

Reiss Describes Inner Life of Stalin's G.P.U.

(Continued from page 1)

When his chief, an intimate friend of his, who knew very well this was a lie, was asked how he had failed to notice that S. was a spy, he replied: A spy does not impart his secrets. An important G.P.U. functionary, Sh., was arrested, and, of course, charged with espionage. His wife was immediately thrown out of their apartment. Sh. was a typical G.P.U.'er, in the worst sense of the term. Comrades who knew him intimately were in a quandary: Why had this man been arrested? Was it perhaps because he knew languages? Was this perhaps held suspect by the authorities?

In the G.P.U. there worked a German. His fate had long been decided, but for one reason or another he had not yet been arrested. Apparently they were waiting for some suitable trial. A pure-blooded German of the Aryan type, he was admirably suited for the role of a Nazi in some public trial. It was indispensable to "liquidate" him, if only because he was a German. Either because no suitable trial cropped up, or for some other reason, a different method was applied in his case. He was sent to Spain, and disappeared there. In general, it is by no means a rare practice to send people to Spain for the purpose of liquidating them.

Dog Gives Clue

A member of the G.P.U. fails to show up for work. Was he arrested? Worried comrades begin to wonder. No one, of course, dares to make inquiries. There was still hope that X. had gone abroad, where he had done work. Sometime later a friend of his receives a letter from X's servant abroad, with an inquiry as to what she should do with X's dog. She had written to the master, but received no reply. Thus, because a dog had been left abroad, news of the arrest of the dog's owner arrived in Moscow.

Several years ago, one of the G.P.U. functionaries detailed to "work" on the street and to compile reports about the prevailing moods, in making his report to the authorities was rash enough to say that in re potatoes, things were really very bad. Not potatoes, but some sort of nut. Couldn't something be done about it? He was clapped in jail, and, as is sometimes the case, forgotten. He received no packages, no visits; his relatives were afraid to inquire. A year and a half passed. An investigating magistrate, on finding the case among the old files, proposed in the nucleus that he be set free. (At that time minor cases concerning members could still be brought up in the nuclei.) No decision was reached on the question. The authorities kept dragging the case, but no one doubted that the arrested man would be freed either this day or the next. Presently, some one again reminded himself of the case, and this time the authorities finally decided: To be shot in 24 hours.

To Avoid Fuss

Nowadays they try to make arrests with the least amount of fuss. Men are not seized either at home or in the department—so as not to cause panic. People are not arrested—they simply disappear. For example, a meeting is in session; a man gets up to go to the toilet and does not return. This attracts least attention. No one, of course, asks what happened to him.

After Yagoda's removal and the smashing of the central apparatus of the G.P.U., they began to recall foreign agents to Moscow. As a rule they are recalled by some sort of ruse. For example, X. is informed that he had been compromised and would have to transfer to another country, and "en route" he might drop in on Moscow. U. is recalled on some other harmless pretext. In Moscow, they "disappear."

Arthur Stashevsky worked in Spain ostensibly as a trade representative. But in reality as one of the leading functionaries of the G.P.U. After Tukhachevsky's trial and connection with the arrest of Unschlicht and other Polish communists, it was decided in Moscow to recall Stashevsky as well. But inasmuch as his wife and daughter were working in the Soviet pavilion at the Paris exhibition, Moscow was afraid lest he refuse to return. The resourceful minds in the G.P.U. thought up the following stratagem: Stashevsky's daughter (without her father's knowledge) was sent from Paris to Moscow with some exhibits, while Stashevsky himself was called to Paris from Spain. In Paris two surprises awaited him: an urgent request by wire to come to Moscow and the information that his daughter was already there (a hostage!). Ac-

ording to the reports of Stashevsky's friends, neither he nor his daughter ever reached their Moscow apartment. Apparently they were seized at the border. Stashevsky, incidentally, was considered a 100 per cent Stalinist. He was given an interview by Stalin "himself" and received personal instructions from him prior to his departure for Spain. In 1935, he demonstrated his loyalty by betraying Sirtsov, who had been rash enough to make some critical comments on Stalin's "activity" around the corpse of Kirov.

Woman Accused

An old Polish communist, a woman, R., was arrested (her husband had been spared from jail only by a premature death). She was accused of having joined the C.P.S.U. on instructions from the sub-Bureau of the Polish General Staff, in whose employ she had allegedly been since 1921. Bruno Yassensky and other Poles are in jail on similar charges. Inasmuch as they are not apprehending real spies, they are arresting and shooting innocent people.

Even in the G.P.U. hardly any one knows what happens in the inner prison to those arrested. A case better known than the others is that of the aged Friedman, an old Chekist whom Stalin, for some reason, was bent on including in the Zinoviev trial. He was subjected to many long months of torture to extort confessions from him. Nor did they lose hope of breaking him until a few days before the opening of the trial. But Friedman remained adamant. The story is that his last words were: You can shoot old Friedman only once, but no one can make a whore out of him.

During examination, in most cases, the investigating magistrates do not, apparently, talk frankly with the prisoners, i.e., they conduct the investigation in accordance with orders issued from above, without themselves knowing the truth officially. But, of course, they are very well aware of what is involved.

Scoff At Confessions

In Moscow the "confessions" are openly scoffed at. Very popular are anecdotes such as the following: Alexei Tolstoy, upon being arrested and examined, confessed that he was the author of Hamlet, etc.

Because of the number of arrests, and the enormous number of cases, virtually all the functionaries of the G.P.U. have become investigating magistrates. For the same reasons, no packages are permitted in jail. With tens of thousands in prison, the sending of packages is allegedly impossible "in practice". On the same grounds, many are shot: There is no room in the prisons.

Political prisoners are now usually sent into exile together with ordinary criminals, and, in addition, the criminals are extended the "right" of stripping the political prisoners bare. It is hardly surprising if in these conditions many exiles never reach their place of exile, but perish on the way.

After Yagoda's arrest and the massacre in the G.P.U., the most incredible stories began to circulate among the foreign agents and a real panic ensued. In order to check it somehow, the G.P.U. sent out a circular letter throughout the entire foreign network. Its contents were approximately as follows: The C.C. has removed the gang at the head of our department. We must unfortunately admit that our heads (Yagoda and the rest) turned out to be bandits. The chief task for us and for you is to struggle against the Fascist-Trotskyites: (1) struggle against the Trotskyites; (2) keep a strict check on your subordinates.

Demoralization Reigns

It must be said that in connection with the recent trials, the important functionaries of the G.P.U. abroad had to "agitate" their subordinate foreign agents nights on end, so great was the demoralization these trials produced even in this milieu.

According to the latest reports, Z. Unschlicht (sister of Unschlicht), an oppositionist, who was arrested in 1934 and who had worked in the Comintern, died in the isolator. (At the time of her arrest, she was taken from her sick-bed.)

The well known Ukrainian communist Kotsulinsky has been shot.

The Bulletin (of the Russian Opposition) is widely read in the G.P.U. Gide's book, or, more precisely, stories concerning this book, and Gide's taking a new position, have indubitably produced a great impression in the U. S. S. R. Those arriving from abroad are bombarded from all sides with questions about what Gide had written. In present conditions, a rather

Defends Property



JUAN NEGRIN

Negrin Promises Stern Defense Of Private Property

Frank Interview Shows Who Is Destroying Revolution

The real economic aims of the Spanish Loyalist Government were strikingly revealed last month by President Juan Negrin in an interview given to the Radio news agency. The most significant statements, omitted from the reports in the American press, are reprinted below from the Paris L'Oeuvre:

"Numerous owners have already made peace with the Republic and their property has been returned to them... The seizure of property is illegal. We shall do everything within our power to assure foreign property-holders or stock-holders the full enjoyment of their property and the complete exercise of their rights... The workers recognize the difficulties inherent in the functioning of the enterprises and are increasingly well-disposed to accept regulation... In this connection, we have been assured of the collaboration of the Communists, and we shall do what is necessary to obtain that of the Anarchists."

Deeds Versus Words

These frank statements of policy, intended to appease the exacting capitalists of Great Britain and France, run directly counter to the oft-repeated promise of the Government that "the conquests of the Revolution will be defended at all costs."

In the light of Negrin's interview, it is interesting to recall the reasons given for the arrest of hundreds upon hundreds of Anarchist and P.O.U.M. workers. The papers of the latter groups repeatedly warned that the Popular Front Government, acting in the interests of British imperialism, had as its chief duty the crushing of the Spanish revolution.

The Government and the Stalinist circles, when they initiated the mass arrest of revolutionists, charged these groups with "consciously playing the game of the fascists in attempting to create an atmosphere of discontent within anti-fascist Spain and its French and British allies." (Las Noticias, Stalinist organ of the U.G.T.)

It is pertinent to ask: Who is "consciously playing the game" of British imperialism? Who is destroying "the conquests of the Revolution"—the revolutionary workers' groups or the Popular Front Government?

grave "problem" for the Soviet functionary is the question of arranging a party. X. is considering giving a party in his house and inviting a number of friends, among them foreign communists, mostly workers in the G.P.U. A more experienced friend urgently advises against it: Something might come out of it. The best thing is to go to a party given by so and so. Such-and such people will be present there, whose position today is quite sound.

STALINISM and BOLSHEVISM

10 C by Leon TROTSKY

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Expulsions from A. F. L. Setback For Unity Drive

Reactionary Move By Executive Council Widens Chasm in Labor Movement; Campaign For Unity Must Be Intensified

BY B. J. WIDICK

A damaging blow to the cause of unity in the labor movement was dealt this week by the reactionary executive council of the A. F. of L. when it expelled the United Mine Workers of America, backbone of the C.I.O., from the Federation.

President William Green of the A. F. of L. implied that the revocation of the miners' charter, and two other smaller C.I.O. unions, was a compromise between the civil war policy advocated by the "diehards" and the policy of "moderates" in the executive council.

The Federation of Flat Glass Workers and the Mine, Mill and Smelter workers were the other two international unions whose charter were revoked.

Leadership Divided

The action of the executive council came after two weeks of indecision which reflected the division within the top A. F. of L. leadership. Dan Tobin, of the Teamsters, and George Harrison, of the Railroad Brotherhoods, were for moderation. Bill Hutcheson, of the Carpenters, headed the "civil war" group.

The strategy of the A. F. of L. executive board in expelling the miners' union is obvious. It hopes to "isolate" the John L. Lewis-controlled section of the C.I.O., and cause a split in C. I. O. ranks.

David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, indirectly played a part in determining this strategy by his recent public attack on Lewis.

Hope in Dubinsky

Louis Stark, of the New York Times, pointed out in his article of February 6 that the A. F. of L. was placing hope in winning Dubinsky away from the C.I.O., and having him, "carry the ball across the C.I.O. goal line." It was this difference between Dubinsky and Lewis that gave the A. F. of L. council new vigor and aided in determining the policy of continued hostility to the C.I.O.

Surprise was expressed in many labor circles that of the major C.I.O. Unions only the Miner's union was expelled. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers was "slated to go," too, according to the "civil war" theory. The very fact that this demand of the "diehards" was not voted by

the council indicates that open warfare on too wide a front is not yet the plan of the A. F. of L. leaders.

The revocation of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union charter was part of the plan to "isolate" the miners, since this international is closely tied up with the Lewis-controlled U. M. W. A.

Raid Plan Seen

The bitter internal dispute in the Flat Glass Workers Union which led to the ousting of Glen McCabe as international president, offered the A. F. of L. the hope of "raiding" that industry. McCabe turned against the C. I. O. following his overthrow and probably expects to capture some locals for the A. F. of L. McCabe was originally suspended when charges were placed against him in regard to use of the C. I. O. union funds.

The executive council did not vote on the appeal of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor against the Green order to purge itself of C. I. O. affiliates. If the State Federation of Labor is forced to cause a split of Pennsylvania labor, it means that the A. F. of L. leaders will intensify hostilities against the C. I. O. on the political field.

A split in the ranks of Pennsylvania unions would seriously affect the political perspectives of the Lewis machine, which intends to run Thomas Kennedy, secretary-treasurer of the miner's union, for governor.

Green Hits League

Green repeated his blast of last fall against Labor's Non-Partisan League in a special report to the council. He termed it a "mere tool and mouthpiece of the C. I. O." His previous attack was ignored in many labor centers but today it might mean further action against the C. I. O. in the political sphere.

These recent developments delay the possibility of peace in the labor movement. In his study of the situation, Stark aptly summed up the prospect and perspectives by writing, "If for the present, hostilities do not cease, it will not mean an end to peace hopes nor an end of striving toward renewal of peace parleys. Resumption of peace negotiations will be made more difficult by these hostilities, but forces both inside and outside labor will continue to work for unity in labor."

Run To Court

As a further act of desperation, the Stalinists proceeded to the capitalist law court to secure an injunction debarring the Toronto Furriers Union from using offices in the Labor Lyceum. The union has been compelled to withdraw from Ben Gold's International and to apply for a charter in the A. F. of L., which has been granted.

The Left Poale Zion, of which Federman is a member, has challenged Gold and his cohorts to appear before an impartial workers' tribunal charged with a thorough investigation of the entire affair. This challenge has so far been ignored.

Taking issue with the Stalinist union wreckers, the Toronto Furriers Union has put out a public statement in which it declares: "For many years the Furriers Union of Toronto has been regarded as one of the strongest and most progressive unions in Canada. Under the capable leadership of Max Federman, the union has carried on militant and exemplary struggles to win for the hundreds of fur workers and their families in Toronto decent living standards."

Attack C. P. Wreckers

"We, the fur workers, have always guarded against attempts to make of our union just another subdivision of the Communist Party. We were certain that the wolf in our ranks would never be satisfied until it got a victim in its claws. It took no longer than six months for the Communists to get their fingers on the fur workers union."

"We have decided to raise a fund of \$10,000 to defend our union in the interests of the fur workers. We furriers have already raised \$1,000 towards this fund. We are the victims of a new Communist offensive against working class rights and democracy. Heed our call, protest against Communist brutality in its assault upon the fur workers in Toronto."

War Resolution Spiked

The war resolution of the progressives was sabotaged in committee with threats of a filibuster on the floor. As a result, an innocuous statement was brought out to tired delegates at 2 a. m. on the day of the final session.

The Stalinists packed the state executive board with a "straight ticket" vote, leaving a stench that will undoubtedly nullify their victory.

Alfred Mack, chairman of the strongest county unit in the state (Essex), brought the issue to the floor by refusing to serve as second vice-chairman for the state because of the nature of the vote, although he himself scored the highest vote in the balloting.

FUR WORKERS BACK VERDICT ON FEDERMAN

Stalinists Try To Break Up Meeting Held To Hail Findings

TORONTO, Canada.—Gathering at a joint meeting of Locals 40 and 100 of the Furriers International Union, an overwhelming majority of the furriers in this city gave enthusiastic endorsement to the verdict of the workers' jury which last week acquitted Max Federman, vice-president of the International and manager of the Toronto locals, of the frame-up charges brought against him by Ben Gold, Stalinist union president.

When the Stalinists became conscious that their frame-up was a failure they provoked physical attacks to break up the meeting.

Stalinists Slink Away

The Fur Workers, however, remained orderly. A small number of Communists, no more than 70 or 75, left the meeting and went to the C. P. headquarters. The hundreds of furriers remained, the meeting continued and endorsed in full the recommendations of the trial committee.

Also here, in Toronto, the Stalinists had their men make "confessions," in order to involve Max Federman. The trial committee condemned the frame-up witnesses, who admitted their part in the deal, and unanimously exonerated Federman.

When all the provocations of the Stalinists encountered a stone wall of opposition from the union, they embarked on typical gangster methods. Arming themselves with knives and clubs, they entered the union headquarters and brutally beat up five union militants, supporters of Max Federman. This attack has evoked the strongest protests from all sections of the Canadian labor movement.

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SOVIET UNION NOTES

Purge Reflects Economic Crisis — Coal Piles Up At Mines — Tractor Failures Slow Down Harvest

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

New Crisis in Soviet Economy

There is a clear connection between the current reign of terror and the economic difficulties in which Stalin's regime of self-proclaimed "victorious socialism" finds itself at the beginning of the Third Five Year Plan. Thousands of technicians, engineers and plant administrators are being made scapegoats for failings which are inherent in the Stalinist management and operation of Soviet industries.

Soviet railways, long a weak spot in industrial life, are again in serious straits. The basic equipment of the railways, like that of the majority of vital plants, has been seriously undermined in the reckless drive for records. Despite vast sums poured into transportation in recent years under the direction of L. M. Kaganovich, the railroads are functioning poorly. Wrecks and accidents show no signs of decreasing. Car loadings have been dropping at an alarming rate, thus nullifying the recent "successes" in metallurgy and mining.

In the latter industries, production has been temporarily restored to the levels attained towards the end of 1935, at the beginning of Stakhanovism. For example, coal production in the Donbas region is averaging 225,000 tons per day (daily production in December 1935—229,000) as against the previous levels of below 200,000 tons daily. But the additional coal is simply piling up at the mines.

Coal Stocks Pile Up at Pits

So grave is the situation that Pravda on January 15, devoted to the First Session of the Supreme Council, had to allot space to the "disgraceful condition" of the Donbas railways. Pravda reports that in the first ten days of January the coal stocks at the mine pits "more than doubled." "More than 600,000 tons of coal" piled up, and the reserve keeps increasing. Meanwhile, according to Pravda, "The North Donetz and South Donetz railways fall behind, failing to load daily from 25 to 30 thousand tons..." On the North Donetz Railway only one-half of the trains start on schedule and only one-third keep to the schedule.

This affects not only the work of the coal mines but of other plants as well, in particular the metallurgy industry. "Tens of thousands tons of production remain lying in metallurgical and other plants of the Donbas for the same reason." (Pravda, January 15.)

Pravda for Jan. 24 devotes its leading article to the railways crisis. Here is the opening paragraph: "The work of the railway transport has steadily worsened in the recent period. The magnificent position which the railwaymen occupied in the summer of 1937 has now been lost by them. Daily, the transport system fails to fulfill the plan by 10 to 20 per cent. The most important freight for the life of the country—metal, oil, and bread—is being held up for long periods at the key stations. The debt of the transport system to the country is growing with every passing day."

Continues Pravda: "The railwaymen have no objective, external reasons whatsoever for the lag." The solution for the difficulty is: "To raise the discipline among the railwaymen," in other words, to pile repressions upon repressions. That is the only solution Stalin has to offer. The condition of the transport is especially grave in view of the fact that the country's resources are being strained to match the armament race for the coming conflict.

The Crisis in Spring Sowing

Despite the Stalinist boasts of a record crop last year and forecasts of even a greater crop in the coming season, it is quite apparent that serious difficulties are being encountered in agriculture, especially in spring sowing. Seeds have not been prepared; the tractors are not ready; the plan is not being fulfilled. Emergency measures are being resorted to. "Volunteer" brigades are being recruited to go into the country and repair the tractors. The entire Komsomol (Young Communist League) has been mobilized to fulfill the plan in repairing tractors and "prepare the sowing campaign."

On January 18 Eikhe, the new Commissar for Agriculture, delivered a report on the "Plan for 1938 in Agriculture" at a plenary session of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. He painted a dismal picture of the conditions in agriculture. His report might as well have been entitled "the work of wreckers in the agricultural organs." "Wreckers" are to blame for everything. In the meantime, according to Eikhe, the plan for repairing tractors has been fulfilled only 30 per cent. Gasoline supplies are lacking, seed has not been prepared. (Pravda, January 22.)

Dispatches appearing in the Soviet press present even a more dismal picture. In the Ukraine (Chernigov) tractors are not being repaired. In 14 tractor stations there are no head mechanics. (Pravda, January 19.) In the Maryansk region in Kuban, at the tractor station there, on January 1, out of 26 tractors requiring major repairs only 8 were ready; out of 30 tractors requiring "average" repairs only 10 were ready. In Maryansk, 1,400 tons of gasoline were needed, only 6 tons were stored. In Novomyshastovsk out of 1,860 tons needed, only 71 tons were ready. (Pravda, January 17.) The Georgievsk tractor station (Ordjonikidze province) had not produced a single tractor by January 1. (Pravda, January 24.) Things are bad in Bashkiria and worse in Tadzhikistan. The Commissar for Agriculture in the latter region, Selivanov, is "not to be trusted."

In its leading article on January 3, Pravda declared: "On December 20, 1937, the plan for repairing tractors had been fulfilled only 13 per cent for the Union as a whole. In point of fact, the plan for the fourth quarter has collapsed."

Havoc Caused By Purge

The havoc caused by the purge accounts in part for this condition. Thus Pravda (January 24) reports that in Bashkiria alone for the last three months 37 agricultural heads and 46 directors of tractor stations have been removed, together with their deputies and "scores of mechanics." Eikhe reported that out of 200 tractor stations in White Russia only 144 had directors. He added "We have the same picture in Omsk, Orenburg, Sverdlovsk and a number of other regions." (Pravda, January 22.) Remedy? It is provided in the leading editorial of the same issue of Pravda which declared that in the recent order of the Central Committee to "suspend" the purge, the party has "a new sharp weapon against the enemies of the people."

Purge in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry

Among those made scapegoats for the latest economic crisis were all three deputies of Lazar Kaganovich, Commissar for Heavy Industry (who replaced—on August 22, 1937—the purged Mezhlauk, successor of the deceased Ordjonikidze). In the early part of January, they all "disappeared." Among them was Zavenyagin, candidate to the Central Committee, decorated with the highest orders for successful construction of the Magnitogorsk combine and director of Magnitogorsk plants, and appointed as deputy by Kaganovich himself on September 17, 1937. The fate of Zavenyagin and his colleagues became known when Pravda and Izvestia for January 8 printed terse notices of the appointment of three new deputies: Butenko, Kuzmin and Per-vurhin.