
Death of Gilbert Lewis

A REVOLUTIONARY NEGRO WORKER.

The working class has suffered a great loss in the death at Yalta in the Soviet Union on June 1st 1931 of the young Negro comrade, Gilbert Lewis, an active member of the Communist Party. It can be said that comrade Lewis died as a Martyr directly as a result of his treatment by the capitalist bosses in the south of the U. S. A.

Born of working-class parents in New Orleans, La, in 1904, Comrade Lewis from an early age felt the pangs of capitalist exploitation and national oppression. Forced to leave school when still a boy in order to make a livelihood, Lewis

drifted from state to state, doing whatever work he could lay his hands upon. As a migratory worker he reached New York in 1928 where he obtained employment as a window cleaner. Comrade Lewis was an active member of the window cleaner's union, here he helped to organize the opposition, led the struggle against the trade-union reformists, and won the union over to the red trade-union movement. He also took an active part in the New York subway strike. These activities

led him into the ranks of the Communist party in 1929, from which time he became an active party functionary.



GILBERT LEWIS
on chaingang, in Tennessee

Early in 1931, when the party and the revolutionary trade-union organizations undertook organizational work in the south, Comrade Lewis was sent to the state of Tennessee as an organizer of the revolutionary trade-union work. During his stay in the south he did much to draw the Negro industrial and agricultural workers into the revolutionary movement.

Despite the terroristic conditions under which his work had to be conducted, under the constant threat of the Klu Klux Klan against his life, Comrade Lewis unflinchingly carried out the tasks of the party. He was frequently arrested and at one time sentenced with a chain gang. These semi-legal persecutions had a deleterious effect upon his health and it was at this time that he contracted tuberculosis.

After a temporary recovery, Comrade Lewis was sent to the Soviet Union for rest and medical treatment. But shortly after his arrival in Moscow he suffered a relapse to which he finally succumbed.

Besides being an active organizer, Comrade Lewis was a regular contributor to the Daily Worker, the central organ of the American Party, and to the columns of other revolutionary journals.