

HUNGER STRIKE IN STALIN'S PRISONS

Heroic Struggle of Revolutionary Political Prisoners Against Despotic GPU Is Told by Dr. Ciliga in Fourth Installment of Series

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER

Decline of the British Empire

Of all the great powers Britain is today the most vulnerable, the one that has most to fear from the inevitable changes that an unstable capitalism will bring forth...

By ANTON CILIGA

May 22, 1933 was the day on which our prison term expired. On March 21, we sent a declaration to the C. E. C. and the collegium of the G. P. U. demanding that we be given permission to depart unhindered from Russia upon the expiration of our sentence.

The GPU agent Dupuis told me that in that case he refused to accept my demands and would send me back to Verkne-Ural'sk. Once again I was placed in an automobile and carried off. But not to Verkne-Ural'sk. They threw me into the cellar of the jail for criminals under the Chelyabinsk militia. I was locked into a damp, cold and dark cell. The electric light burned night and day. I spent three months in this cellar without ever leaving it for a minute, without even seeing the prison yard or the sun.

I immediately began my hunger strike here. I knew that my comrades were also on a hunger strike somewhere, because we had taken into consideration all the possibilities beforehand, and had planned how to meet them. We had agreed that in the event of our being separated, or being taken to some other place than Moscow, we would begin a hunger strike immediately.

"Citizen Ciliga," said Dupuis, "the representatives of the collegium have something to communicate to you." "Well, what is it?" I said rubbing my eyes, unblinking my glasses, and half-raising myself on the bench.

"We will not permit you to commit suicide," said citizenship Andrejev. "We will assign two GPU agents to your cell, and all your things will be immediately removed."

A short time ago, I succeeded in obtaining permission to depart. Comrade Dragutch, a former member of the C. E. C. of the Yugoslav Communist Party, in his struggle to achieve this aim is still incarcerated in the secret dungeons of Soviet Guiana, the terrible Solovetski Islands, because he attempted to cross the frontiers illegally after permission to depart legally was denied him.

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But inasmuch as my case, coupled with what the commission had to tell me, was such a shocking instance of lawlessness, such a cynical breach of even formal rights and proletarian morals, the prosecutor's office decided, quite reasonably, that it should best be done "without its knowledge".

"The question of the hunger strike and of artificial feeding has already become a secondary question," I began coldly and deliberately. In answer to the unheard-of decision of the G.P.U. and of the Soviet Government, and the refusal to allow me to return home although I have already served the prison sentence which you yourselves imposed upon me in 1930...

The next morning I sent a telegram to the Moscow collegium of the GPU and the C. E. C. of the U. S. S. R. containing a declaration similar to the one I had made to Andrejev.

Reasons for the Struggle We were so stubborn in insisting upon permission to depart abroad for several reasons. First of all, we came to Russia in 1920, only for a temporary stay and were supposed to return home after accomplishing certain work. By 1933, our mission had long been fulfilled. Secondly, there were no possibilities in Russia for doing revolutionary work as we understood it, and besides we had infinitely greater possibilities abroad. Thirdly, after our harsh experience in Russia we wanted to become directly acquainted also with the experience and the ideas of the Western European and American labor movement.

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In the eyes of the present Stalinist leadership, which is conducting a nationalist policy, every Pole and German must be held suspect, if not directly considered as a "spy". I am personally inclined to consider this psychology as the underlying reason for the monstrous crime of shooting fifty Polish communists.

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"You mean to say that since Columbus' route from the Mediterranean to India was via America, therefore my itinerary from the Urals to Europe is via Irkutsk and Kamchatka." I said to him in a similar tone. "But no," I said. "I want to go from the Urals West to Europe. Taking into consideration the withdrawal of an additional prison term, I withdrew the question of the protest-suicide. But I continue with the hunger strike for permission to depart home to Europe."

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British Imperialism Faces Dilemma As Line-Up in Europe Changes

By MAURICE SPECTOR

Galvanized by the Blackshirt successes in Ethiopia, British moral indignation is running high. At the League Council, Anthony Eden virtuously denouncing the bombings and use of poison gas, called for the application of fresh sanctions.

realization that shifts British attention swiftly from the banks of the Rhine to the headwaters of the Nile. An Anglo-French alliance would bring the Italian upstart's threat to the Empire and its communications to a halt. But the price that Baldwin-Eden would have to pay—sanctions and military action against Germany—is so high and the consequences so perilous, that British policy is momentarily in a state of confusion.

others may follow... The great political risk of giving Germany a free hand in the East is, however, that a challenge to British interests would follow at a later stage. These pre-occupations of British Imperialism, the most vocal recent supporter of the League, strikingly manifest the humbug of the sanctions policy as a means of struggle against imperialism.

A GPU Coup When the GPU saw that matters were heading toward an extensive struggle, it executed a maneuver, deciding to remove us from Verkne-Ural'sk on a devious pretext. A few days prior to the expiration of our prison term, on May 18, 1933 we were told to surrender our correspondence, and to get our things ready. To our inquiry as to our destination, Mizukov, the warden, replied—Moscow. To the question as to the purpose of the journey, we received the answer: "Can't say." Apparently, in order to discuss the matter you raised in your declaration.

The Cabinet is prepared to give the French General Staff the required guarantees against a German invasion of either Belgium or France. But the section of the Cabinet which is hostile to Eden's pro-French orientation, and sympathetic to Hitler's offer of a twenty-five year truce, points out that France is tied up with pacts in the East, (USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia). They ask why Great Britain should be involved in a war, or the defence of France in the West, which would be precipitated by French commitments to her Allies in the East.

"Power Politics" The "Nations" and "New Republics" are all engaged in touting that "collective security goes, power politics returns. . . if international law is to be effective, agreements must be uniformly respected." These liberal formulas are among the great contemporary "democratic" lies. Power politics, the politics of imperialism, of the struggle for markets, have never ceased to rule since the peace of Versailles. Or are we to be treated to a fresh dose of Wilsonian diplomacy. When did this "collective security" come in?

When we were taken away, the isolator sent us off with the warmest wishes, but also with some doubts as to whether we were not being simply removed to another prison. Our possessions were examined, our persons were searched. We were placed in two autos, comrades Deditch and Dragutch in one, myself in the other. The machines started together, but on the road, the auto with my comrades pulled ahead, and disappeared in a cloud of dust. I never saw my comrades again. They had separated us. We rode the entire day, and toward evening we arrived in the city of Chelyabinsk. I was taken to the Chelyabinsk political prison, which held at that time from 50 to 80 people (S.R.'s, social democrats, Zionists, anarchists, and a few communists).

The Pro-German Orientation The Cabinet is prepared to give the French General Staff the required guarantees against a German invasion of either Belgium or France. But the section of the Cabinet which is hostile to Eden's pro-French orientation, and sympathetic to Hitler's offer of a twenty-five year truce, points out that France is tied up with pacts in the East, (USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia). They ask why Great Britain should be involved in a war, or the defence of France in the West, which would be precipitated by French commitments to her Allies in the East.

En Route to Irkutsk I declared a hunger strike. After these abominations, the question of the protest-suicide was again on the order of the day. But a few days later, shortly after I began the strike, again in the middle of the night, a group of GPU agents burst into my cell and informed me of the decision to remove me to exile by force. They packed my things, loaded them into an auto, shoved me in, and drove to the Chelyabinsk railway station. Thus, towards the end of July, accompanied by a convoy of four GPU agents I was taken to Irkutsk.

Chelyabinsk and Hunger Strike When I announced in the prison office that in view of the trick with regard to my alleged journey to Moscow, and my being separated from my comrades, I would immediately begin a hunger strike, the head of the Chelyabinsk isolator,

The British Cabinet is in a quandary. The gorged Empire is caught between the pincers of more dynamic imperialisms in the East and West. The Italian conquest of Ethiopia would spell more than merely a diplomatic defeat of Eden. Mussolini would bestir the Mediterranean and challenge the British pickings in Egypt, Palestine and the Near East generally. It is this

Neither war nor fascism can be overthrown without a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist-imperialist order that breeds them. The most powerful force for the destruction of both Hitler and Mussolini, and for the creation of the Soviet United States of Europe, would be the French Revolution, that, and not the Popular Front of class peace.

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