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WHAT'S HAPPENED TO BLUMKIN?

Let Stalin and the American Party Leaders Answer!

The Paris organ of Miliukov, Latest News prints the following telegram: "BLUMKIN IS SHOT"

"COLOGNE, December 28.—The Moscow correspondent of the Cologne Journal telegraphs: These days, there was arrested upon the order of the G. P. U. the notorious Blumkin, murderer of Mirbach. Blumkin was accused of maintaining secret relations with Trotsky. According to the sentence of the G.P.U., Blumkin was shot."

This telegram has been reprinted in many other papers, but up to the time this is written the entire Stalinist press has maintained an ominous silence: the story has neither been denied nor affirmed.

Is this horrifying report true?

When the Bolshevik revolution broke out, Blumkin was one of the leaders of the Left Social Revolutionaries. He did indeed kill the German ambassador, Count Mirbach. But immediately thereafter he joined the Bolshevik party and played a heroic part in the civil war. For a while he worked in the military secretariat of comrade Trotsky and helped edit some of his military works. For some time, in the last period, he has been carrying on work of a highly important character, from which

he was never removed by his chiefs, Menzhinsky and Trillisser, despite the fact that they knew him to be a supporter of the Leninist Opposition from the very beginning. That he continued to maintain relations with comrades of his viewpoint was his right and duty, and a tribute to his devotion to the principles of the revolution.

Information that we have received leads us to believe now that Blumkin has simply been assassinated by Stalin for adhering to the Opposition. But the formal certainty is not yet established. We therefore demand of Foster, Bedacht and the others, of the leadership of the Communist Party of the United States, which supports the present regime in the Russian Communist Party:

If the report of Blumkin's killing is false, then make a public declaration to that effect in the Party press!

If the abominable crime has really been committed, do you take responsibility for it before the revolutionary working class together with Stalin?

If you assume joint responsibility for the assassination, will you make a corresponding statement in the Party press?

We await the reply of the leaders of the Party, for there is much to be said yet about this frightful deed!

City of Chicago Goes Bankrupt

Chicago, the "great" metropolis of the Middle West, is in a financial dilemma. Actually the city government, and the county government, too, have gone bankrupt, of course, without any official declaration being made. With thousands of workers tramping the streets in vain search for work this bankruptcy becomes but one more evidence of growing inability of capitalism to govern society.

Much excitement was stirred up throughout the city when by a majority vote the city council passed upon the 1930 budget, calling for an expenditure of \$55,000,000. This was 7 1-2 million below the last two years budget but claimed to be within the revenue of the city which has suffered an indebtedness of \$13,000,000 during these last two years. Twice the mayor, the "famous" Big Bill Thompson, vetoed this budget merely to have it pass as often in a slightly amended form. But then the cuts necessitated layoffs. The first to come under the axe were 473 policemen. The excitement became a panic among the "better" citizens. Various rescue "Citizens Committees", with which Chicago has been so much "blessed" in the past were again formed.

The "Poor Policemen"

Some of the "very best" citizens even thought it a damnable outrage that these alderman had voted a sum of \$45,000 in the budget for their own automobile maintenance but would not appropriate enough to pay these "poor" policemen and thereby deliberately throw the city into "darkness and crime". Last year by their own efforts these "best" citizens had succeeded in adding 750 huskies to the city's force, and now—that seemed to have been all in vain—that would protect their property?

Meanwhile, 40,000 city employees are running far behind in wages. County employees have been voted a cut of 10 months pay for one year's work. These are the white collar workers being hit. In addition many white collar workers and regular city and county maintenance workers have been laid-off, increasing the ranks of the unem-

ployed. The city government is short of funds because the large property owners, the big corporations have paid no taxes for 1928 and 1929, awaiting a reassessment of tax valuation. The city government in its place is peddling tax anticipation warrants to such bankers and corporations willing to take them over, receiving an interest of 6 percent. This interest paid by the city now amounts to \$36,000 per day. Even at this handsome return the corporations have been very unwilling to buy. But now a ray of "hope" appears. The Down Town Property Owners Association has declared its willingness to take over \$10,000,000 worth of such warrants, to be returned in tax payments when the reassessment some day shall be completed. Meanwhile they collect 6 percent on their own tax payments they are thus withholding.

As an example of tax valuation in Chicago, it suffices to mention a couple of instances—not, however, those of workers who happen to own a shack, and are assessed up to the hilt. The Union Stock-year company is assessed, upon its property covering 135 acres, a valuation of \$11,000 per acre, making a total of less than a million and a half for taxation. The company's own appraisals, filed by the Department of Agriculture, shows a claimed valuation of \$130,000 per acre, amounting to a total of \$18,000,000. The Stevens Hotel claimed a property valuation of thirty one million dollars for bonding purposes; on the tax books it stands at a valuation of eleven million. These are but two examples.

Tax Valuation Cut

In 1926 and 1927 a big campaign started in the city, supported by the A. F. of L., for a reassessment of tax valuation to catch these big tax dodgers. A reassessment was finally granted, and although not yet completed, has already resulted instead of catching any dodgers, in further cutting tax valuations from 1927 to 1928

(Continued on Page 2)

Dress Strike on Schlesinger and Bosses Cooperate

Left Wing Can Win Workers by Quitting its Isolationist Attitude

The long-awaited dressmakers' strike of the Right wing union, the International Ladies Garment Workers, has finally been called with the approval of the dress manufacturers. Thousands of workers have quit their shops. The dressmakers' strike, like that of the cloakmakers which took place last year, is pretty unique in labor history. It was not called until a virtual agreement had been reached between the Right wing union leaders and what the New York Times calls "the better element" of the manufacturers.

So far as the union leaders are concerned, the main purpose of the strike is to demonstrate to the bosses that the Right wing is able to rally the workers behind

it, and draw them into one organization freed of all militant elements. The bosses want the elimination of the Left wing from the industry because the "red trouble-makers" defend the interests of the workers and carry out a policy of class struggle instead of class collaboration. They therefore hope that the present strike of the dressmakers will isolate the Left wing and reduce it to an inconsequential factor in the industry.

Workers Need Left Wing

A weakening of the Left wing in the present struggle would be a heavy blow to the needle trades workers. It is significant that at the head of the Right wing union strike committee are to be found the same ultra-reactionary forces—Schlesinger, Nadler, Hochman, Dubinsky, etc.—that dragged the formerly powerful organization into the deepest swamps of "peace with the bosses" at the expense of the workers, of class collaboration, the lowering of living standards the abolition of union control and continual defeats. The leadership of the Right wing today is the same outfit that split the old I. L. G. W. U., expelling militant members by the thousands in order to prevent a Left wing leadership, which had the support of the mass of the membership, from directing the activities of the organization.

To place the fate of the dressmakers into the hands of this discreditable crew would be to surrender the interests of the workers into the tender mercies of the manufacturers.

The bosses realize that they have nothing to lose by a victory of Schlesinger and Co. and a lot to lose by a victory of the workers, the rank and file. The various bosses' associations have already given a virtual endorsement to the strike. They want to drive the workers into the Right wing camp, under rigid Schlesinger control, in order to wean them away from any Left wing influence, to which they correctly attribute all their "difficulties". This attitude is taken not only by the dress bosses, but by the New York employing class as a whole, which speaks of the strike through the New York Times. This paper is notoriously an enemy of the workers, and of all strikes for the improvement of their conditions. But it designates the present strike as "the second step in the reconstruction of the garment industry" (2-3-1930) and points out that "the better element among manufacturers, jobbers and contractors is in sympathy with the step taken by the garment union".

What the bosses and their press endorse, the workers must be wary of. The dressmakers must understand that the essential purpose of the strike is to wipe out the Left wing, the main defense of the workers in the trade. If the Left wing makes the mistake of isolating itself from the main mass of the workers on strike, it will only fall in unconsciously with the plans of the bosses and their union agents. That is precisely why the present policy of the Left wing is so dangerous for its future and for the interests of the workers.

Left Wing Errors

It is wrong for the Left wing union to keep its members at work during the strike in the shops where it has a "sacred contract" with a handful of cockroach manufacturers. This will only strengthen the hypocritical position of the Right wing bureaucrats. The Left wing

(Continued on Page 2)

Enormous Profits in U. S. Steel

Every possessor of \$6,000 of watered U. S. Steel stock "made" as much money through that ownership in 1929 as the average U. S. Steel worker got out of an entire year's employment. The owner of the 60 shares of golden steel stock got \$1,270.80 for the year which is the average wage the steel trust pays the producers of the basic industrial metal.

The net profits of U. S. Steel for the year were \$197,531,000, all available for dividends. Only half of the last quarter's earnings were paid out in dividends, the rest going into the surplus fund which for the year totals \$108,003,000. It is all the property however of the stockholders who have the right to vote themselves the entire sum.

The 1929 earnings were twice those of the bonanza year of 1928 and focus attention on the steel trust as a main beneficiary in this country of low wages and high tariffs. In 1927 the company made \$114,000,000 clear, turned into dividends and plant.

The traveler entering Pittsburg along the Ohio, Alleghany or Monongahela would little imagine that he was entering the territory of one of the world's wealthiest corporations. Drab, smoke-grimed shacks line the river banks for long miles. Badly clothed children play in muddy, rutted streets, their only playgrounds. Houses are long rows of dilapidated shacks and the horizon is relieved only by the tall stacks of mills and spires of Catholic churches.

The average weekly wage in these steel mill towns is \$31.63 but tens of thousands according to federal labor statistics get under \$25. Laborers' wages—and laborers are more and more typical of the steel industry as mechanization throws out skilled workers—get from \$20.38 in the puddling mills to \$27.03 in the tinplate mills. The maximum wage in the blast furnaces is \$31.90 a week.

For 273,000 workers whose earnings were tabulated by the federal bureau of labor statistics, wages averaged \$31.63. With 40 weeks work during 1929, the steel worker got \$1,264, or the same as the holders of \$6,000 stock in his company "earned" during the same period.

If a common laborer in the blast furnace could have worked the 62 hours a week he is credited with by the federal figures for 52 solid weeks of 1929, he would have earned about \$30 more than the holder of the \$6,000 U. S. Steel stock.