

Peking story (American prisoners in China) - correspondence, letters and ca...

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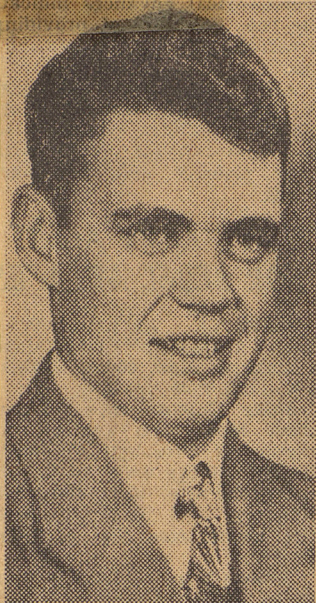
Dag Hammarskjölds saml.

Peking story - 1957

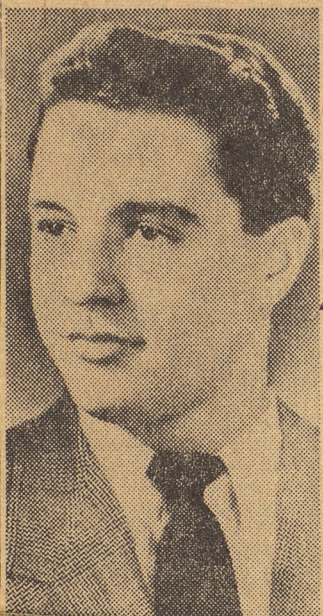
9 Sept.

Press clippings

Prisoners of Reds



John T. Downey



Associated Press

Richard G. Fecteau

U. S. VISITORS TELL OF 2 HELD IN CHINA

American Prisoner Is Said to Have Admitted He Held Intelligence Agency Job

PEIPING, Sept. 8 (Reuters) —Ten young Americans outlined today the results of their visit yesterday to two United States civilians, imprisoned in China since 1952 as spies.

In a statement that was held up for seventeen hours by "difficulties in mimeographing," the ten said they had found the two men, Richard G. Fecteau of Lynn, Mass., and John T. Downey of New Britain, Conn., to be in good condition.

The visitors are members of a group of forty Americans who have been touring China at the Communists' invitation after attending the Moscow Youth Festival.

The five who were permitted to see Mr. Fecteau, who is serving a twenty-year sentence, said he looked generally healthy and had no gray hairs.

"We could not detect any signs of mental or physical illness," their statement said.

They also reported that Mr. Fecteau admitted having once worked for the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The five others who saw Mr. Downey said he looked suntanned and had his hair closely cropped. The Connecticut man is serving a life sentence.

Use of Cameras Forbidden

The ten Americans were not allowed to take notes or use cameras during their visits with the prisoners, and they were expressly told not to ask questions about the men's alleged crimes or trial.

[Mr. Downey and Mr. Fecteau, both civilian employees of the United States Army, were captured in 1952 when an Air Force plane in which they were traveling was shot down in the Korean war.]

Both prisoners said they were confined in cells 15 by 12 feet, that they had one hour of exercise a day and they read much of the rest of the time.

Mr. Fecteau said he read Hsinhua (New China) news agency reports and such magazines as Sports Illustrated and The New Yorkers, as well as the works of Engels, Marx, Stalin, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, Cervantes, Dickens and Thomas Mann.

Both men have been taken on trips away from prison, the statement said. Last year they had a six-week conducted tour of China and three years ago they were given a tour of Peiping.

Mr. Downey, who is 27 years

old, said that after the tour last year he was "terribly impressed with all the new developments taking place."

"For the first time I realized the importance of land reform and the significance of collective farms," he was quoted as having commented.

The 30-year-old Mr. Fecteau told the visitors he had spent two and one-half years in solitary confinement before being sentenced.

"That was pretty tough," he said. "There was no one to talk to and nothing to read and nothing to do. I got a nervous tick, but that's gone now. I think the general practice is to be rough on prisoners before sentence and lenient afterward."

"My treatment is fine now," he added, according to the statement.

Before joining the Air Force, he said, he enlisted in the merchant marine with the hope of seeing the world and then attended Boston University with the hope of becoming a football coach.

He finally went to work for the Central Intelligence Agency because there was more money in it, he was reported to have said.

The young American visitors left today for Wuhan, whence they will go on to Nanking by steamer along the Yangtze River. They will also visit other cities in central and south China.

Five of them are to leave China by the middle of this month. The rest will return to Peiping at the end of September to attend National Day celebrations Oct. 1.

U. S. Agency Declines Comment

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8 (AP) —A spokesman for the Central Intelligence Agency said today he had no comment whatever to make on Mr. Fecteau's reported statement. Mr. Fecteau's mother denied earlier this year that her son had worked for the intelligence agency.

Chou Says No to 3 U.S. Mothers

Hong Kong, Jan. 24 (AP) — Communist Chinese Premier Chou En-lai today rejected an appeal by three American mothers for the release of their sons imprisoned by the Communists.

The mothers presented their

pleas through Mrs. Li Teh Chuan, Chinese Health Minister and Red Cross president.

The mothers are Mrs. Ruth Redmond of Yonkers, N. Y., Mrs. Jessie Fecteau of Lynn, Mass., and Mrs. Mary Downey of New

Britain, Conn. They are to leave Peking tomorrow for the U. S.

Peking Radio broadcast a statement by Chi Feng, assistant director of the International Relations Dept. of the Chinese Red Cross, saying:

"The Premier fully understands the feelings behind your appeal but your sons have violated Chinese laws and must be dealt with accordingly."

The Chinese Red Cross in Shanghai had suggested to Mrs. Redmond that she go to Peking to appeal. This had aroused speculation in Hong Kong that Chou might be getting ready to release the three Americans in a move designed to attract favorable world opinion. It was felt in Hong Kong that the Chinese Red Cross would not have made the suggestion without the Premier's knowledge and concurrence.

the WEEK-END POST

Earl Wilson

—Interviews—

Bill Cullen

Skolsky Tintypes:

Gene Kelly

Food, Fashion,

Books, Art

By John Gates:

**Why I Quit the
Communist Party**

**It Happened
All Over...**

By Paul Sann

Lerner, Lyons

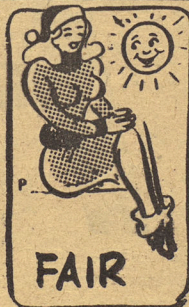
**TV Highlights
for the Week**

Jimmy Cannon

Weather

**Fair,
high in 30s.**

**Tomorrow,
cloudy,
possible snow.
High, 30.**



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U.S. VISITORS SPLIT ON CHINA REPORT

Brooklyn Student Preparing
Own Version of Interview
With 2 Jailed Americans

WUHAN, China, Sept. 9 (Reuters) — Larry Moyer of Brooklyn is preparing his own version of the controversial interview he and four other touring Americans had with a United States civilian imprisoned in Peiping.

Mr. Moyer, one of forty American youths visiting Communist China in defiance of United States policy, spoke up for some members of the party who accused the report's two final authors of "deliberately withholding information from the press for reasons of their own, and deliberately editorializing the report."

The target of the charges were Jake Rosen, chief organizer of the delegation, and Robert Williamson. After a preliminary meeting with Mr. Moyer and two others who had visited John T. Downey Saturday, Mr. Rosen and Mr. Williamson prepared the final draft of the report, issued yesterday.

Men Imprisoned in 1952

The report said Mr. Downey, of New Britain, Conn., and another imprisoned American, Richard C. Fecteau of Lynn, Mass., both looked well. It described Mr. Downey, serving a life sentence, as suntanned and in good health. Both men were imprisoned in 1952 on spying charges.

[They were captured when an Air Force plane in which they were traveling was shot down during the Korean war.]

But Mr. Moyer contended that the report should have made it clear that during the interview Mr. Downey seemed nervous and excited. He said it was very difficult to get Mr. Downey to talk.

At the start of the interview, at which prison officials were present, Mr. Downey replied in short, sharp phrases and often was "almost speechless," Mr. Moyer said.

Mr. Downey's hands and feet trembled badly, Mr. Moyer said. Mr. Rosen, a New Yorker, admitted: "As I shook hands with him, his hand trembled in mine."

While dissension broke out among the Americans over the

Downey report as they arrived here in central China from Peiping, there was no objection to the report on the visit of five other Americans with Mr. Fecteau, who is serving a twenty-year sentence.

The young Americans defied their Government's ban on travel to Communist China when they came here after attending the recent Moscow Youth Festival.