

# The MILITANT

Semi-Monthly Organ of the Opposition Group in the Workers (Communist) Party of America

"It is necessary that every member of the Party should study calmly and with the greatest objectivity, first the substance of the differences of opinion, and then the development of the struggles within the Party. Neither the one nor the other can be done unless the documents of both sides are published. He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be disposed of with a simple gesture of the hand."—Lenin

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## TROTSKY'S DEPORTATION

"Our platform will find its way. The workers of the whole world will ask themselves in deep alarm, 'For what reason, on the tenth anniversary of October, are they expelling and arresting the best fighters of the October Revolution? Whose hand is here? The hand of what class? The class which conquered in October? Or the class which is edging out and digging under the victory of October?'—L. D. Trotsky.

THE apparently definite news that comrade L. D. Trotsky has been banished from the borders of the Soviet Union by decree of the Stalin machine will be a shock to the revolutionary workers in every part of the world. No one to whom the cause of the proletariat is a serious thing, will fail to see in this fateful act one of the most hideous and dangerous steps yet taken in the criminally disruptive course of the man against whom Lenin sharply warned the Party in his last words. The banishment of Trotsky outside the borders of the Soviet Union, for the creation of which he is more responsible than any living man, will be joyfully celebrated by the exploiting class of the entire world who see in him the embodiment of the workers' victory in the Russian Revolution.

The shameful banishment of the Sword of October follows directly on the heels of the arrest in Moscow, a few days before, of one hundred and fifty Opposition supporters whose crime consisted in the underground distribution of Leninist literature which today can no longer be circulated legally.

The arrest of these one hundred and fifty Oppositionists, comprising some of the best fighters for Bolshevism, comes at a very critical moment in the course of the Russian revolution. The Stalinist press reports, ranging from those of the hired liar Walter Duranty in the New York Times to the inspired Daily Worker stories, have announced, furthermore, that the reign of persecution, arrest, imprisonment and exile of Oppositionists is to be sharpened on every front.

We are confronted here with a course that was not begun yesterday and will not end tomorrow. The arrests and imprisonments are the logical outgrowth of the fight against the Leninist Opposition which began simultaneously with the departure of the official Party leadership from the proletarian revolutionary line after the death of Lenin. On this road of decline, slander, falsehood, Party-splitting, arrests, imprisonment and exile are only swiftly-passed stations. The apparatus has become mad in its efforts to halt the irresistible progress of the Leninist program. More than a year ago, Trotsky warned:

"Voices are already to be heard: 'We will expel a thousand, and shoot a hundred, and have peace in the Party.' These are the voices of pitiable, frightened, and yet also diabolic blind men. This is the voice of Thermidor. The worst elements, perverted with power, blinded with bureaucratic hatred, are preparing the Thermidor with all their might."

Since that warning the elements of Thermidor have claimed many victims. They drove to his death comrade Butov, the secretary of comrade Trotsky, as they had persecuted to the point of suicide his former secretary, comrade Glassman, in 1924. Butov was one of the best fighters of October. Side by side with Trotsky he went through every stage of the revolution, the civil war and the inner-Party struggle. When Trotsky was exiled to the wastelands of Central Asia, Butov felt it his duty to follow him there. He was arrested at Tashkent, en route to Alma-Ata, and incarcerated in the Butyrki prison in Moscow. Knowing that neither prison nor torture could break the iron caliber of such as Butov, the G.P.U. resorted to shattering his mind and heart: he was accused of espionage! Despite its malicious absurdity, Butov could not stand such a base accusation. When his demand to be brought before the investigation judge was refused he declared a protest hunger strike. He was

allowed to starve for three weeks. When he was transferred to the prison hospital, it was already too late. In an unknown spot, among murderers and criminals, the corpse of comrade Butov was secretly interred.

An even worse fate was accorded the Opposition comrade Haenrichsen, a Leningrad metal worker. Shortly before the 11th anniversary celebration he was arrested and imprisoned. When his wife came to see him a few days afterwards the prison director informed her that her husband had committed suicide. But on the corpse she observed unmistakable marks of maltreatment: his teeth were knocked out, and the whole body was covered with blue marks and blood clots. When the G.P.U. heard of her intention to have an autopsy made to discover the real causes of the death, they forbade the autopsy and the body was hastily and secretly buried.

In October 1928, Menzhinsky, the head of the G.P.U., reported to the Political Bureau of the

### A Letter From Trotsky's Wife

Alma-Ata, December 1928.

Dear ———:

Since the end of October we have received no letters from home. We get no answers to our telegrams. In short: the postal blockade. Naturally it will not stop there. We await something worse. At present we are all sick with malaria; it is Leva (Trotsky's son) who is sickest; he is running a continual temperature of 39 degrees (103-4 degrees Fahrenheit).

Severe cold. The cold in our rooms is torturing. Houses here are not built for cold weather. The price of wood is incredible.

Natalia Ivanovna.

Party that he would decline all responsibility for the struggle against the Opposition unless he were "permitted to tighten the screws." He was given this permission, and sent out a circular letter to all centers of the G.P.U. with instructions to prohibit all political correspondence to exiled Oppositionists and, in the event of hunger strikes, to cut down their rations by half.

A letter from Moscow, dated November 17, 1928, informs us that on the eleventh anniversary celebrations,

"In the proletarian centers of the U.S.S.R. no less than 300 comrades were arrested, 118 in Leningrad, 55 in Moscow, 42 in Kiev, 15 in Baku, 35 in Kharkov, 9 in Odessa, 8 in Saratov, etc. Oppositionists are proceeded against with far greater violence than White Guards, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Beating of the imprisoned comrades is a daily occurrence. In Leningrad and Kharkov they proceed with special violence."

But these measures—measures of hysterical fear and the pressure of enemy class—cannot halt the forward march of the Opposition. Their program is listened to more attentively than ever by the workers. Despite the incredible violence practised against the Opposition, despite the ideological and organizational terror of the apparatus, growing sections of the working class in the Soviet Union have stepped forth boldly for the Opposition's program. In Moscow, for example, the workers of the Krasnaia Obrona factory and the Bucharin Street Car Depot adopted the resolutions of the Opposition with overwhelming majorities. In a series of other factories Proletarski Trud, Moskov Schweia and Parostroi, there were majorities for the Opposition. In a closed Party nucleus meeting at the Burevestnik, 29 voted for the Opposition, 6 abstained, and 36 voted against.

The bureaucrat now officially admits the growth of the Opposition's strength among the workers, and

seeks to crush it by the most violent means. But every blow that is struck at the Opposition causes the workers to pause and ask: Whose hand wielded the weapon? What class benefits from these brutal attacks? They find their answer in the daily life and struggle of the Soviet Union.

They find that the Kulak's strength and arrogance grows every single day with alarming rapidity. While Bolshevik fighters are being sent to prison and exile, they can read daily reports like the following in the Pravda:

The Kulak preparations for the election campaign are surprisingly well-organized. At first they organize their own election committees, and sometimes they even try to capture our Soviet Izbircoms (election committees.)

"The Soznovo-Solonetzki Izbircom (in the province of Volozhen), whose chairman is a former czarist officer, has taken away the right to vote from a poor peasant by declaring him physically sick, while they have granted the right to vote to a number of Kulaks of their own clique.

"In certain localities the Izbircoms are being led by churchmen. In the Siberian village Menteheri, a secret Kulak Izbircom was organized. Under the guise of festivals they conducted two meetings where the 'Initiators' gathered 'their own' poor and middle peasants, nominated their own candidates and also outlined a plan for the campaign. The Kulak Izbircoms are well informed about the plans of their enemies. The Kulak children do not miss a single meeting, and keep their fathers informed as to what is going on in the Soviet Izbircoms. (The village Perovo, province of Vladimir.)

"The Kulaks influence the middle peasants with the assistance of the weaker members of the Soviets whom they often help financially; thus, Raskolski, the chairman of the Nizhni-Tchirisk Izbircom, is riding a horse presented to him by the Kulaks at a banquet."—Pravda, January 11, 1929.

The workers see that while the Leninist Opposition is being persecuted under the accusation that they are allies of the imperialists, the government of the Soviet Union signs the infamous Kellogg Pact, the newest instrument of imperialist war and war against the Soviet Union, and praises it as "a forward step towards peace."

The workers see that at the moment when 150 Opposition workers are arrested for "counter-revolutionary activities" the acting Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, makes a report to the Central Executive Committee praising Mussolini and Herbert Hoover as friends of the Soviet Union who have taken no hostile steps against the Workers' Republic. . . .

The workers are beginning to realize that it is more than a coincidence that severer blows are directed against the Leninist Opposition at the moment when the business and diplomatic representatives of the Soviet Union are hard at work in Washington to get recognition from the United States. They want to know if the arrest of 150 Bolsheviks is Stalin's method of assuring the foreign bourgeoisie that "the Communist and the capitalist systems can live side by side peacefully," as Sokolnikov did at the Economic Conference in Geneva. The workers already know who it is that gets great satisfaction out of the work of physical annihilation of the Opposition that is now being carried on. They have heard the warning of Piatakov, when he was still with the Opposition, that he feared an attempt on Trotsky's life; and the words of Zinoviev and Kamenev who had corroborated Piatakov's fears. The brutal course that Stalin has followed up to now gives no one any reason to believe that he will stop at any point in his rough-shod riding over the whole tradition and teaching of Leninism and the Leninists.

Stalin is determined to annihilate the fighters for Bolshevism with the basest weapons at his disposal. The official propaganda reports are laying the basis for the commission of the most hideous crimes. The "ideological campaign" is being prepared. Robert Minor, the editor of the Daily Worker, following the lead given him by the quasi-official reports of "comrade" Walter Duranty to the New York Times, writes a semi-lynching editorial entitled

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