

THE ASSASSINATION *of*
Kirov



*PROLETARIAN JUSTICE
VERSUS
WHITE-GUARD TERROR*

By M. Katz

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THE ASSASSINATION OF KIROV

Proletarian Justice versus White-Guard Terror

By M. KATZ.

ON DECEMBER 2, 1934, the following announcement appeared in all the Soviet newspapers:

“FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION (BOLSHEVIKS)

“The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) informs the Party, the working class and all toilers of the U.S.S.R. and the toilers of the whole world, with the greatest sorrow, that Comrade Sergei Mironovitch Kirov, an outstanding leader of our Party, an ardent, fearless revolutionary, a beloved leader of the Bolsheviks and of all the toilers of Leningrad, Secretary of the Central and Leningrad Committees of the C.P.S.U. (Bolsheviks) and member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., perished by the treacherous hand of an enemy of the working class in Leningrad on December 1.

“The loss of Comrade Kirov, who was loved by the entire Party and the whole working class of the U.S.S.R., who was a crystal-pure and unshakably steadfast Party man, a Bolshevik-Leninist who devoted his whole vivid and glorious life to the cause of the working class, to the cause of Communism, is the severest loss sustained by the whole Party and the land of Soviets during the past years.

“The Central Committee believes that the memory of Comrade Kirov, the glowing example of his fearless, untiring struggle for the proletarian revolution, for the construction of socialism in the U.S.S.R., will inspire millions of proletarians and all toilers for the further struggle for the triumph of socialism, for the final annihilation of all enemies of the working class.

“CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ALL-
UNION COMMUNIST PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS)”

Sergei Mironovitch Kirov, one of the most beloved leaders of the Soviet working class, who, in addition to his other duties, was Secretary of the Party Committee of the Leningrad Region for the past eight years, was murdered on December 1, at 11 A. M. in the historic Smolny Institute, the headquarters of the Leningrad Party Committee. He was murdered just as he was about to deliver a report on the decisions of the Central Committee abolishing the bread-rationing system and a number of emergency methods of Party work. The assassin Nikolayev, a former petty functionary, lay in waiting in the corridors of the building and fired at Comrade Kirov from behind. A bullet struck his head. Death was instantaneous. The Assassin later confessed that he was a member of a terrorist organization composed of the remnants of the former Zinoviev-Trotsky opposition at Leningrad. The dregs of this opposition, which has lost all contact with the masses, linked itself with various White-Guard elements and representatives of foreign governments for the purpose of overthrowing the Communist leadership and the Soviet government and of putting in their place men like Zinoviev and Trotsky by means of terroristic acts. The murder of Comrade Kirov was organized and directed by counter-revolutionists and White-Guardists, enemies of the working class, who parade under various guises in order to undermine the workers' State and its foremost leaders.

A Blow at White-Guard Terrorists

As an answer to the murderous shot, the Soviet government arrested a number of persons connected with White-Guard terrorist organizations. In addition, it had under arrest quite a number of White-Guard terrorists who had been seized previously as they crossed the frontier from Finland, Poland, Rumania, and Latvia, carrying hand-grenades and other concealed weapons for the purpose of murdering leaders of the Soviet government and the Communist Party, of setting fire to industrial plants, of blowing up bridges and disrupting transport.

Due to the gravity of the crime committed on December 1, which showed that the White-Guardists aim their weapons at the very heart of the revolution, all these prisoners were, by decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union, turned over to the Extraordinary Supreme Court of the Republic. The prisoners were tried on the basis of the material evidence discovered at the time of their capture. One hundred and three terrorists, members of White-Guard organizations who had entered the Soviet Union from foreign countries with forged passports and armed, were sentenced to death and executed.

This swift act of justice met with the whole-hearted approval of the entire Soviet working class. In thousands of demonstrations and mass meetings the Soviet workers demanded that short shrift be made of the serpent of counter-revolution which again tried to rear its ugly head and did succeed in striking down one of the best leaders of the revolution.

Nikolayev's Shot Not Accidental

It was clear from the very beginning that the shooting of Comrade Kirov was no isolated or private act. The fact that bands of known White-Guardist agents of terrorist organizations of Russian emigres recently stole into the Soviet Union, showed that Nikolayev's shot was merely part of a larger plan of terrorist attempts upon the lives of the leaders of the Soviet Union.

Significant likewise was the concentrated offensive of lies and slander let loose in connection with the assassination of Kirov in the capitalist press generally, and especially in the press and at the gatherings of pronounced White-Guardists and various brands of so-called "Socialists". These same elements, who said not a word in condemnation of the murder of the fearless and tireless revolutionist and builder of Socialism, Sergei Kirov, began manufacturing rumors about mutinies and terror in the Soviet Union, even before the arrested White-Guard terrorists were put on trial, insinuating that Kirov was

a victim of a personal grudge. Their campaign of vilification and their demands for moral intervention (which is nothing else than a mental preparation for military intervention) against the Soviet Union became even louder after the terrorist conspirators met with their merited fate.

Thus the White-Guardists and counter-revolutionists in the U.S.S.R. and their friends and instigators abroad, worked hand in glove in accordance with a definite plan which has been and remains:

1. To hamper the Socialist construction of the Soviet Union through direct terroristic attacks upon its leaders and through acts of sabotage directed at Soviet enterprises.

2. To undermine the moral support that the Soviet Union has been gaining more and more among the toiling masses in capitalist countries, by representing the U.S.S.R. as a land of terror and bloodshed, by placing the Communist leadership of the Soviet Union on the same level as Hitler's wholesale murderers and degenerates.

3. To help cement a united capitalist front against the Soviet Union in the hope of precipitating, at the first opportunity, a war against the Soviet Union, and the restoration there of the capitalist system.

4. To distract the attention of the world from the remarkable victories of the U.S.S.R. on the front of industrialization and collectivization in the year 1934.

Who Was Kirov?

Comrade Kirov was born forty-nine years ago, in 1886, in the small town of Urzhum, in the former Vyatka Province near the Urals. His parents were poor workers. When he was seven years old his father died. His mother died a few months later, and Sergei and his two little sisters were orphaned. Their grandmother, a house servant, took them to live with her, but her wages of three rubles a month were not enough to support them, and she was forced to place them in an orphanage.

While still in the orphan asylum, little Sergei distinguished

front, liberated Baku, and established the Soviet government in the Caucasus.

When the Civil War came to an end, Comrade Kirov was assigned to the important post of Secretary of the Trans-Caucasian Committee of the Communist Party. With this assignment went the great responsibility, on the one hand, of restoring the ruin wrought by the counter-revolutionists and interventionists in the Caucasus, and, on the other, to put an end to the inter-racial and tribal slaughters and bring about brotherly Soviet relationships among the many nationalities and tribes of the Caucasus. His success in this work was so notable that at the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party he was elected a member of the Central Committee. In 1926, when the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition demoralized and weakened one of the strongest and best organizations of the Party, the Leningrad Committee, Kirov was transferred to Leningrad as Secretary of the City and Regional Party Committee.

The task was unusually difficult because the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition controlled the strongest positions in the Leningrad organization and had there its most energetic representatives with long-established connections among the Leningrad workers. Kirov, however, threw himself into work heart and soul. He promoted dependable rank-and-file members of the Party, workers from the shop to positions of leadership and responsibility and put the struggle against the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition on a high level of revolutionary theory and principle. The result was that within a short time the Leningrad organization again became one of the mainstays of the Party in the struggle for the correct Leninist Party line.

But this was not all. Under the Tsarist regime Leningrad was one of the industrial centers of the country. Immediately after the Revolution the city lost this position to a large degree, both because of the return of many of the Leningrad workers to their native rural districts, and even more so because the Leningrad region had no raw materials and fuel of its own. Thanks to the tireless work of Comrade Kirov, and under his direct leadership, the necessary conditions were created in

himself as a bright and energetic lad. He found an opportunity to go to school and he completed his elementary education at the municipal school.

At the age of fourteen Kirov entered the Technical School at Kazan, from which he graduated in 1904, living four years at a stipend of ninety-six rubles a year.

His acquaintance with the revolutionary movement began in his native town of Urzhum where the Tsarist government placed a number of political exiles. But his closer connection with the revolutionary movement, its Bolshevik wing, was brought about at Kazan, where the revolutionary movement had struck roots among the workers and students.

In 1904 Kirov went to Tomsk, Siberia, where he intended to enter the Technological Institute. Instead, he threw himself heart and soul into the revolutionary movement—this was the time of the Russo-Japanese War—organized demonstrations and strikes, addressed meetings, and founded a famous underground printing plant. At the age of 18 or 19, he became one of the outstanding Bolshevik leaders in western Siberia and took an active part in the armed demonstration organized by the workers of Tomsk as a protest against the massacre of workers in St. Petersburg on the Bloody Sunday of January 9, 1905.

In February of that year, Kirov was, for the first time, arrested as a revolutionist and held in prison several months. No sooner was he released than he again plunged into revolutionary activity along the Siberian Railway among the workers and soldiers and led a large scale strike of railwaymen. Early in 1906 he was again arrested and spent a year in prison before he was brought to trial. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment in a fortress and served the full term. This, Comrade Kirov used to say, was his revolutionary college. He utilized his imprisonment to make a study of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and to fit himself for the task of a "professional revolutionist", one who no longer thought of a purely personal career or occupation outside of working for the victory of the revolution.

After his release from prison Comrade Kirov again tried to work in the revolutionary movement of Siberia, but he was too well known to the police and secret agents and was under constant surveillance. He therefore left Siberia and went to Vladikavkaz where he was active in the underground revolutionary movement for several years, and where he probably made his first acquaintance with Stalin.

In 1915, during the World War, he was again arrested and exiled to Tomsk. There he spent a year's time and was about to be sent to the remote Narim district of Arctic Siberia when the revolution of February, 1917, broke out.

A Leader of the Revolution

Free again, Comrade Kirov immediately went to the Caucasus where he took an active part in the great revolutionary work of 1917, particularly in demobilizing the retreating Russian army, and in arming the workers and peasants. When the October Revolution came, Comrade Kirov was one of the most energetic organizers of the struggle against the White-Guardist Cossack bands. In this struggle, the first units of the Caucasian Red Front were formed, and early in 1918 the local Bolshevist organizations sent Comrade Kirov to Moscow to obtain arms and military leadership for the Caucasian front.

He was successful in his mission in Moscow, but his return to the Caucasus became impossible, because the White armies and bands of the Tsarist generals, Kornilov, Krasnov, Alexeyev, and others, had already seized a part of northern Caucasus and the Volga. Kirov was then assigned the task of defending one of the most important points of the Red front, the city of Astrakhan, on the Caspian Sea, through which the Soviet government hoped to keep up its communication with Baku, and control the traffic on the Volga.

Under the leadership of Comrade Kirov the Twelfth Red Army, organized in the Astrakhan section, did splendid work in defeating the White generals, smashed Denikin's Caucasian

Leningrad for the return of the emigrated workers. Rich sources of raw materials were discovered, a series of large power plants and canals was built, and Leningrad became one of the most developed and industrialized centers of the Soviet Union. At the same time, under Comrade Kirov's leadership, the city became a first-rate cultural and art center, comparing favorably with Moscow in this respect.

In 1930 Kirov was elected to membership in the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Early in 1934 he was given, in addition to his other posts, the important position of Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and member of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union.

In the eight years Kirov spent in Leningrad as the head of the regional Party organization, he became, not only the beloved leader of the Leningrad workers, but also one of the most prominent leaders of the entire working class and the toiling masses of the Soviet Union.

An assassin's bullet put an end to thirty years of brilliant revolutionary work of Comrade Kirov, but his memory will live for ever among the working class. The work he accomplished will remain a model for future generations of revolutionists, both in the Soviet Union, and in all other countries where revolutionary workers fight for victory.

The White-Guardists and Their Protectors

The contemptible assassination of the beloved revolutionary leader aroused the entire Soviet population. The reaction to this crime, as reflected in countless resolutions of workers' meetings, and through individual expressions of high indignation, showed how profoundly shocked were the masses of workers, peasants, intellectuals, scientists, artists, and other sections of the Soviet population. Numerous biographic accounts and reminiscences, both of the time of the Civil War and of the later years of Socialist construction, filled the Soviet press, revealing the great creative personality of Kirov, and the

tremendous loss sustained by the Soviet Union and the proletariat of the whole world through his assassination.

When we realize the full scope of Comrade Kirov's accomplishments and his contributions to the Revolution in the thirty years of his active revolutionary work, we begin to appreciate the fiery indignation of the Soviet toilers against the group of counter-revolutionary conspirators, who had guided the hand of the assassin. We begin to understand the white-heat anger of the Soviet proletariat that stepped hard upon the snake of White-Guard terrorism after it had stung to death one of the most outstanding sons of the workers' fatherland.

Yet in spite of the fact that the published details reveal the full heroic stature of Comrade Kirov, the capitalist press and almost the entire "Socialist" press deliberately put a veil of complete silence about the personality of Kirov and his popularity among the Soviet masses. Not a word of regret in the "Socialist" press at the death of this great popular leader, not a word of indignation against the assassin! On the other hand, a hysterical hue and cry is raised against the Soviet government because of its energetic measures against the counter-revolutionary organizers and perpetrators of the murder of Comrade Kirov!

"One's heart stands still and one's brain freezes"—the old White-Guardist, Abe Cahan, writes in the *Jewish Daily Forward*, a paper Socialist in name, but actually an organ of the terrorist conspirators against the Soviet Union.

With every new announcement of the Soviet government that it has wiped out another nest of counter-revolution, a fresh howl is raised by the allies and "moral" supporters of the interventionist elements whose only aim is to strike a death blow at the workers' fatherland. The capitalist press gnashes its teeth, the Tsarists yelp curses and threats at the Soviet Union, and Socialist Party leaders—as in New York—organize protest meetings and memorials in honor of the executed counter-revolutionary assassins.

"Only the Hitlerite massacres," says a resolution adopted at a meeting of "Russian and American Socialists" at the Rand

School, in New York, "are comparable to the crimes the Stalin dictatorship is committing under the banner of supposed socialism." And at a meeting in Cooper Union, the degenerate Mensheviks try to squeeze through a resolution "to urge [upon Roosevelt] to put an end to the reign of fear in Russia . . ." and to "voice our earnest indignation against the new crime against civilization on the part of Soviet government." (!!)

The direct aim of such a resolution is to bring about a "moral" intervention of the United States against the Soviet Union in order to protect the arrested counter-revolutionary gangsters, and thus spur on the imperialist military interventionists against the U.S.S.R.

The "Crime" of the Proletarian Dictatorship

The "Socialist" enemies of the Soviet Union are enraged by the "crimes of the Stalin dictatorship" and the "*new crime against civilization on the part of the Soviet government*".

When they speak of the "*new crime*" they imply a remembrance also of "*old crimes*". What then were these old crimes of the Soviet government in the eyes of the protesting White-Guardists? These "crimes" were very grave indeed and still arouse the indignation of the entire capitalist world.

The Soviet government took Russia out of the World War, that was being waged in the interests of the capitalists and landowners, destroyed the capitalist system together with the power of the exploiting classes of capitalists and landowners. It abolished every kind of national and racial oppression; it pulled the country out of its state of permanent poverty and backwardness and developed it by means of a planned, Socialist system into a cultural, industrialized, and collectivized country. The Soviet government abolished forever the scourge of unemployment. It is rapidly leading the Soviet masses towards classless, Socialist society; it has fortified the workers' fatherland against a world of bitter enemies; it has stood out before the masses of the entire world as a force for peace; it has liberated woman from the yoke of special oppression;

it is uprooting the remnants of capitalism from the economic relations and from the minds of men. *All this has been done on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has brought for the first time in history true democracy to the entire toiling population, places the interests of the toiling people supreme, and protects the achievements of the Revolution against the restoration designs of the remnants of the parasitic classes.*

This is indeed a great "crime"! The capitalist world cannot forgive the Soviet Union this "old crime" and it misses no opportunity to show that it has never forgotten it. It is indeed a crime on the part of the Communist Party to strengthen the rule of the proletariat in the Soviet Union at a time when the Socialist Parties in Germany, Austria, Poland, England and other countries have surrendered into the hands of the bourgeoisie the power entrusted them by the working class! The "democratic" Socialists of various stripes can never forget or forgive this gross "crime" of the Soviet government.

And it is to this old "crime" of having overthrown the rule of the bourgeoisie and of building Socialism upon the basis of the proletarian dictatorship that a "new crime against civilization" is added. In what, then, does this "new crime" consist?

Can the Struggle Against the White-Guardists Be Compared to the Hitler Terror?

"Only the Hitler massacres," states the resolution of the "Socialist" meeting at the Rand School, "are comparable to the crimes the Stalin dictatorship is committing."

Very well. Let us compare and see. What are Hitler's crimes? They consist in the fact that, as an agent of the monopoly capitalists of Germany, he has suppressed the working class in a bloody manner, deprived the workers of all rights; abolished or outlawed all labor organizations; done to death, tortured, and imprisoned countless Communist and other anti-fascist fighters; launched a campaign of destruction against the Jewish population; fostered a vicious inhuman.

chauvinist race theory, working against the major portion of the world's racial stocks; turned Germany into a spear-head of the world-imperialist drive to a new war.

And when his capitalist masters decided that it was time to abolish Hitler's "Brown Army" in favor of the Reichswehr and became displeased with his friends for opposing their plans, the Nazi chieftain stopped at nothing and had his closest lieutenants killed without any trial or opportunity to explain.

Now, what has the rule of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which its enemies prefer to designate as "Stalin dictatorship", done that is comparable either in its purpose or its method or its results to what the Hitler regime has done in Germany? The relationship here is one of *opposites*: Thanks to the vigorous rule of the proletarian dictatorship, the enemies of the working class and of the peasantry have been suppressed and the power and dominant position of the proletariat have been strengthened. While, as a result of the fascist dictatorship, the working class was curbed and its best sons tortured and killed in order to strengthen the rule of capitalist monopoly. A fine similarity!

The "fair-minded" people of the type of Norman Thomas or the editors of the *New Republic* and *The Nation* put it a little more delicately: the executions in the Soviet Union, they say, "remind one painfully" of the Hitler purge of June 30.

Is it really so? Let us see. On June 30, 1934, Hitler had seized several hundred of his closest aides and followers and had them killed off without trial. Their crime consisted in there being a danger that they would not fit into the plans of those who were setting up in Germany a military dictatorship, under the guise of Hitler's supreme leadership, for the purpose of strengthening the badly shaken German capitalism.

What has happened in the Soviet Union? Within recent months a couple of hundred White-Guardists were caught red-handed illegally entering the Soviet Union from Rumania, Poland, Latvia and Finland, with hand grenades and other weapons on their persons. While the investigation into their plots and organizational connections was being completed, the

assassin's shot resounded in the Smolny Institute, killing one of the foremost Soviet leaders. It then became clear that these White-Guardists were a party to a terrorist plot. This being established beyond doubt, they were placed on trial, and the Extraordinary High Court of the Soviet Union, after finding them guilty, sentenced most of them to death. How then can this be compared to the Hitler killings directed at his own henchmen? And why have some of the "Socialist" and liberal leaders raised such a howl?

The Enemies of the Soviet Union Are Opposed to Any Kind of Trial Against White-Guardists

The trials, they argue, were held behind closed doors, and it is not known upon what evidence the accused were found guilty and condemned.

The fact of the matter is the Soviet government *has published the confessions* of the accused plotters and of the assassin Nikolayev, wherein he tells how he committed the crime, why he did it, and who was behind it. But the enemies of the Soviet Union immediately raised a howl, trying to cast a doubt upon the authenticity of the Nikolayev confession. It might have been written, they say, by the . . . Cheka (long abolished!). They would be satisfied with nothing less than a *public* trial of the terrorists—they, who know full well that such a thing was not done, in all probability, because it was found that the terrorist plot involves not only Russian White-Guardists, but certain foreign governments and their agents.

The truth is that the White-Guardists and their foreign friends would in no way be satisfied, even by a public trial for which they now clamor so loudly. We remember the howl they raised against the Soviet Union at the time of the famous public trials—conducted openly before the whole world—of the Social-Revolutionist terrorists in 1923, of the "Industrialist Party" of the Ramzin group in 1929, of the Menshevik interventionists in 1930, and of the British wreckers and spies in 1933. On each occasion the friends of counter-revolution tried to outdo each other in maintaining that the Soviet gov-

ernment "staged" these trials for the purposes of "propaganda", in order to influence public opinion in the Soviet Union and abroad.

The one and only way to satisfy the enemies of the Soviet Union would be for the Soviet government to refrain from any kind of trial of counter-revolutionists, and, still better—to transfer its whole power into the hands of the White-Guardists and their friends.

But this, of course, is beyond their hope, and this is the reason that the anti-Soviet propagandists try to present the condemned White-Guardists as saints and martyrs and maintain that they were punished for no crime whatsoever and without due process of law. But who deserves more confidence: the White-Guardists who have always been enemies of the Soviet Union, who have always organized acts of terrorism and sabotage or the Soviet judges, every one of whom is an old and tried revolutionary fighter, every one of whom devoted his entire life to the emancipation of the working class and of the whole toiling mankind and is ready at any moment to lay down his life for the revolution? To any honest, class-conscious worker there can be but one answer to this question.

The judges of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union found the White-Guard terrorists guilty for the simple reason that their guilt had been established beyond any doubt—and to any honest man and class-conscious worker that settles the question.

The White-Guardists Themselves Boast of Their "Work"

If logical reasoning alone is insufficient, we have facts to support our conclusions. A Russian sheet named *The Fascist*, claiming for itself the title of the central organ of the "All-Russian Fascist Party", is more or less regularly published in the United States. In its issue of March, 1934, *The Fascist* printed a resolution of the "Supreme Council of the All-Russian Fascist Organizations" stating that "beginning with the year 1934 the organization must concentrate its efforts upon propaganda work in Russia. The central task is to bring

propaganda and agitation literature into Russia.” The same American-Russian fascist publication stresses the point that *the aim of such propaganda is the assassination of Communist leaders, the blowing up of factories and the killing of active workers loyal to the Soviet rule.* It is also the avowed aim of this organization to hinder the development of Socialism in the Soviet Union and bring about a state of war which might help in the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, following the hoped-for overthrow of the Soviet regime.

The “fourth thesis” of the fascist organization, published in the same issue of *The Fascist*, states:

“In the factories and enterprises and in the unions, constant work must be carried on for the purpose of sabotaging production and transportation of goods for export. In addition to our general slogan about the destruction of the Soviets we advance a specific slogan for this agitation: *‘Not a single grain, not a single ton of coal or barrel of oil for export.’*”

In its issue of January, 1934, this fascist organ boasts of the following “accomplishments”:

“During the past summer our Brotherhood Unit (of three persons) No. 5, carried out special operations upon the River Pripet. Seven barges carrying government goods were sunk. The workers who were not members of the Party were allowed to land. The Communists, numbering nine, were drowned.”

In its issue of February, 1934, *The Fascist* tells of the disruption (by Soviet authorities) of a fascist organization which “*consisted of 300 persons, 20 of them belonging to the Terrorist Center whose members used to kill Communists wherever they could be found*”.

These are facts. The White-Guardists themselves boast of them publicly. Out of their own mouths comes the evidence of their guilt.

It Is Not a Question of Numbers but of Guilt

In addition to the open and frank defenders of the White-

Guardist terrorists there are many tender-hearted liberals who exclaim with a show of horror:

“See what they are doing! They have executed over a hundred people at one clip!”

Quite so. But the question is not about the *number* of people executed but of the number of *guilty ones*. If those people were guilty, they deserved their punishment even if there were a thousand of them instead of a hundred. If they were innocent, it would have been a crime to execute even a single one of them. The question here then is not of the number, but of the *guilt* of the counter-revolutionary terrorists who plotted against the rule of the workers and killed one of the ablest Soviet leaders. The White-Guard terrorists have attacked—and the more of them that are captured and destroyed the better it is for the welfare and peace of the Soviet Union and its toiling masses.

Finally, we have those “political vegetarians” who stand “above the battle” and are concerned only with “humanity”. These cannot condone the execution of the counter-revolutionists simply because no one has a right to deprive a human being of life”, because “human life is sacred”.

As to the Sacredness of Human Life

Yes, we’ve heard about it. Capitalist writers and philosophers used to stress this point about the “sacredness of human life”. But, in the first place, the bourgeoisie applied this philosophy only in cases where it concerned its own safety. When it came to shooting down workers in the streets, or torturing them in the prisons for the crime of having revolted against capitalist oppression, these same “humanitarians” quickly forgot their philosophy about the “sacredness of human life”. Also, when members of petty-bourgeois revolutionary parties, who made individual terrorism a weapon of political struggle, had to do away with a Tsar or a minister they pronounced him a tyrant and an enemy of the people and were little concerned about the “sacredness” of his life. The lives of the poor, who

perish by the thousands between the grindstones of capitalism, have always been so cheap that the liberal philosopher never bothered about them.

But in our present epoch of wars and revolutions this humanitarian philosophy has been completely discarded by the bourgeoisie, and whenever it is revived it is usually for very unholy reasons.

Indeed, what talk can there be about the "sacredness of human life" after tens of millions of young men were sent to the battle front with the slogan to kill millions of the "enemy" and lay down their own lives for the "fatherland",—and new tens of millions are still being prepared for the same "sacred" purpose? How can they prattle about the "sacredness of human life", those who brought about and tried to justify the slaughter of millions of human beings in the World War? What does this "sacredness" amount to, when hundreds of thousands of militant workers are being tortured and slaughtered and done to death in dungeons in order to protect the rule of the capitalists, the system of exploitation?

From our everyday experiences we know only too well, that, far from being held sacred, human life is treated by the bourgeoisie as the cheapest and most worthless thing in the world. The working class in this country, as in the entire capitalist world, knows from experience that the life of the individual worker is in no case and in no way sacred and important, except to his class, the collective of which he is a member, which he serves or leads in its fights.

What Life Is Really Sacred?

Is the class of capitalists and landowners and their system in any way sacred for us, workers and toilers? No, it is not. We fight the capitalist class and its system. And, if so, can we regard as a hero, as a "saint" any person (a strikebreaker, a gangster, a fascist, etc.) who risks or loses his life in the interests of the bourgeoisie and of the capitalist system? Of course not!

To us workers the interests and the victory of our working class are the most sacred thing. Consequently, the interests of unhampered and victorious building of Socialism in the Soviet Union, a system we seek to attain everywhere, are indeed sacred to us. We know of no higher purpose, of no more sacred goal. And that is why the lives of the workers, of the leaders and fighters who risk their liberty and their life for the working class, for the revolution and for Socialism, are sacred indeed in our eyes and hearts.

One life is not equal to another. In our eyes a White-Guardist is not equal in "human value" to a revolutionist, just as a scab is not equal to a striker, just as a traitor is not equal to a hero.

The life of a revolutionist, of a leader of the working class, of a Lenin, of a Stalin, of a Kirov, stands in our eyes for the highest value, is the most inspiring and sacred thing, because such a life is the concentrated energy, the crystallized consciousness of the militant working class; because every day of their life is a further step toward the emancipation of the working class, and of whole mankind. It is a joy and a pride to live in an epoch which has put forward a Lenin, a Stalin, a Kirov.

But wherein lies the importance and the value of a Dora Kaplan who tried to assassinate Lenin? What is the human value of a Nikolayev who did assassinate Kirov? Or the lives of the White-Guard terrorists, who sneaked into the Soviet Union with weapons of murder in their hands in order to obstruct the Soviet revolution and terrorize the Soviet workers and their leaders? Or the lives of the treacherous scum of the former Trotzky-Zinoviev opposition groups, which united hands with the White-Guardists for terrorist purposes?

Suppose the White Guards Are Victorious

Let us imagine for a moment that the White-Guard terrorists had attained their goal and, after destroying the Soviet regime, restored the Tsarist regime, *i.e.*, the rule of the land-

owners and capitalists. Can any one figure out how many hundreds of thousands of the best sons and daughters of the working class and the peasantry would be killed? Can you imagine the regime the White Guards would establish, wiping out all the gains of the workers and peasants and instituting a reign of race persecution, bigotry and bloody oppression? Think of what happened to the German masses under Hitler, to the Italians under Mussolini, to the Russians, Ukrainians and Jews under the rule of Denikin and Petlura, during the Russian civil war, and you will get some idea of the rule of the White-Guards.

We maintain, therefore, that the Soviet government deserves the deepest recognition and support from all toilers in the United States, as in the whole world, for the vigorous way in which it dealt with the White-Guard plotters and terrorists following the assassination of Kirov, for the way it protected the best interests of the toiling masses of the Soviet Union. The supreme law of proletarian revolution is merciless struggle in the interests of the toiling masses and the uninterrupted building of Socialism. There is no higher law. There is no more sacred duty!

The assassin's bullet struck one of the most energetic and devoted builders of Socialism, Comrade Kirov, precisely at a time when the abolition of the bread-rationing system was announced and when a series of emergency measures and institutions (such as the O.G.P.U., the Political Sections in the rural districts) was abolished after fulfilling their task. But if the White-Guardists hoped that the assassination of Kirov, which was to serve as the signal for many more such dastardly murders, would force the Soviet government to turn back or retard the latest measures, thus creating widespread dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime as a prerequisite for the plans of the counter-revolution, they sadly miscalculated.

The Soviet Government dealt swiftly and sternly with the enemies of the working class. The triumphant forward march of Socialist construction has not been halted or interrupted.

It is characteristic of the progress and success of the Soviet Union that the first speech made by Comrade Stalin, leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, following the mourning-period in connection with Kirov's death, dealt only with still further improving the living condition of the workers with a general raising of wages and bringing the technical efficiency of the socialist industries to new high levels.

The enemies of the revolution are being crushed as the workers' fatherland triumphantly marches on toward Socialism!

The March Toward Socialism Is Uninterrupted

The fact that the terrorists came not only from the sewers of the White-Guard counter-revolution, but also from the scum of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition, tended to confuse some of those friends of the Soviet Revolution who do not know how bitterly Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and their followers fought against the Party and against the policies of the Soviet government since the first days of the October Revolution, whenever the Party had to make a decisive step or overcome a new hardship. They do not know that Trotsky and the Trotskyites in the capitalist countries are in the forefront of the enemies of the proletarian dictatorship and of the Soviet Union and that they made it their business to supply the capitalist press with the most poisonous ammunition against the Party, just as Zinoviev, Kamenev and their followers did, according to their own published confessions in the Soviet Union.

If the Trotskyites in the capitalist countries have come out with criminal openness as enemies, their friends, the scum of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition in the Soviet Union, were even more dangerous, being past masters in the art of disguising their true face and aims—the more dangerous even than the White-Guardists, because they made their nest in the Party itself and *could shoot from the inside*. They were the disguised agents who tried to do their dastardly counter-revolutionary “work” from within. This certainly has not lessened their

crime. On the contrary, their guilt thereby became the greater, and they fully deserve the punishment they received.

The counter-revolutionists in the Soviet Union have not succeeded in carrying out their program of disrupting the Soviet regime and halting the progress of Socialism. But in the capitalist countries, all the enemies of the Soviet Union, including Trotzkyites, fascists, and leaders of the Socialist Parties, have made the Kirov assassination an occasion for a vicious propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union, its Leninist Party, and especially against the person of Comrade Stalin and against the Communist Parties of the respective capitalist countries.

The bankrupt counter-revolutionary outfit of Trotzkyites and Musteites in the United States, which parades now under the misleading name of a "Workers' Party", was even more vicious than the capitalist press in spreading lies about the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. They did it with the special purpose of confusing the minds of the American workers and of alienating their growing sympathy for the Soviet Union and for the Communist movement.

But, instead of being weakened, the confidence of the working class in its Communist leadership has been even more strengthened by the attacks of the enemies. In reply to the vicious propaganda against the fatherland of the proletariat, workers in capitalist countries rally to the support of their Communist Parties and join its ranks in ever increasing numbers. The revolutionary workers the world over demonstrate their solidarity with the workers of the Soviet Union and their approval of the sternness and determination in dealing with the counter-revolutionary terrorists. Workers and friends of the October Revolution throughout the world honor the memory of Comrade Kirov, and join in the call of the Soviet workers:

Down with the counter-revolution, with the fascist terrorists, the counter-revolutionary Trotzkyites, and the social-reformist defendants of the White Guards!

More power to the proletarian dictatorship in the struggle against all enemies of the working class and of Socialism!

Defend the Soviet Union—the fatherland of the workers of the world!

Long live the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, headed by its Leninist Central Committee under the leadership of Comrade Stalin!

Long live the World Party of the working class—the Communist International!

Forward to the victory of the American working class—to Soviet America!

Rally to the banner of the Vanguard of the American working class!—Join the Communist Party!