

# TRIAL BY CONFESSION

CONDEMNATION by Soviet authorities of trial by confessions is part of an intensive overhauling of Soviet legal practices now going on in the USSR.

Violations of the rights of Soviet citizens came in for strong criticism at the recent congress of the Soviet Communist Party. The present review has long been necessary, and it was brought to a head by the revelations that frame-up and false convictions were brought about under the influence of previous legal practices. Possibly the most vicious of these was the admission of "confessions" as the major evidence of guilt.

As the Soviet law publication now puts it, trial by confession "denies the need for a court to establish the absolute truth in each case, and permits the possibility of convicting a person on the basis only of the probability of some fact or other that is undergoing legal examination."

Again there is evidence that a socialist society contains within itself the basis for self-correction. It is clear that the process is unfolding in the Soviet Union. For three years this self-correction has been going on, and there's a lot more to come.

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