

Tarov Relates Horror of Prison and Exile Under Stalin Regime

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER
RENEWED MENACE TO CHINA
Japan will not miss its opportunity to make further inroads into China while the other imperialists are preoccupied with the Ethiopian situation.

aid the penetration into Outer Mongolia. But the attack on Outer Mongolia can only mean the prelude to war against the Soviet Union.
ATTACK ON SOUTH CHINA...
The plundering of China is not to be confined to North China alone. The situation at Swatow threatens to become the pretense for the beginning of Japanese invasion into South China.

WHICH THEATRE OF WAR?
There have been previous indications that Japan wishes to add to its present booty Outer Mongolia. This territory is not nearly so important economically as Manchuria. But its control by Japan would determine the main theatre of war in the coming struggle against the U.S.S.R. Manchuria is too close to Japan to suit the Japanese strategists. Soviet aircraft are a menace not to be neglected.

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ourselves, in protest against the bestial treatment of the prison administration. We were often beaten, the guards fired their guns through our cell windows, with the result that one of our comrades, Yessayan was shot in the chest. We demanded a commission, but, as a rule, we were refused.

The Hunger Strike
Then, 485 imprisoned Communists went on a hunger strike that lasted 18 days. A Commission arrived, transferred the "stetive prisoners" to other penitentiaries, and exiled the wounded Yessayan to Siberia. Thus, it "improved" our position. And then, another Commission came next year and extended our sentences. For this reason all of us who were imprisoned in the Vorikino-Uralsk penitentiary went on a hunger strike, in protest against this unheard of lawlessness. We began the strike on December 11, 1933. On December 29 the hunger strikers were dragged from their cells—in order to search the latter. Then they began feeding us by force. Unheard of scenes took place, desperate fights broke out between the jailers and the hunger-strikers. The latter were of course ignominiously beaten up. In our exhausted condition we were subjected to forced feeding by means of rubber tubes. The treatment was indescribable: thick rubber hoses was shoved down our throats, the strikers were dragged into the "feeding cell" like dead cattle. There was not a single case of surrender.

On the 15th day of the strike our strike committee decided to discontinue it because many of the famished Communists tried to commit suicide. One of the G.P.U. functionaries from the Ural District appeared in the penitentiary and threatened the starving Communists with transfer to the Solovskiy Islands. Our comrades, of course, drove him from their cells. The decision of the committee to call off the hunger strike was accepted by all the strikers unanimously. The G.P.U. representative was compelled to make a verbal promise (for some reason he refused to put it in writing) that all those who had served their sentences would be freed. Since my sentence terminated on January 22, 1934, I was transferred to the cell of those about to be "freed."

Shachtman Phil. Meeting
PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Oct. 15.—Warming up for his national tour, comrade Max Shachtman opened the season for the Workers Party educational forum here last Sunday evening with a lecture on "The Truth About Trotskyism."

The speaker dealt very effectively with Olga's slenderous pamphlet, "Trotskyism, Counter-Revolution in Disguise," exposing all the falsity and rottenness of the fight against the living leader of world Bolshevism and the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. A mass of evidence was produced, much of it from Olga's own writings, to expose the Trotsky baiting campaign. The audience was attentive and asked many questions. Comrade Shachtman summed up and spoke of the need for a new revolutionary International of the working class.

The "Interview"
"Tell me, please, do you consider your views counter-revolutionary, or don't you? In your opinion, is the Opposition and its activities counter-revolutionary or not? Do you think that Trotsky, for example, is the leader of the counter-revolutionary vanguard of the bourgeoisie, or don't you?" In answer I went into a detailed exposition of my views as to the Opposition, headed by Trotsky, and in turn I asked such questions as, "And, what do you say, dear comrade, are these views of mine counter-revolutionary? Do you consider counter-revolutionary our Oppositionist work from 1923 up to 1930 against the Right opportunist tendency in the Party? Indeed, in 1930 Centrism also began to fight against the Rights. Is one to consider this struggle counter-revolutionary too? As regards Trotsky, in my opinion, he is the most unwavering revolutionist de-

Given Long Terms Without A Trial Revolutionists Are Beaten and Shot

voted to the cause of the world proletariat. I consider him my ideological companion and comrade, I have no wish to fool the party, I can not consider as counter-revolutionary the revolutionary views of the Opposition."
My interlocutor would sit mum, with his head on his chest. Incidentally, this chap was a fine fellow with some brains. But apparently he had had little occasion to listen to Oppositionists themselves, but he had heard a great deal about them from the official sources. . . . I had an identical conversation with one of the representatives of the local section of the G.P.U. I remarked, among other things: "What is your opinion of such an act of lawlessness as this: I have passed six months in exile already without any sentence being passed, after serving a three year prison term." The assistant chief of the G.P.U. in answer pulled out from a drawer some kind of a paper and read me a new sentence, three years in exile. But for some unknown reason he refused to allow me to read the sentence myself. This, of course, was a common trick on the part of the apparatus hirelings. They probably wished to scare me with a new sentence so as to make me switch on the Opposition. Here I became completely convinced that these miserable functionaries had long ceased being Communists, that I had to deal with a gang of hard-boiled bureaucrats who were incapable of understanding the integrity of sincere revolutionary words. Nevertheless I decided to go to Moscow, and personally speak with the upper crust of the party apparatus, in order to find out at last precisely what it represents, what sort of people were they who shriek about revolution and socialism and communism and compel me to consider my purely communist views as counter-revolutionary. In May I sent a telegram to the C.E.C. with a request for permission to go to Moscow to have some personal interviews concerning my case. This time I sent a telegram, with an answer prepaid. But it was useless—there was no answer. My attempts to gain permission to go to Moscow for personal interviews were not crowned with success. Then I decided to go without any permission. En route it became all too clear to me that no one would listen to me in Moscow, and that I would be immediately arrested for having fled from exile. I had no recourse left, except to escape abroad.

Communist Despite All!
In jail, in exile, and emigration I remained what I was, a Communist, a devoted defender of the Soviet power and of the socialist construction. The land of the Soviets is my fatherland, in the socialist sense of the term. Under a different rule, under the rule of the enemies of the proletariat it would be alien to me. I am always ready to the last moment of my life to fight for the land of the Soviets. Is it conceivable that under a genuine proletarian rule the struggle against bureaucrats, thieves, and plunderers who unscrupulously appropriate Soviet wealth and who are the cause for ruining hundreds of thousands in hunger and cold—is it conceivable that a struggle, or even a mere protest against these scoundrels would be considered a counter-revolutionary crime? For my fight was for internal proletarian party democracy; I fought for a Leninist program, and Leninist statutes of our party. I fought and will continue to fight against the self-appointed leadership, and a party apparatus bound by mutual oath. For, according to the statutes of our party, the elected party, trade union and Soviet organs must be re-elected annually from top to bottom. But what do we see today? The post of party secretary has become a sort of speciality. If, for example, a Kabyani had served 8 years as secretary in the C.E.C. of Georgia until the membership would no longer tolerate him not only as the secretary of the Georgian C.E.C. but in the party as a whole, then this specialist in the craft of General Secretaryship departs from Tiflis, on the good counsel of the supreme authorities of course, and hies himself to Alma Ata, again as General Secretary of Kazakhstan. And a Mirzoyan belongs to the same species as Kabyani—from Baku to Uralsk as the secretary of the District Committee. It is precisely for this reason that the party leadership feels itself absolutely under no obligation to the party masses who presumably elected him. They recognize only supreme authority of the upper crust of the party apparatus. Hence flows the shameless servility and the shameful mutual covering-up of the bureaucratic upper-crust. Of course, under these conditions the party mass puts no trust in the leadership. As regards the non-party working class masses, the latter see the party only in the shape of the apparatus, and put no trust in the Communist Party as a whole. Hence flows the administrative pressure upon the party and the working class. That is why all jails, Solovskiy Islands and exile areas are crammed today with party and non-party workers. And there is no need to talk about the peasants.

is being written in the official press, and so much pother made by outstanding officials—as if they, too, are not loth to struggle against bureaucracy. But in reality, let some one dare point a finger at a bureaucrat—and it is prison, or exile, or, at any rate, unemployment. And do any of you know what it means to be unemployed under the present regime? It means outright ruin for the family of the unemployed. He wanders from one office to the next, and is refused every where, despite the fact that suitable work is available. Everywhere every conceivable personage finds employment, there are jobs for thieves and swindlers. But there is no job for a man who comes out against the bureaucracy.

Destroying the Revolution
At party and workers' meetings the assembled are in complete apathy. They have to be almost driven to meetings. Not only non-party but even party workers are very reluctant to go to meetings. At the meetings, "bold" speeches can be made only by the party and trade union parrots. They can be so bold as to always and everywhere praise the leadership, beginning with Stalin, and then down the line according to rank. Then a resolution is presented, and the assembled are terrorized by labelling as counter-revolutionists anyone who dares to object even to a single point in the resolution. Naturally, such a situation in the country tends to discredit the authority of the Soviet power and of the Revolution. The party leadership has despotically terrorized the entire party. In the party there is a complete lack of the conscious party discipline which was once the pride of our party. Barracks discipline reigns in the party, a mechanical fulfillment of orders. Hence, it is easily understandable why all sorts of grafters, charlatans, and shady characters of every description—thieves of the "gentleman" type—live very much at ease and are very bold in the party, the Soviet, and trade union apparatuses, and consider their native duty to look upon Soviet wealth as their own "property." And who is there to supervise them? Who is there to punish them for the plundered national resources? The rank and file Communists? Sad to say, the latter have been frightened by prisons and the Solovskiy Islands, where languish for many long years the boldest Communist and non-party workers, under lock and key, behind bars. Is it really possible that the world proletariat will maintain silence while in the land of the So-

victs the imprisoned communists hang out the red banner from their cell-bars on the anniversaries of the October Revolution, and the turnkeys rip it down with rakes? . . .
Even the Infants Persecuted
Unfortunately I am unable here to dwell on all the abominations perpetrated in the Soviet prisons under the regime of the usurers. I will depict only a single scene that I witnessed. In the Petropavlovsk prison, in a small cell, some 25 cubic meters in volume, are lodged 35 women, eight with suckling infants. The cell is ventilated by a peep-hole. I shall never forget those tiny emaciated bodies—I saw them through the peep-hole of our cell. The children stood in line, clasping their mothers' bosom in order to obtain their infinitesimal ration of fresh air at the peep-hole. Let the world proletariat look upon this brand of shame on the faces of the jail-keepers of the plebsitary regime. Is it conceivable that there were no communists in this city? Is it possible that they remained uninterested in the jails of their city where thousands were suffering from hunger, cold and filth? Wasn't there a prosecuting attorney? One is ashamed even to mention this title. There were! They were all there! Even a member of the Central Committee was in this city at the time—Mikoyan, by name. His picture was printed on the front page of the local paper. But Mikoyan was a personage in transit, his arrival could serve only as the signal for arresting an additional hundred women with suckling babes. One can refrain from mentioning Mikoyan. But what were the local communists doing? Nothing! They have no independent voice. They haven't the right to think. For example, if a suckling babe is in the hands of an arrested working or peasant woman, then it means that the baby is guilty, it must sit in its mother's lap in a small cell with 35 women, and stand in line for "fresh" air.

The brazen bureaucracy of the Stalinist regime will label my words counter-revolutionary. Let them label them as they will. My duty is to tell the truth, and only the truth, for truth is the most dependable weapon in the hands of the proletariat against its enemies. Indeed, if all the working class organizations told only the truth and nothing but the truth, then the victory of the world proletariat over its enemies would have been assured long ago.

A. TAROV.
August 4, 1935

Plenum Meets; Plans A Campaign Against War

The third plenary meeting of the National Committee of the Workers Party, held at New York October 4-9, adopted resolutions on the main party problems and issued the call for the second convention of the party which is to convene December 26 at New York. The intensive discussion which has been taking place in the party ranks since the June meeting of the N. C. is to be continued at membership meetings and in the party internal bulletin until the convention.

The plenum held open sessions with the New York party members and numerous delegations from other cities in attendance. Party opinion on the main questions, which has crystallized in the course of the three-months' discussion, was reflected also in a strong consolidation of the leadership at the plenum. All the important political resolutions presented by the Political Committee were adopted by a vote of 18 to 2.

The first point on the agenda was devoted to a discussion of the Leninist position on the war situation and the preparation of the party to meet the test of war. Party activity in the next period is to be organized around a campaign on the question of war, public agitation being supplemented by intensive study and discussion in the party ranks. In addition to the public statement issued by the plenum the Political Committee was instructed to prepare material for the branches in the campaign.

vious discussion, was likewise rejected by the plenum. The reference to our French comrades as "capitulators" was branded as impermissible slander which has nothing in common with the attitude of the Workers Party.

Comrades Stamm and Oehler were similarly isolated on the general resolution dealing with tactics and methods of building the party and our attitude toward opponent organizations. The resolution on the internal situation drew attention to the repeated violations of party discipline committed by the Oehler-Stamm group and the repeated censures and warnings of the political committee and the protests of party branches against their disruptive course. The resolution specifically provided that the opposition comrades are to be assured full party democratic rights in the pre-convention discussion as hitherto. Their resolutions and articles are to be published in the internal bulletin for the information of all party members and they are to be given adequate time to present their point of view in the branch and general membership discussion meetings. As a further safeguard of the rights of the minority, elections to the party convention are to take place on the basis of proportional representation. At the same time the plenum resolution gave the Oehler-Stamm group a final warning that further violations of discipline and acts of disruption and disloyalty to the party will not be tolerated.

Following the plenum the party is swinging into action through its campaign on the war question and in other fields, while also carrying forward intensive discussion in preparation for the December convention.

CHICAGO MEETING
"ETHIOPIA—
Beginning of a New World War"
Speaker:
MAX SHACHTMAN
SUNDAY, OCT. 27, 2:30 P.M.
Capitol Bldg., Room 412
189 No. State Street.
ADMISSION 15c
UNEMPLOYED FREE
Aus: Chicago branch of W. P.

International Workers School

55 EAST 11th STREET, N. Y. C.
Second Year—Fall 1935. Beginning October 21, 1935.

- 1. ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES—Martin Abern.
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2. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF MARXISM—Ben Borkeston.
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Lectures on the A. F. of L., unionization in the basic industries, the capitalist political parties, the third party movements, the Socialist and Communist parties.
5. THEORETICAL SYSTEM OF KARL MARX—Rubin Grote.
Thursday, 7:00-8:30 P.M. Seven sessions.
An advanced course which will consider the origins and social roots of Marxism, the materialist conception of history, Marxian economics, the class struggle and the political party, theory of the state and working class internationalism.
6. STATE AND REVOLUTION—J. Weber.
Friday, 8:40-10:10 P.M. Eight sessions.
The course will deal with the origin and development of the state from the earliest times to present day capitalism. A detailed discussion of the capitalist state machinery, the attitude of the working class towards the capitalist state and the role of the workers' state.

Fees: \$1.00 per course, 50c payable at time of registration.
For information, write to: International Workers School, 51 East 11th Street, New York City.