightening implications, and observe how the prisoner reacts when he does not believe he is under observation.

Interrogators often seek to aggravate a prisoner by pointing out such signs of guilt as sweating, crossing and uncrossing of legs, nail biting, blushing, or aversion of the eyes. Persons not guilty of anything become exceedingly nervous and uncomfortable when under interrogation. In point of fact, only hardened criminals and aberrant personalities of certain types behave calmly in such a situation. The best defense is to say one is always nervous and ill-at-ease when interrogated or

questioned or even in conversations. The display of horrible photographs of bombing victims, murder victims, or other atrocities occurs occasionally. The interrogator calls to the prisoner's attention that he is responsible for atrocities. This provocation has two objectives. It can make a person feel guilty, or it can provoke him into attempting to justify the acts of the power he supports. The best defense is to deplore these misfortunes and to take no stand whatsoever with regard to them.

The prisoner finds himself in a particularly hazardous situation when he makes some small admission and the interrogator tries to use this to pry more information out of him. Of course, "the longest journey begins with a single step," but there is no law that says that a person, having made one step, necessarily has to take further steps. An admission or a slip of the tongue can be used by the resolute prisoner to lure the interrogator up a false trail.

Some interrogators will provide the prisoner with pencil and paper and demand that he write his life history. This is a very tiring and time-consuming activity. If the prisoner has maintained his posture of confusion effectively, there is nothing to prevent him from preparing a most confused biography. A great deal of time can be gained in this way, as well as much peace and quiet for recovery of equilibrium and review of the situation.

The prisoner should conceal all knowledge of foreign languages, as far as possible. The interrogator will be very interested to identify the foreign languages spoken by the prisoner and may use a number of tricks, such as suddenly addressing the prisoner in a language he is suspected to know, or speaking to a third person in this language, while observing the prisoner. He may say something uncomplimentary or startling about the prisoner, seeking to cause a visible reaction. If a strange language is spoken in his presence, the prisoner should always make the appearance of trying to hear and understand what is said. Many prisoners who know a foreign language act ostentatiously uninterested in such a situation, but the normal behavior of a man who does not know a language is to listen attentively in the effort to catch a word here and there, finally to give up and lose interest.

Prison informers are not usually brought forward while there is intensive interrogation, but may be after the prisoner has been interrogated or if he is held indefinitely in detention pending investigation. The prison informer can be exceedingly dangerous or useful depending upon the

skill of the intended victim. It is wise to regard all fellow prisoners as informers. Especially suspect, however, should be persons who warn the prisoner against other inmates of the jail, persons who are quite healthy in spite of the miserable prison conditions. The informer often has the task of discouraging a resistant prisoner. The prisoner should never lose sight of the fact that contact with an informer or other provocator gives him an opportunity to supply deception information to the interrogation staff, while pretending to be telling the truth in confidence.

The interrogator will tell the prisoner, "we are alone and can talk completely privately." A tape recorder may be ostentatiously displayed and turned off so the prisoner can talk "off the record." Many fall for this although common sense should tell them that no prisoner is ever alone with any interrogator. Even if several people are not listening in on concealed microphones and recording on concealed machines, what the prisoner tells the interrogator will be told to everyone needing to know and often enough to the world-at-large. In fact, no prisoner can ever be sure he is truly alone anywhere. Not only are peepholes and audio devices easily employable, and closed circuit TV a possibility, but the prisoner may find himself quartered in a cell with a person he has every right to trust and who is in fact trustworthy, in order that concealed devices can pick up their conversation. Stool pigeons confined in a cell with a prisoner may point out a "hidden" microphone and involve him in a discussion outside its range, where another microphone is known to them to be hidden.

## **Propaganda Exploitation**

One of the most painful ordeals the agent-prisoner has to undergo is the attempt of the apprehending service to exploit him for propaganda purposes. Efforts may be made to get him to denounce his sponsors and the regime he has been serving in favor of the Communist system, both on paper and in public before cameras. Depending on the intentions of the Communists, the prisoner may have to undergo a show trial or some other legal farce. Show trials usually require that the prisoner rehearse his part in the show until it is letter perfect. Commonly, he will be rehearsed in a story which displays him as pleading for mercy and as the victim and/or accomplice of a capitalist

machination.

One gambit used with success in many cases is to invite or allow the prisoner to write one or more letters to his loved ones. These letters must conform in many parts to a prescribed text. If the agent has prepared for this contingency in advance by arranging a simple open code with his loved ones, he can use this opportunity to convey useful information. The code must be simple, and cannot convey complicated ideas. Provision in such a code should be made to send at least the following messages:

- a. What is stated about my situation is (is not) true.
- b. I am (am not) being severely maltreated.
- c. I suspect (know) I was betrayed by \_\_\_\_\_
- d. The enemy knows (does not know) who my accomplices were.
- e. The enemy has a source in \_\_\_\_\_

In some show trials, prisoners have had the courage to denounce their rehearsed pleas. In the case of a prominent prisoner this action may have some value, as the foreign press may be represented or hear of it. However, in the average show trial no reporters other than Communist sympathizers will be in the courtroom. The most heroic conduct on the part of a prisoner ordinarily will not be mentioned by such persons. As a rule, therefore, the prisoner should aim to make himself as uninteresting and useless for propaganda purposes as possible. The propagandists do not like to put on a show with unreliable persons—or persons who show of symptoms of crippling mental or physical mistreatment which might arouse the sympathy of an audience. All trials end with a predetermined verdict on which courtroom conduct, unless it is bitterly hostile to the Communists, will have no effect.

The thing to bear in mind in refusing cooperation in propaganda exercises is that *in the long run* it will have no effect on the fate of the prisoner whether he complies or not. On balance he will probably be better off if he does not comply. For some reason, the Communists tend to inflict more suffering and demands on the weak than on the strong.

At times the prisoner may be trapped by technical devices used without his knowledge. He may be asked to review some propaganda statement out loud and then state what he thinks of it. A secret tape recorder will be set up to record his voice apparently saying what in fact is merely being read. It is, therefore, advisable for anyone given anything to read to read it in silence. Sometimes statements of the prisoner are taken out of context and merged with something he said elsewhere to make a damaging statement. There is little the prisoner can do to guard himself against an effort of this kind unless he says nothing at all, which is always a method to be tried but can seldom be sustained long if the interrogator chooses to employ drastic measures.

## **Penitentiary, Escape, Release**

Once the prisoner has passed through the sentencing procedure, the interest of the authorities in his case declines very sharply, although attempts may later be made to recruit him as an informer. The prisoner should bear in mind that entry into a penitentiary with a long sentence does not necessarily mean that he will serve this sentence.

Important captured Communist agents are from time to time exchanged for agents of the West. From time to time there are diplomatic negotiations, as in the case of the Cuban and the East German prisoners, resulting in the release of thousands of individuals who had resigned themselves to many years in prison. There is the possibility of escape. There is the possibility of the overthrow of a Communist regime. This is a danger that the regime is constantly preoccupied with. In the recent case of Czechoslovakia, an explosion of the entire Communist system in Europe was thought to be imminent. This can and will happen again and again, possibly with increasing frequency. The prisoner should bear these consoling factors in mind.

In the penitentiary or concentration camp the prisoner will again find human association. Among the prisoners he meets there will be persons with whom he can cooperate, but there will also be secret informers against whom he must defend himself and whom he can also exploit by telling them whatever it is he wants the authorities to believe. The prisoner should always beware of special officers in the prison who have

a stature higher than the guard personnel, especially "welfare officers" or "morale officers", or "political indoctrination officers". These are very often state security service men responsible not only for keeping an eye on the prisoners, but for watching the guards. Some of the guards will be extremely venal and others will hate the regime.

The prisoner should look upon himself in the penitentiary as continuing the fight in a special situation, not simply as a man who is out of action until release. His conspiratorial skills and training can be used to good advantage in the prison. He can learn a great deal more about conspiracy in the prison. This is, after all, the school of conspiracy in which the Communists learned their trade. A prison is, in a very real sense, a typical Communist country in miniature. Skillful and determined prisoners have effectively operated within such penitentiaries safely and for long periods of time to create great difficulties for the prison administration, organize escapes, subvert guard personnel, and sabotage the installation.

In considering escape plans and confederates, the prisoner must never forget that the prison administration from time to time may induce provocateurs to suggest escape, and thus dupe the prisoners, later visiting heavy additional punishment on them. A provocation of this kind generally destroys escape ideas for quite a long time.

A provocation which is elaborate, but sometimes is used, is to allow the prisoner to escape in company with another prisoner who is actually a member of the security service. Usually the escape is "miraculous" and the prime mover is the provocateur. The intent is to win the confidence of the prisoner. In a variant of this trick, the prisoners escape, and meet the confederates of the provocateur, who profess to distrust the prisoner, consider him a stool, become very angry, and threaten to kill him unless he can prove his loyalty by proving that he has been operating against the regime. The temptation to betray operations and contacts under such conditions is strong. The best defense is to say nothing on the grounds that one can never trust anyone and take one's chances, for it is after all by no means unusual for one prisoner to help another escape without ulterior motives.

The prospects and conditions governing physical escape and subsequent evasion of controls vary so widely that only very general rules can be given here:

- a. Be careful whom you trust (see above on types of provocations).
- b. Be realistic as to the prospects of success: it is one thing to get out of a prison; it is quite another to get out of the country, and it may be foolish to try physical escape if other factors are tending to promote the chances of early release. Prison guards may be lax because there are other obstacles to escape beyond the perimeter.
- c. Do not aggravate your situation by committing serious crimes in the escape effort; for example, murdering a guard will usually result in a death sentence. Of course, there may be occasions of active warfare in which the prisoner in his escape action is in effect undertaking guerrilla warfare. This is not commonly the case, however, for a secret agent arrested in alien territory.
- d. Beware of becoming involved in escape plots from which you may later want to withdraw. The others plotters may decide you know too much.
- e. Above all, never become involved with persons who are sincere but indiscreet.

Release from prison can come about, as already mentioned, through a number of factors over which the prisoner has no control. One of the ways to get out of enemy custody most easily is to get oneself recruited as a double agent, that is to say, to let oneself be "turned". The hostile service, of course, is aware of this, but sometimes has no choice but to try to recruit agents from among its captives. It is well for the agent to memorize the factors which can make him a desirable "turn around" for his captors:

- a. Special access or other capability to accomplish something for them.
- b. Lack of publicity in his case.
- c. Fundamental "job loyalty." If a man conveys the impression that he has desperately and loyally defended the interests of his sponsor so long as he thought the sponsor was in the right, only turning his coat when he came to see how wrong his sponsor was, he will win a great deal more trust than if he gives the impression of merely yielding to pressure.

d. "Unpacking." In general, before a person will be considered really "doubled," he will have had to make a full confession of his activities. It is possible to display the appearance of this provided the planning has been thorough, even while concealing vital information. The agent can best plan his ultimate "confession" (really a third cover story) at his leisure in his cell after he has had many sessions with his interrogators and has discovered what they actually know. He can devise a story which explains the known factors and makes him look attractive from the point of view of *potential* to do things the opponent wants him to do. Woven into the story should be factors which induce the opponent to think he can control the potential "double agent" through blackmail. For example, the prisoner in the course of "unburdening his soul" can confess to serious but not easily checkable misdeeds, such as embezzlement or fraud. Confession to crimes such as murder is fine, provided investigation by the opponent will confirm that such a crime was in fact committed, the guilty person not apprehended, and the prisoner could have committed it. The prisoner may "betray" an ambition to become a figure of power in his homeland which can only be realized by collaboration with the enemy. The prisoner must be very careful in pretending to become "converted" to the opponent's faith. Protested too much is usually suspect, but true believers seeking converts are often quite vulnerable to being deceived by the pretence of belief on the part of others. Easy capitulation is, of course, fatal to any hopes of emerging as a double agent.

Most prisoners in jail for clandestine operations find themselves free as a result of one or another event unexpectedly and suddenly. A word of caution is in order: There is a tremendous temptation to share one's joy and information with all one encounters in the first wild elation of release. This should be rigorously suppressed, for only harm can come from spontaneous disclosures, even when fully true, to unauthorized persons before coordination with the original sponsor has been effected. Publicity may for example alert the person who betrayed the prisoner, so that he may escape or destroy evidence. Whatever is said will be twisted by certain publications to the detriment of sponsors, friends, and relatives and thus may endanger innocent persons. Public recriminations against the Communists for treatment received in prison can hinder the release of other prisoners, and possibly damage secret operations which are under way. For maximum effect, release stories have to be enriched with information not known to the released or escaped person, and publicized at the right time and place. It may be

desirable to avoid any publicity, as this may be just what the opposition hoped to achieve.

Above all, the prisoner should never forget that one can turn almost any situation to one's advantage with a little luck and careful planning.

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1 Briefers should bear in mind that some agents, getting the full briefing, might decamp rather than take the risks.

2 Persons who have visible leprosy are no longer infectious. Tuberculosis bacteria exist everywhere in prisons anyway. Venereal disease cannot generally be communicated without the cooperation of the victim.

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