

LETTER FROM
MOSCOW

: How Stalin Murdered Blumkin :

RADEK'S JUDAS
ROLE

Beyond doubt it is known that comrade Blumkin has been shot and that this was done at the personal instigation of Stalin. This vile act of vengeance is already arousing large sections in the Party. But this goes on in secret. One of the sources of these rumors is Radek. His nervous prattling is well known. Now he is completely demoralized, a characteristic of all capitulators. With I. N. Smirnov this takes the form of utter dejection; Radek, on the other hand, seeks to avoid this by spreading rumors and gossip, whose purpose is to prove the profound sincerity of his "repentance". Yaroslavsky beyond doubt, makes use of this trait of Radek to set into circulation any necessary stories. It is of value to point out all this in order to make clear the following.

This version, attributed to Radek, is being circulated: When Blumkin arrived in Moscow, his first act was to hunt up Radek, with whom he had more contact during the past few years than with the other comrades, and whom he looked upon as a leader of the Opposition. Blumkin wished to be informed and to see clearly and in particular to understand the reasons for Radek's capitulation. He could not yet bring himself to the realization that in Radek the Opposition already had an implacable foe, who, having lost the last vestige of moral balance, did not stop at any abomination. One must take into consideration, on the one hand, as a characteristic trait of Blumkin the tendency of moral idealization of individuals, and on the other hand, the intimate nature of his former relations with Radek.

Blumkin told Radek of the thoughts and plans of L. D. (Trotsky) concerning the necessity for a secret struggle for their ideas. In reply, Radek, according to his own words, demanded of Blumkin that he immediately appear before the G. P. U. and tell everything. Several comrades say that Radek threatened Blumkin with immediate denunciation if he did not do this. This is quite likely, considering the actual statements of this hysterical mass of putty.

We do not doubt that this actually occurred. Following this, according to the official version, Blumkin "repented", presented himself to the G. P. U. and turned over the letter of comrade Trotsky which he had upon his person. Not only that, he even demanded his own shooting (literally). Following this, Stalin had to take his demand into consideration and ordered Menzinsky and Jagoda to shoot Blumkin. Evidently Stalin had previously had this decision confirmed by the Political Bureau in order that the Right capitulators be linked up with the affair. It is needless to say that the latter were completely in accord with Stalin.

How is this official version to be taken? Its lying character strikes one. We are not in possession of authentic information since Blumkin, as far as we know at present had not time to inform those outside (the prison) as to the actual state of affairs. But the actual course of events unfolds with sufficient clarity throughout this situation—at least in its general aspects. After his conversation with Radek, Blumkin found himself betrayed. Nothing was left for him except to present himself to the G. P. U., especially since the letter of L. D., from the nature of its contents could not but be an absolute refutation of all the slanders which are being propagated in order to justify the expulsion. Were there any addresses of individuals in the letter?

*The letter contained no addresses and could harm no one. Its text was but a short review of the situation in the foreign Opposition and an expression of solidarity with the Russian comrades who were demanding a complete break with Urbahns. The letter at the same time stressed the necessity for energetic measures for the widespread distribution of the Bulletin of the Opposition in Russia. Under the circumstances described by our correspondent, this letter, in the hands of Blumkin, could not but prove that it contained no element of "military conspiracy." This fact explains clearly Blumkin's decision to turn over the letter—after he found it unavoidable anyhow, because of Radek—to the G. P. U. (Note of the Bulletin.)

**According to positive information which we possess no comrade to whom Blumkin should have turned over the letter has been annoyed (Note of the Bulletin).

We believe not, since no comrades whom Blumkin could have made use of in establishing contacts have been "annoyed".*

Did Blumkin capitulate? If he had indeed capitulated, that is, adopted Radek's stand, he could not but have divulged the names of the comrades for whom Trotsky's letter had been destined. I myself would not have been spared.** And yet I repeat: no one was arrested. Besides, if comrade Blumkin had capitulated, the G. P. U. would not have been forced to satisfy his "demand" that he be shot, but would have used him for other purposes, this being indeed an exceptional opportunity. Beyond doubt the G. P. U. actually attempted this, but ran into the stone wall of Blumkin's obdurance. Then Stalin ordered him to be shot. And when alarming mutterings began to reverberate in the Party, Yaroslavsky, through Radek, set into motion the version which we have reproduced above. It is in this light that we picture this affair to ourselves.

Stalin could not fail to understand that the murder of Blumkin would not pass unnoticed within the Party, and that this would definitely result in great injury to "the brutal and disloyal" (Lenin's characterization of Stalin—Ed.) usurper. But his thirst for vengeance carried him away. On this point, a story has long been in circulation in the Party that in 1923, on a

summer evening, at Zoubalova (in the suburbs of Moscow), Stalin confided to Dzerzhinsky and Kameneff: "To choose a sacrifice to carefully prepare the blow to pitilessly avenge one's self—and then to go to bed, what could be sweeter in life?" Bucharin has referred to this conversation (the Stalinist philosophy on sweet vengeance) in his discourse concerning the struggle with the Stalinists, this having appeared last year. The books of L. D. (Trotsky) his articles, his autobiography are appearing abroad. This must be avenged. Stalin arrested, without cause, the daughter of L. D., but since she was seriously ill (having need of a pneumothorax), the Political Bureau did not dare, (despite Stalin's insistence, it is said) to keep her in prison, especially since Trotsky's second daughter died of tuberculosis a year and a half ago under similar circumstances. He confined himself to exiling Trotsky's son-in-law, Platon Volkov, two months ago. M. Nevelson, the husband of Trotsky's dead daughter, has long been in prison. But this vengeance is too ordinary and consequently inadequate. The need for pitiless vengeance—aided by Radek—fell upon Blumkin. Stalin ordered him to be shot and after... he went to bed.

Yours,
N.

Moscow, December 25, 1929

The Russian Opposition Knows Its Path!

NOTE BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF
THE BULLETIN OF THE
RUSSIAN OPPOSITION

Although the above letter from Moscow does not yet give a complete picture of the arrest and murder of Blumkin, it nevertheless sufficiently clarifies the most important point of this tragedy. The immediate cause for the loss of this revolutionary, so unusual in his devotion and his courage, evidently lies in two facts: in his own idealistic confidence towards men and in the complete decline of the man to whom he turned. It is also possible that Radek himself has not sufficiently appreciated the consequences of his own actions because in his turn he idealized... Stalin.

The personal fate of Radek reveals with a final clearness the pitiful fate of the capitulators. Their first stage: "Centrism is not quite so bad as we thought." The second stage: "We must come closer to the Centrists so as to help them in their struggle against the Right wing." The third stage: "The Centrists must be paid to struggle against the Right by recognizing the correctness of Centrism." And finally the last stages: The capitulators turn the Oppositionist Bolshevik over into the hands of the G. P. U. dooming him to extermination.

And I. N. Smirnov? And Preobrazhensky? Their personal role in the tragedy of Blumkin is not known to us. But is it possible that Radek did not confer with them on the attitude to take in this delicate affair? In the final analysis, it is not important. Before the party and the international proletariat, they have assumed responsibility for all the ignominies of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Consequently, they cannot disavow them in this case.

NO. 7

THE BULLETIN
of the Russian Opposition

The new issue contains articles by L. D. Trotsky on the Twelfth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Communism and Syndicalism, Syndicalism's Mistakes in Principle, the Austrian Crisis, China, etc., etc. Articles by Christian Rakovsky on Government Policy and the Party Regime, the Capitulators. Letters from Russian Oppositionists in Exile. An unpublished document of the Petersburg Party Committee on the eve of the uprising, concealed by Stalin. And many other important articles and documents.

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—The Bulletin of the Russian Opposition

Daily Worker and
Blumkin

Continued from page 1

sealed the fact. He has been shot by Stalin now—in the dark of the moon and far from the eyes of the working class—simply for belonging to the Opposition. Under Lenin an honest revolutionary foe, taken with arms in hands in an insurrection against the Soviet power, was released. Under Stalin, a devoted Bolshevik who opposed him is secretly assassinated for retaining his views.

Messrs. Foster and Co., answer: Why has Stalin done this?

The Daily Worker has not yet replied. It has sought to drown our demand in a flood of vituperation and calumny. It has declared we are in one counter-revolutionary camp with the pope, with Norman Thomas, with the French reaction, with Ortiz Rubio and the rest. It says that we have raised the old war-cry of the reaction against the Soviets. "The only change it has undergone since the days of 1917," writes the Daily Worker, "is that Lenin the murderer" has now been changed to "Stalin the murderer."

Not at all, gentlemen. Lenin took a few hundred depraved and corrupted aristocrats and bourgeois who had lived on the flesh and blood of the Russian workers and peasants and were seeking to drown the revolution in a sanguinary sea, and stood them against the wall to be shot. The proletarian revolution is not a plaything. But Stalin has taken a revolutionist, a Bolshevik, a man whose loyalty and devotion Stalin will never see reflected in his mirror, and murdered him in the darkness. Lenin was the instrument of the proletarian revolution against the class enemy. Stalin is the instrument of the Thermidorian elements against the proletarian vanguard. That is the difference.

The Daily Worker speaks of the "defense of the Soviet Union". But it is Stalin and his paid press that weaken the defense of the Soviet Republic by assassinating its most faithful guardians. The corpse of Blumkin is a hostage offered by Stalin to the pope, to Briand, to Rubio, to reaction.

Therefore again we demand of Foster and the other leaders of the American Communist Party: Do you assume responsibility for the reactionary blow that Stalin has dealt the party? Why?

The Communist workers still await a reply and they have a right to know.

⊕

Ludlow Killer Rewarded

DENVER—Sixteen years after he had charge of the burning to death of 12 little children and two mothers at the Ludlow Massacre, the notorious "Pat" Hamrock has just been sent to the state penitentiary. Not, however, to await the trip to the gallows as one would naturally expect after such a ghastly orgy of killing, but to have complete charge of the "inside" of the prison as "military dictator".

Colorado had the worst prison mutiny in American history on Oct. 3, when eight guards and five convicts were killed. Since that time there has been an almost continuous series of petty mutinies, one getting so serious that a prison building was set on fire. In a panic the Board of Corrections in charge of the prison, turned to Colorado's most expert killer to set up a dictatorship. Hamrock has called his old lieutenant, Lewis N. Scerf, who was in charge on the two killings in the 1927 coal strike to be his chief aid.

Colorado organized labor lodged a strong objection with the governor, demanding that he immediately file charges against the Board of Corrections before the Civil Service Commission.

Hamrock answered the labor recital of his record with the statement that he would repeat the Ludlow massacre "if it were necessary". He has never shown any remorse or regret for the burnings and his whole record would lead one to believe his statement that he would gladly repeat the holocaust.

Blumkin was killed because he was bound to the cause of the Russian Opposition, of those who signed the declaration of Rakovsky. And these austere denouncers—it must also be said loudly—have not even raised a finger to help the Russian Oppositionists who are imprisoned or deported. On the contrary, in the person of Urbahns they have done everything to render this aid impossible.

The revolutionary detachment of the Bolshevik-Leninists has no needs of false friends, and still less of traitors. There are still many difficulties and tests before us.