

The

MILITANT

Semi-Monthly Organ of the
Communist League of America
(Opposition)

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THE MASSACRE AT MARION

The Trial in Charlotte

While mill owners' guns were barking death to five textile workers in Marion, the second trial of the Gastonia defendants was getting under way. The utter worthlessness of the case for the prosecution in the first trial, the great difficulty it would experience in getting a conviction under first degree murder charge against the thirteen men, has now been partially "remedied" by the new set of charges brought against the defendants. Three women and six of the men have had their cases dismissed "with leave", and the other seven men, including their leader Fred Beal, have had their charges changed to call for a sentence of the 30 years in prison that go with second degree murder.

The fact that the prosecution has been forced to change its line of action and back down from the charges that involved death sentences for the defendants is a definite victory for the workers of the United States. Had it not been for the protest movement, had it not been for the consequent fear of the North Carolina capitalist class that an attempt to repeat the crime of Massachusetts would make them the center of a nation-wide working class attack, this victory would never have been won, and the workers would still be in the shadow of the electric chair.

But this victory is not the whole battle. It is only a part of it. With the apparent softening of the charges, the prosecution wants to secure an easy conviction. The peremptory (absolute) challenges of the defense have been radically reduced (from 168 to 28) and this makes it all the easier for the prosecution to pack the jury and cinch the frame-up. The temporary removal of the women defendants from the case is a "chivalrous" gesture by which the prosecution wants to get a surer conviction of the men. Finally, a second degree murder case permits the acceptance of a juror despite admitted prejudice on his part.

To rely upon the capitalist courts, North or South, for a "fair trial" is to build hopes on treacherous quicksands. The more widespread and militant is the protest movement of labor the greater is the assurance that sufficient pressure will be exerted upon the mill barons' courts to free these fighters. Their cause is the cause of all labor. The "chivalrous" Southern textile mills are largely controlled by Wall Street interests, which hold the reins of American industry and finance in their hands. Should the seven men be convicted, it will not only mean a blow at the unionization of the Southern workers but also a setback for workers everywhere.

Now more than ever must every worker rally to the protest movement. As the case proceeds, it becomes steadily clearer that it is a frame-up of the bosses and their legal tools. The witnesses for the prosecution perjure themselves with tongues made glib by a golden oiling. They bear a startling resemblance—the policeman Roach, for instance—to the characterless underworld degenerates who testified Mooney and Billings to life imprisonment.

The latest developments have demonstrated to the hilt the correctness of the slogan raised by the Communist League of America (Opposition): "Fight the Gastonia frame-up!" The fight against the frame-up is the main issue in this case, to which all others are secondary and subordinated. Even more clearly than in the first trial the essentially legalistic "courtroom" slogan of the right of self-defense, put in the foreground by the Party, now falls to the ground. More firmly than ever we believe that the prosecution is trying to frame-up the outstanding leaders of the strike, particularly the Communist fighters in it; we cannot accept a conclusion that the nine whose cases were dismissed have thereby won the capitalist court's acknowledgment of their right to self-defense. It is a good sign that the *Daily Worker* has ceased to put forward this latter slogan and is turning correctly to emphasis upon the perjured testimony and the attempts to railroad the defendants, that is, upon the essential features of a frame-up case. It is necessary to take the full step and to mobilize a broader movement, on a genuine united front basis, among the broadest possible sections of the workers. The first victory gained so far can and must be made final and conclusive.

The 'Impossible' WEEKLY

The publication of the *Militant* has been the achievement of the impossible! When we issued the first number of the *Militant* as a semi-monthly paper, the Stalinist leaders scoffed at it and said that it was not only the first number but also the last. This "prediction" has been made now for almost a year and the *Militant* is today more securely established as a spokesman for the regeneration of the revolutionary movement than when it was first issued. The Party bureaucrats, who cannot conceive of any progress unless it is organized by a subsidized apparatus, thought that to publish the *Militant* would be impossible. Many even of our closest friends were doubtful in the beginning of the likelihood of our continuation. But these very friends and supporters helped to achieve the "impossible". The place established in advance for our work by the opportunism and adventurism of the Stalinists has been filled by the *Militant* now for almost a year, by the stubborn spirit of sacrifice of our small fighting army.

But now the requirements of the situation demand that we advance a step further. The disintegrating effects of the present official Party policy upon the Communist movement, the crisis in the International, the dangers confronting the dearly-bought achievements of the Russian Revolution—all these are making big demands upon the revolutionary vanguard that has rallied to our banner. The *Militant* as a semi-monthly is insufficient to meet these demands. It is not frequent enough in its appearance to enable it to react in time for the burning issues of the day.

THE MILITANT WILL BE A WEEKLY MILITANT ON THE TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION! The American capitalist class is becoming more arrogant in its offensive upon the working class. The misleaders of labor are becoming more cynical in their trafficking with the interests of the working class. The socialist party, nourished and revived in part by the blundering of the official Communist Party, is experiencing a re-birth and new strength in this country. The Communist Party is being led by its present leadership from one catastrophe to another. On the twelfth anniversary of the victory of the Russian working class, the appearance of the *Weekly Militant* will raise the flag of Bolshevism higher, a challenge to its enemies and its revisionists.

THE CREATION OF THE WEEKLY MILITANT IS A PART OF THE WORLD MOVEMENT FOR RE-INVIGORATING THE COMMUNIST RANKS! In France, our comrades of the Opposition have finally succeeded in establishing a central WEEKLY organ, *La Verite*, a rallying point for Leninism in France. In Germany, our comrades of the Opposition have begun a campaign to make their four-times-a-week *Volks-wille* a regular DAILY paper. Our Russian comrades have begun the publication of their first organ, the *Bulletin of the Bolshevik-Leninist (Opposition)*. In underground China, the Opposition has begun the issuance of the *Proletarian*. In the International, preparations are being made for the issuance of a CENTRAL organ of the Opposition in the French and German languages. The *Weekly Militant* will be part of this growing army.

THE WEEKLY MILITANT IS POSSIBLE ONLY WITH THE SUPPORT OF ALL OUR COMRADES AND FRIENDS! The *Militant* is your paper. Its publication as a Weekly by November 7th can be accomplished only if we are assured of widespread support. We repeat what we have said before: If an average of TWO HUNDRED comrades will pledge an average of ONE DOLLAR A WEEK for the next period, the *Weekly Militant* is assured of regular publication. We are depending upon every reader to respond. Only they can make the "impossible" Weekly a genuine reality.

SEND IN YOUR PLEDGE OR YOUR DONATION! WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

5 Workers Murdered

After the murder of Ella May Wiggins and the attempted lynchings of half a dozen organizers of the National Textile Workers Union growing out of the recent Gastonia strike, comes the cold-blooded massacre of five Marion, N. C., textile workers and the wounding of more than a score of others by the gunfire of Sheriff Adkins and his law-sworn, mill owners' thugs.

On October 2, a group of strikers picketing the Marion Manufacturing Company were confronted by the Sheriff and his legalized plug-uglies and ordered to disperse so that the scabs might enter the mill. The workers, unarmed though they were, stood their ground and refused to scatter. Without a word of warning, the Sheriff fired a tear gas pistol into their midst and he and his gang followed it up with a fusillade which left three workers dead and more than 20 wounded. In the course of the next few days, two others who had been fatally wounded died in bed; many of those shot will probably be crippled for life. The dead are George Jonas, a man past 60, Sam Vickers, Randolph Hall, Luther Bryson and James Roberts.

The brutality of the butchery is almost indescribable. Medical investigation shows that many of the workers were shot in the back while fleeing from gunfire. One of the murdered workers, George Jonas, bleeding to death and clubbed into unconsciousness, was carried to a hospital in handcuffs, and was operated upon while still fettered in steel!

The frightful assault followed almost directly upon the heels of the declaration by Governor Gardner for the "improvement of the textile workers' conditions" and against the Communists. The smooth hypocrisy of the mill owners' governor was immediately supplemented by the bloody reality of Marion. The massacre also followed upon the sell-out of the first Marion strike by the reactionary officials of the United Textile Workers union. The workers found it impossible to continue their work under the "agreement" made between the bosses and the union officials. The attempt to weed out the militants from the mill by transferring them to the night shift and then abolishing that shift, caused a practically spontaneous walkout. The fruits of class-collaboration, the gospel of the A. F. of L. leaders which the progressives of the Muste group timidly refrained from condemning openly, were brought to rapid bloom, drenched with martyred blood.

The murder of the Marion workers is a crushing answer to the state officials, the mill owners, the A. F. of L. fat boys, the sugary liberals and the pink socialists who laid all the "troubles" in North Carolina to the "interference" of the Communist and Left wing militants. The black day in Marion, where the Communists were not even in evidence for various reasons, points to where the "trouble" lies: in the fierce exploitation of the textile slaves, in their resultant misery, in the class collaborationist policies and downright betrayals of the old line labor leaders. The "trouble" with the Communists has been that they have dared to break into the Solid Non-Union South and lead the mill slaves in struggle for better conditions without using them as pawns around the conference tables of the boss or the governor.

Because of these very facts, it is essential that the Left wing conduct its work in such a manner that will make it possible to unite the forces of all the workers. The bosses prefer the A. F. of L. union to the National Textile Workers Union. But they prefer no union at all to even an A. F. of L. union. This stubborn hostility of the bosses, coupled with the rising sentiment of the textile workers, makes imperative and possible the fight for a united front of all workers, regardless of their opinions, for the unionization of the South. A wrong policy now will destroy possibilities that may take years to recover. A correct course will bring advances all along the line. The only reason why the mill barons can execute such horrible massacres is the lack of organization and unity of the workers. The winning of this organization and unity is the best reply and vengeance for the martyred dead. This victory will be found through the broad path of united struggle.

Mass Meeting

at the
LABOR TEMPLE
242 E. 14 St. —(near 2nd Avenue)
on TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1929.
7:30 p. m. sharp

ADMISSION: 25 CENTS
Auspices: New York Branch, Communist League (Opposition).

Speakers:
James P. Cannon
Martin Abern
Max Shachtman

"The Crisis in the American Communist Movement"