

A CASE FOR A LABOR JURY
Against All Types of Gangsterism in the Working Class Movement; On the Murder of the Italian Stalinist Montanari

By L. TROTSKY

On August 9, according to a news item in l'Humanite, the Italian communist Montanari was murdered in the Metro Belleville. On August 12, l'Humanite printed an altogether monstrous, but, of course, in no way unusual explanation for the murder.

a patent absurdity. The author is unable to present his own version consistently.

As Clear as the Kirov Case. As the anonymous article proceeds it becomes more and more entangled. We read that the "provocateur" was never a member of the C. P. (yet we had just been told that he belonged to a group of this "Trotskyists"—L.T.), this agent of Fascism among the Italian emigrants naturally found sympathy and shelter among the "Trotskyist groups".

After several more new zigzags, the article concludes with an utterly amazing political moral: "The French workers made more cautious and wiser by the lessons of Austria and Spain, will not be led into this criminal trap." A remarkable revelation! The defensive uprising of Austria and Spain which even the social-patriotic and pro-coalition Congress of the Communist International was compelled to recognize as heroic actions on the part of the proletariat—these in the judgment of l'Humanite were in reality the product of the activities of Fascist provocateurs, the very same ones who had killed Kirov in Leningrad and Montanari in Paris.

The Diary of a Lunatic. The reader will agree with us if we say that this article resembles a page from the diary of a lunatic. Only, there is method in this madness, and it has not yet said its last word. So let us pursue the further developments of this case. The Italian Bolshevik-Leninists against whom the anonymous author had leveled his anonymous charges, declared on August 14, through comrade Jean Rous, a leading member of the French Socialist party, that "Beiso was never a member of our organization, nor did we have any sort of relations with him, and we never even heard his name before."

pelled to state that "We are taking under consideration the declaration of the Italian Trotskyist group." But l'Humanite would have remained true neither to itself nor to its lord and master had it simply bit its tongue and kept quiet. No. This rag immediately adds that it has in its possession certain letters of the murderer which clearly indicate that Beiso was imbued with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist ideology. On the heels of af they had said previously, this rings a trifle over-strained. "Ideology"! We are well aware what can be done with this subtle substance in the chemical laboratory of Messrs Ducloux and Co.

Finally, on August 18, l'Humanite published a proclamation of the Central Committee of the Italian C. P.: Montanari was the victim of a "murder which the agents of the Fascist reaction had prepared for their counter-revolutionary mission in the circles of the Trotskyist and Bordighist emigre groups." No more, no less! This information is all the more interesting because in it the Bordighists appear on the scene for the first time, a group which is neither ideologically nor organizationally connected with the so-called "Trotskyists," but whom and we have not the slightest doubt about it,—had as little to do with the murder as the Bolshevik-Leninists. The Bordighists are dragged in so as only to widen the radius of the calumny: the Italian Stalinists have to reap a little additional profit on their own account. But what is most remarkable about the communication of the Italian C.P. is that it does not at all mention in any way Beiso's connection with the Fascists. No, the matter is much more involved, or, if you will, much simpler: the Trotskyists and

the Bordighists are "in general" the agents of Fascist reaction and Beiso prepared himself for his mission in these "circles," i.e. within both these circles which are fighting one another. Now, at last, we can grasp the meaning of the words, "It was almost in the same way that our comrade Kirov was murdered." That is to say: it was almost in the same way that scores of people were indicted in the Kirov assassination who were in no way implicated in the murder.

Out of this entire snarl of interlinking calumnies and insinuations that crumble into dust, one thing stands out each time, namely that Guido Beiso came into some sort of a sharp conflict with the organization of the Italian C. P., or some of its members. If we were to leave aside the all-embracing and therefore in no way illuminating "ideology," then any normal thinking individual would ask the question: What was it that really drove Beiso to commit murder? If we do not proceed from the assumption that he was mentally unbalanced (there is no evidence for this as yet), we can only arrive at the conclusion that he must have been subjected to an extraordinary painful personal experience which he found insufferable, which finally threw him off balance and drove him to a senseless and criminal act. But who drove him through this insufferable experience? Was it the "Trotskyist" organization with whom Beiso had had no relation whatsoever, or the organization in whose name l'Humanite speaks? Thus, and only thus does the question stand. Doesn't there follow from this the supposition that the Italian Stalinists accuse Beiso whom they despise, of provocation without any real evidence, perhaps without any evidence at all, i.e. utilize those poisonous weapons which serve these people as political arguments for the most part? As is evident from l'Humanite itself, Beiso had himself protested most violently against the accusations, and threatened the authors with death. No provocateur who had undertaken the murder of a revolutionist would act that way; but an unknown and a hotheaded emigre could act in this manner, finding no other means of defense against the slander campaign. By these hypothetical considerations (and it is only a question of hypothesis) we do not mean to cast the slightest shadow on the murdered Montanari. It is entirely possible that he fell an accidental victim, or—if he did participate in bounding the alleged "provocateur"—he did so in good faith because he trusted his party and its thoroughly demonstrated leadership. But Montanari's personal desire does not solve the question of Beiso's motives.

Let the Workers Judge! Scoundrels will say that we advocate or justify murder as a method for solving conflicts within revolutionary circles. But we are not writing for scoundrels. The Montanari-Beiso case is important precisely because a conflict on the political plane has led to a supremely senseless act of murder of one emigre by another. In this there lies an ominously serious warning, and it is necessary to grasp its significance in time!

The matter is now in the hands of the bourgeois law courts. The official investigation is obviously not intended to cast light on the bloody tragedy from the standpoint of revolutionary morals of the proletariat. The prosecution will probably try only to compromise the proletarian emigres and the revolutionary organizations in particular. But the agents of the Comintern will also try to exploit the trial for every vile purpose, as they are obliged to do. The duty of workers' organizations, without any regard for political banners lies in one thing: in shedding the greatest light possible on this case, and thereby, insofar as it is possible, to prevent the repetition of gunplay in revolutionary circles. In our opinion the labor organizations must establish, without any further delay, an authoritative and non-partisan Committee which would go over the entire material, including Beiso's letters mentioned in l'Humanite, to examine all the witnesses and representatives of the parties and groups who are concerned or interested in the case, so that the political, moral and personal circumstances in the case be clearly established. This is necessary not only in memory of Montanari, not only to reveal Beiso's real motives but also to purge the atmosphere of all working class organizations of treachery, calumny, hounding and gun play. Naturally the interests of the case would be best served if the representatives of l'Humanite and of the Central Committee of the Italian C.P. were to take part in this Committee. But we may safely predict that they will most certainly refuse: these politicians stand only to lose from an impartial investigation, and much more than would appear on the surface. But the investigation ought not to be wrecked by their refusal to participate. Every honest participant in the labor movement is deeply interested in seeing to it that this abyss is opened which can otherwise develop into gangrene. The tragic case of Montanari-Beiso must be brought before a labor jury. August 29, 1935

NPLD Cooperates to Defend Cuban Workers

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was arrested during the March strike and murdered by the police. His body was discovered with thirty bullets in it and the reactionary press called it a suicide. In the Guanabacoa jail there are more than twenty women imprisoned for social and political "crimes."

Mistreatment of Prisoners. In the Isle of Pines the prisoners, both in the jails and in the Presidio Nacional, are living under the most frightful conditions. They are jammed into narrow galleries, lacking the simplest hygienic conveniences. Their rations are meagre made most frequently of decayed food. Any protest about it, is punished by hard labor on the rockpile. This happened at the Castillo del Principe a short time ago to a large number of political prisoners, among them several widely known intellectuals. In the Presidio at the Isle of Pines the political prisoners, intellectuals included, are obliged to work in the marble quarries and in the stinking mosquito-ridden La Yana swamp.

Aware of the intolerable situation, a number of trades unions and labor organizations joined in July to struggle actively for the freedom of the social and political victims of the Terror. The National Committee Pro-Amnesty for Social and Political Prisoners was built for that purpose. Its object is, therefore, concrete enough. It does not fight under the banner of any one party or organization; but is guided by the united effort of the thirty-one workers' groups that came together to form it. Aims of Pro-Amnesty Committee. "This Committee struggles further, to insure the safe return to Cuba, of political exiles—again we do not extend our protection to Machado butchers—and against the expulsion of foreigners for political

or social reasons. This is part of our daily task, for we believe that each of our three objectives: For the freedom of social and political prisoners; for the return of the exiles; against the expulsion of foreigners, are closely connected parts of the same urgent question of workers' defense.

This is, broadly, the present situation. Nevertheless on the margin of it an apparent change of methods has occurred. The Government, preparing for the elections, has changed its tone. Attemping to create an apparent "legal" basis to guarantee its electoral aims, it has proclaimed a Constitution and "re-established" civil rights, which of course, has been no obstacle to the arbitrary arrest of three of our comrades, members of this Committee, carried out during a lecture—given with a permit of the Secretariat of the Interior—in the Barrio de Luyano. The government has furthermore talked of forthcoming amnesty for the political prisoners. These maneuvers always arouse certain democratic illusions among some of our people. It is not our object to analyze here the perspectives and the true position of the government, nor can we in one word describe its aims with regard to the coming elections. We have answered its talk with the organization of the Committee Pro-Amnesty. We have stated that the problem can be solved only through the immediate and COMPLETE amnesty of all social and political prisoners, excepting the Machadistas. But nevertheless there are some things we want to emphasize.

Demand Complete Amnesty. "The Mendieta government is preparing to extend a certain kind of amnesty to some of the prisoners, but it will leave out those who fall under the so-called "Gangsterism Law." This is so defined as to keep under arrest, hundreds of revolutionary militants and labor leaders. The governmental formula we shall oppose with all our might, for our object is decisively: Not an inch less than complete amnesty.

"Engaged in this tremendous task, we can only repeat the words that began this letter-report. We hope from you your best efforts towards popularizing these matters among all the political and trades union organizations of your country, as well as a campaign to bring out responsibilities and realities by crusading with letters, telegrams, and all other possible methods. Our agitational work in this sense is being carried out on a larger and larger scale. We assume you will take part in this movement, with all your powers. Our best greetings, The National Committee General Secretariat"

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

M. Z., NEW YORK— Question: Does not the recent statement by the Soviet government that the Roosevelt-Litvinov pact did not refer to the Comintern refute the contentions of the "Trotskyists" that Litvinov had signed away the rights of the C. I. in the Soviet Union in return for recognition of that country by the United States? Answer: The fact of the matter is that the Soviet government did not break the pledge given by Litvinov to Roosevelt. It is true that a "congress" was held in Moscow which was attended by leaders of the American C. P., but there was no meeting in that city of individuals, or groups of individuals, who had, or their aim the overthrow of, or the preparation for the overthrow of, American capitalism. The Seventh Congress of the C.I. came out for defending the "democratic remnants" of the capitalists and for harnessing the workers to the imperialist aims of the capitalists of those countries which are the temporary ally of the Soviet Union. Stripped of its protective coloring, therefore, the Seventh Congress, in the final analysis, came out, not to overthrow capitalism, but for perpetuating capitalist slavery under the Soviet Union. The Stalinists, however, require a formula for their deeds; and because the Soviet Union is a Workers' State, it is necessary that the formula for a crass betrayal of the workers be a C.I. congress which has the form, if not the substance, of the Comintern of Lenin. When Litvinov signed the Roosevelt pact, he was quite ready, as the wording of the agreement shows, to give up this formula. At that time, however, he expected economic concessions, particularly credits, in return. The credits did not materialize. For reasons of imperialist and personal policy, however, Roosevelt-Hull still wanted the Stalinists to surrender the formula. Having received nothing in return, the Stalinists refused.

L. N., NEW BEDFORD—

Question: What is meant by the "antagonism between city and country"? Answer: In general this term implies the antagonisms arising out of the technical, and flowing from this, the cultural backwardness of the rural as compared to the urban regions. The basis for any well developed social division of labor is the division between the city and the country; the latter producing and exchanging raw materials, food, etc. In return for the manufactured products of the city. Economically, therefore, the antagonism is that between buyers and sellers and is reflected in the prices of commodities. The technical development of agriculture is subject to natural obstacles which are not present in the factory. If the economic incentive had existed for the ruling classes, however, there would have been a tendency to overcome this handicap. Under capitalism, the tendency on the part of industry to outstrip agriculture in its development is accentuated by the necessity of paying ground rent to the landowner. A capitalist farmer, who rents land, will refrain from putting any sort of permanent improvements into it because eventually the extra profits thus made will go to the landlord who raised the rent as soon as the "earning power" of his land has been increased. Where agriculture is carried on under modes of production which are less advanced historically than capitalism, e.g., forms of chattel slavery or serfdom, it is self-evident why its technical development is outstripped by capitalist industry, even in the latter's infancy. In the final analysis, therefore, the relative technical backwardness of agriculture is due to social and not to natural causes. In class society the more advanced exploits the backward. Under capitalism the advanced city exploits the country. This is accomplished through the disparity of prices resulting from the tendency towards an average rate of profit for all capitals; the products of the technically advanced industries selling above, those of the backward industries selling below, their values. Monopoly further increases this price disparity. The antagonism could be removed only by raising the technical and correspondingly the cultural level of the countryside. Under capitalism this could have been partly accomplished through the nationalization of the land (theoretically possible under capitalism) so that ground rent, and with it the obstacle to the technical advancement of agriculture, would have been removed. Such nationalization would thus have been a progressive step. Capitalism, however, has proceeded too far into its decay stage to be capable of such a step, and it remains the task of the proletariat revolution to complete this unfinished work of the bourgeois revolution.

N. Y. District School to Open Oct. 21

The week of October 21st will mark the opening of the Fall 1935 semester of the International Workers School in New York City. The schedule for regular courses is: Monday, 7-8:30 P.M.: ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES, STRUCTURE AND METHODS OF PARTY WORK. Martin Abern, instructor. Monday, 8:40-10:10 P.M.: FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF MARXISM. Ben Borkeson, instructor. An elementary course which will trace the basic economic and political features of capitalist society, the development of the modern class struggle, the need for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, the dictatorship of the working class and the role of the revolutionary party. Wednesday, 7:30 P.M.: PROGRAMMATIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORKERS PARTY. J. G. Wright, instructor. An advanced course which will analyze the contradictions of the imperialist epoch, the rise and degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals, the struggle against Fascism and war, the working class struggle for power and the need for a Fourth International. Thursday, 7-8:30 P.M.: THEORETICAL SYSTEM OF KARL MARX. Rubin Grote, instructor. An advanced course which will treat the philosophical and general theoretical basis of the modern revolutionary labor movement as established by its founders, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Friday, 8:40-10:10 P.M.: STATE AND REVOLUTION. Jack Weber, instructor. Will explain the origin and development of the state from the earliest times to present day capitalism. A detailed discussion of the capitalist state machinery, the attitude of the working class towards the capitalist state and the role of the workers' state. In addition to these regular courses, there will be a lecture

course conducted by A. J. Muste on "Trends in America" every Wednesday evening at 8:40 beginning October 23. I. THE ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR. An evaluation of the past year of the A. F. of L. II. THE ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR. A forecast of the coming year of the Federation. III. TRADE UNIONISM IN THE THREE BASE INDUSTRIES. A review of the past attempts to organize the steel, automobile and rubber industries and a forecast of the coming period. IV. THE NEEDLE TRADES UNIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE AMERICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. V. THE CAPITALIST POLITICAL PARTIES. VI. THIRD PARTY MOVEMENTS. VII. THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES. VIII. THE COMMUNIST PARTY. Also to treat the Lovestone, Weisbord and Field Groups. Registration fees are one dollar per course, fifty cents payable at time of registration. For information write to: International Workers School, 55 East 11th St., third floor, N. Y. C.

Minneapolis Iron Workers

(Continued from Page 1) nine factories in Minneapolis. While the settlement leaves a good deal to be desired it provides a firm basis for further consolidation of the union, and for future gains on the basis of a strong and militant organization. The present strike committee continues in office until a solid shop committee organization is set up in every factory. Considering the overwhelming forces mobilized against them the strikers have won a notable victory.

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER

THE VOTING IN MEMEL... Hitler is taking full advantage of the Italian imperialist threat against Ethiopia as well as the "moral" weapon made to order for rabid nationalism by the actions of the Lithuanian government. It is not hard to understand that the Lithuanian bourgeoisie, seizing Memel by force in a desperate effort to break through the strangling grip on economy of its own national boundaries, would hardly scruple to maintain that conquest by supplanting the Germans opposed to the seizure. Since the balloting for the Memel Diet to take place on Sept. 29th will be interpreted, particularly by Hitler, as a form of plebiscite, the Lithuanian ruling class tried to prevent a "German" victory, or at least to minimize it by means of a new electoral law passed August 27th. The purpose of the law was to disenfranchise the pro-German majority which prevented "cooperation" between the Memel Diet and the government officials appointed by Lithuania. The Nazis have encouraged Germans to become Lithuanian citizens in order to vote Nazi, with the express promise that they would recover their German nationality without difficulty once Memel had been recaptured by Hitler. Hence the new law denies the right to vote to those naturalized Lithuanian citizens who hold a promise from a foreign nation that their original citizenship may be reassumed at a later time. The vote is also denied to members of organizations which have been condemned for working against Lithuanian independence or which call for the alienation of a part of the Lithuanian state. All of which is quite obviously aimed at the "treasonable" Nazi elements.

THREAT OF WAR... Hitler, with that twisted sense of justice typical of reactionary capitalist defenders, at the same time that he disenfranchises the Jews violates the conditions laid down by the League of Nations for the Saarland, raises a great outcry against the Lithuanian oppressors. The Nazis have massed troops at the Lithuanian border to take advantage of any eventuality. Should a world war break out immediately, the German Army will have an initial objective in the taking of Memel. Even without the outbreak of war elsewhere, the threat of war exists in this struggle over national boundaries. For the workers' struggle over national boundaries, even where a small state like Lithuania is involved, can be viewed only as part of the general clash of different imperialisms. Each ruling class is trying to extend its sphere of exploitation of the working class. The solution for the proletariat lies not in defending the national boundaries of the capitalist state, which can only mean support of the national bourgeoisie, but the revolutionary overthrow of the national bourgeoisie, German or Lithuanian, by the workers and the setting up of a proletarian state. Extension of the rule of the workers would mean the wiping out of national boundaries, themselves one of the symbols of class rule. The problem of the Memel workers will not be solved by aiding Hitler to regain Memel for Germany but can only be solved by the proletarian revolution striving to bring about the Soviet United States of Europe.

"UNSER WORT" Halbmtonatschrift der Internationalen Kommunisten Deutschlands (Bolschewiki Leninisten) Bestellungen an: J. Meichler, B. P. 14 248 Rue des Pyrenees Paris 20e Preis des Abonnements 1 Jahr \$1.20; 1/2 Jahr 60c