

Excerpts from
Tortured for Christ

by Richard Wurmbrand

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“We know about the love of Christ toward the Communists by our own love toward them. I have seen Christians in Communist prisons with fifty pounds of chains on their feet, tortured with red-hot iron pokers, in whose throats spoonfuls of salt had been forced, being kept afterward without water, starving, whipped, suffering from cold —and praying with fervor for the Com--munists. This is humanly in-explicable! It is the love of Christ, which was poured out in our hearts.

Later, the Communists who had tortured us were sent to prison, too. Under communism, Communists, and even Communist rulers, are put in prison almost as often as their adversaries. Now the tortured and the torturer were in the same cell. And while the non-Christians showed hatred toward their former inquisitors and beat them, Christians took their defense, even at the risk of being beaten themselves and accused of being accomplices with communism. I have seen Christians give away their last slice of bread

(we were given one slice a week) and the medicine that could save their lives to a sick Communist torturer, who was now a fellow prisoner.

These are the last words of Iuliu Maniu, a Christian and the former Prime Minister of Romania, who died in prison: *"If the Communists are overthrown in our country, it will be the most holy duty of every Christian to go into the streets and at the risk of his own life defend the Communists from the righteous fury of the multitudes whom they have tyrannized."*

In the first days after my conversion, I felt that I would not be able to live any longer. Walking on the street, I felt a physical pain for every man and woman who passed by. It was like a knife in my heart, so burning was the question of whether or not he or she was saved. If a member of the congregation sinned, I would weep for hours. The longing for the salvation of all souls has remained in my heart and the Communists are not excluded from it. In solitary confinement, we could not pray as before..

We were unimaginably hungry; we had been drugged until we acted like idiots. We were as weak as skeletons. The Lord's Prayer was much too long for us—we could not concentrate enough to say it. My only prayer repeated again and again was, "Jesus, I love You." And then, one glorious day I got the answer from Jesus: "You love me? Now I will show you how I love you." At once, I felt a flame in my heart, which burned like the coronal streamers of the sun. The disciples on the way to Emmaus said that their hearts burned when Jesus spoke with them. So it was with me.

I knew the love of the One who gave His life on the cross for us all. Such love cannot exclude the Communists, however grave their sins. Communists have committed and still commit horrors but “love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave...Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it” (Song of Solomon 8:6,7).

As the grave insists on having all—rich and poor; young and old; men of all races, nations, and political convictions; saints and criminals—so love is all-embracing. Christ, the Incarnate Love, wants all men to come to Him, including the Communists.

A minister who had been horribly beaten was thrown into my cell. He was half-dead, with blood streaming from his face and body. We washed him. Some prisoners cursed the Communists. Groaning, he said,

“Please, don’t curse them! Keep silent! I wish to pray for them.”