

THE MILITANT

Published Twice a Month by the Communist League of America (Opposition)

VOL. IV, No. 5 (Whole No. 64)

NEW YORK, MARCH 1, 1931

PRICE 5 CENTS

BLUMKIN... One Year after his Murder

A year ago Stalin had our comrade Blumkin shot. It is our duty to refresh the memory of the revolutionary workers on this Stalinist crime against the Left wing of the Bolshevik party. The assassination of Blumkin was one of the most cowardly, most perfidious betrayals on the part of Stalin against the entire Leninist party and against the working class that is sincerely attached to the work of the October revolution.

Ever since we received news of the crime, we have not ceased to demand of Stalin and of the party bureaucrats the reasons for which they have destroyed one of the most valiant militants of the revolution. Neither Stalin nor his subordinates of the American party have been able to give us an explanation to justify this assassination. More than that, they have not had the courage to admit openly, before the whole working class, their responsibility for this action.

We pause particularly on this fact because it describes especially well the anti-communist and anti-Soviet character of the Stalinist repression against the Bolshevik-Leninists.

Physical repression against the enemies of the Soviets has been and remains the indisputable right of the proletarian dictatorship. This right was loudly proclaimed by the Bolsheviks without any of that hypocrisy which generally accompanies capitalist repression in the so-called "democratic" countries. During the most tragic moments of the revolution, the Soviets and the party, led by Lenin and Trotsky, did not hesitate to severely punish the enemies of the revolution and to take upon themselves full responsibility for their actions. Let us not forget that the trial of the Social Revolutionists, the most ferocious enemies of the revolution, took place before the eyes of the working class or the entire world and under the immediate control of the Russian Communist Party. The dictatorship of the proletariat only profited all the more by this openness. The confidence of the working class in the institutions of the proletarian dictatorship was increased.

The correct policy of the Bolshevik party, its internal regime based on workers' democracy, the devotion and the sacrifices of its militants, the absolute confidence in its leaders were sufficient security for the proletariat against the abuse of the power of repression and a guarantee that the sword of the revolution would be used only against the enemies of the workers' state.

Since the reign of the bureaucratic regime of the Stalinist apparatus, things have changed radically. In the hands of the irresponsible bureaucrats, the weapon of repression against the bourgeoisie and its defenders has become an arm of persecution against the ideas of the Bolsheviks.

To the G. P. U., which had as its purpose the repression of the class enemy, Stalin has added another function; that of suppressing inside the working class and its party all that struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of the proletarian dictatorship.

The working class does not and will not accept this repression, dictated by the interests of social classes hostile to the proletarian power. The laboring masses do not approve of the terrorist methods which Stalin employs against the proletarian revolutionaries. That is why Stalin has hidden from the working class his crime of February 1930, perpetrated on the person of Blumkin.

The Left Opposition will denounce everywhere the Stalinist repression and the centrist policy in the name of which this repression is carried on. The names of Blumkin, Zinzadze, Siloff, Rabinovitch and the numerous other victims of the bureaucracy will remain alive in the memory of the revolutionary workers.

Φ "COMMUNISTS AND PROGRESSIVES"

This subject, which has become especially important with the recent development of the C. P. L. A., will be discussed at the lecture by James P. Cannon, on Saturday evening, 8 p. m., March 7, 1931, at the Labor Temple, 14th St., and 2nd Avenue. Auspices: New York Branch Communist League of America (Opposition).

Lawrence on Strike!

Textile Workers Rebel Against Wage-Cut and Speed Up System

Definite signs of active workers' resistance to the capitalist offensive are here. In Lawrence, Mass. a total of 10,000 textile workers have struck the American Woolen Co.'s mills against an increased speed up system and a wage cut. These strikers immediately began militant mass picketing. It has thus become one of the early small beginnings of a rising labor movement.

On Feb. 16th, 1931, the strike began with only 33 workers coming out of the Washington Mills combing dept. against the instituted new schedules. It became spontaneous. By Feb. 21st it increased to 8,000. Despite the fact that only fragmentary union organization exists the strike continued to grow to embrace 10,000 workers.

The new schedules provided for increased speed-up. It instituted wage cuts in the form of abolition of all overtime pay and abolition of extra pay for night shifts. It provided for placing of efficiency experts throughout the mills to increase the labor intensity.

The strike involved mainly the three mills of the American Wool Co. The Washington, Wood and Ayer Mills. The Workers demanded time and a half for overtime, double time for holidays, withdrawal of efficiency experts, no discrimination and recognition of the Mill committees to settle special grievances.

The employers fear of these signs of actual resistance became immediately expressed in the brutal efforts of the police to break up picketing. The Company offered to restore the old schedules if the workers would return. Furthermore, as usually happens in such cases the "better citizens" rallied to the company offering their services through an established citizens committee.

The small section of the National Textile Workers Union existing in Lawrence, took a militant lead in this strike. This the employers feared and they refused to deal with these workers' representatives.

They called the officials of the N. T. W. "outsiders". However, that is always so in a strike; workers representatives are castigated as "outsiders".

On Feb. 26th, the employers succeeded in getting the strikers to take a vote on returning to work granting the concession that there would be no efficiency experts, that the old schedule in force prior to Feb. 16 will be put back into operation and that a committee of mill workers will be met to consider any disputes in the future. They refused to grant time and a half for overtime. Following immediately upon the voting the police-force raided the N. T. W. union headquarters, arresting 11 workers. Of those arrested the following 5—Edith Berkman, Pat Devine, William Murdock, John C. Czarencki and Alex Danilevich are held under bail aggregating \$100,000. Of the 10,000 strikers only about 2,000 participated in the voting, the result of which is announced as 1,651 in favor of returning to work and 453 against. On the face of it this does not look like an expression of the workers' sentiments.

While this strike is entirely of a spontaneous and isolated local character its significance lies in it being a beginning of a new basic tendency. A tendency towards working class resistance. It did not have any previous preparation enabling it to spread on a large scale.

In this fact the present C. P. leadership has a serious responsibility. For a long time it has not only criminally neglected to build a union in the textile industry but has by its narrow factional attitude towards the working class movement removed one after another of officials elected by the union, finally substituting for elections the method of appointing. It permitted a splendid movement in the textile industry of the South to completely collapse. The net result is a union, in an industry holding great promises, reduced to almost nothing.

Two Philly Oppositionists Held for Sedition

Two of our comrades, members of the Philadelphia branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) have been arrested on charges of sedition and are being held under \$1,000 bail for distributing leaflets in front of a "shelter for homeless men" and for calling on the employed and unemployed workers to demonstrate on International Unemployment Day at the mass meeting of the unemployed on City Hall Plaza.

Comrades Goodman and Morgenstern were distributing our unemployment leaflet. The passage in the leaflet (the Open Letter to the Central Committee of the party) for which they were indicted and which the District Attorney termed seditious, reads as follows:

"There can be no solution to the unemployment problem under capitalism. The solution can be found only in the Socialist revolution and, finally, on a world scale."

For calling upon the workers to fight against unemployment and for the six hour day, against capitalist rationalization and for unemployment insurance paid by the bosses and their government, for long term credits to the Soviet Union (where unemployment does not exist) in order to gain employment for more American workers and at the same time to help put through the Five Year Plan and lastly, for pointing out to the workers that unemployment can be abolished only by the world revolution, our two comrades have been snatched up by capitalist class justice. Together with scores and hundreds of other courageous working class militants they are threatened with imprisonment and with isolation from their class brothers in struggle.

Under the outrageous Flynn Sedition Law of the state of Pennsylvania the Communist fighters Peltz, Holmes, Resetar, Muselin and Zima have already been incar-

cerated, while Bill Lawrence, Tess Ryder and Anna Lynn are awaiting sentence and Leon Goodman and Berman Morgenstern are up for trial. The ravages of capitalist justice must not be allowed to go on unhampered. The entire revolutionary working class of America must be aroused to action in defense of their valiant pioneers.

Comrades Goodman and Morgenstern, as well as the other arrested Communists need the help of the united forces of the whole communist and Left wing movement in this country, in the fight for their freedom. Thus far, they have been furnished only with an attorney by the Civil Liberties Union. The local organization of the I. L. D. has been appealed to for help, and we are awaiting their response.

On Sunday, March 1, an Anti-Sedition Conference has been called by the I. L. D. in Philadelphia, to organize the struggle against the Flynn Sedition Law as part of the struggle against capitalist class justice all over the country. This Anti-Sedition Conference must be made into a real, united front conference in defense of all class war prisoners, into a real fighting weapon of the working class.

In these times of deep capitalist crisis and growing workers' unrest, the savage onslaught of the bosses and their government against the liberties and rights of the workers, as well as against their living standards, can be repulsed only by the combined efforts of the entire working class, by the fighting unity of its revolutionary vanguard. Only a broad united front of struggle, composed of all elements fighting capitalist justice on a revolutionary class basis can save Goodman and Morgenstern. Peltz, Holmes, Lawrence, Ryder and Lynn and the others from the fangs of the bosses and their government

In view of these beginning signs of working class resistance our slogan against rationalization and speed up assumes real importance. But above all in general agitation the slogan of the six-hour day without reductions in pay should be put forward, as a propaganda slogan. It can become the unifying slogan of working class struggle. It is the main slogan of the rising labor movement.

—A. S.

Stalin Acts

We extract the following from a letter of the Russian comrades:

"... mass arrests have been performed in December. The reprisals have been reinforced especially after the wave of protests evoked by the death of Kote Zinzadze. For communication with the exterior (receipt or report of short news from or to friends) there are arrests or indictments for "communication with the foreign counter-revolution". Apart from this, the material conditions of the deportees are growing worse and worse and they are all completely deprived of work. The deportation camps are more isolated than ever. Not only are no letters received from other deportees, but the mails do not even deliver letters from relatives. For several months there has been no news of Rakovsky.

During the month of December a whole series of deportation colonies has been arrested. According to the incomplete information received from Central Asia the following comrades have been arrested: Akirtava, Bogrotov, Japp, M. Joffe, (the wife of the late A. A. Joffe), Kinkadze, Okudjava, Pekler, Proletarsky, Zivzivadze and others.

To these new Stalinist reprisals, the deported and imprisoned Bolshevik-Leninists have replied unanimously: "No reprisals can suppress us. We remain firm and courageous."

Moscow, January 23, 1931.

Alarming news has reached us about Victor Serge (a Franco-Russian oppositionist and the French translator of the works of Lenin). Already imprisoned as an oppositionist in 1928, Victor Serge has been removed from all work and exposed together with his family to dire destitution. Tomorrow, no doubt there will be imposed deportation upon him also.

The repression against communists has nothing in common with the defense of the revolution. It tends to amputate the arm of the class: the party. It falsifies the whole concept of proletarian repression and delivers material into the hands of the enemies of the revolution.

The party must react and cry out aloud:

Put a stop to this shameful repression against communists!

Fire Destroys Trotsky Home

Capitalist press dispatches from Constantinople inform us that a fire which swept the house in which comrade Leon Trotsky and his family were living on the island of Prinkipo in the Sea of Marmora, compelled the inhabitants to flee at dawn and take refuge in a nearby hotel. Comrade Trotsky and his wife, comrade Natalia Ivanovna, have both been ill, with the former confined to bed. The united front of Stalin and the bourgeois governments of Europe has hitherto prevented Trotsky from obtaining the urgently needed medical aid. The fire, whose origin is not yet known, destroyed a number of valuable historical documents, including many manuscripts which had not yet been published anywhere. The extent of the destruction done by the fire—as to that we are not yet able to say. We are awaiting further and more reliable news.