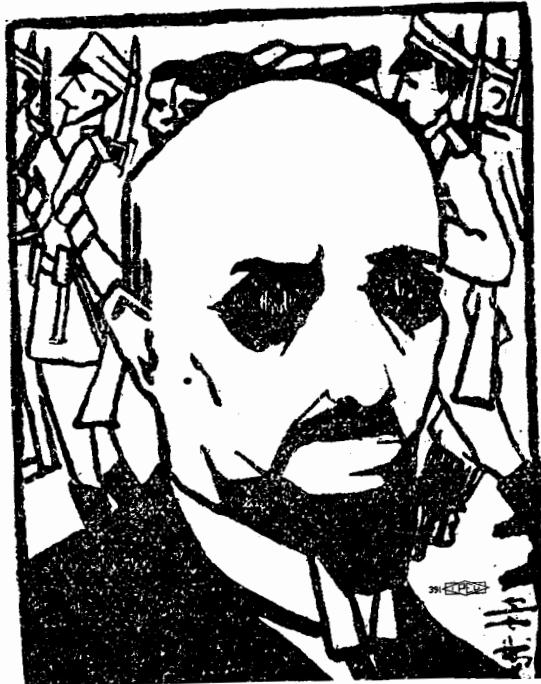


The Bulgarian Conflagration

By Max Shachtman



ZANKOV, SUPREME BUTCHER OF BULGARIA

IN a unique fit of truth, a European correspondent of the Chicago Tribune cables on the recent Bulgarian occurrences that "in the outburst of fury that followed the bomb outrage an army of police, militia and reserve officers searched out the most notorious Communists in Sofia and probably killed some 100 in cold blood."

This sadism of black reaction in Bulgaria is a continuation of almost unparalleled terrorism that has characterized the Zankov government since its victorious coup d'état in June, 1923, when it overthrew the rule of the peasants' party led by Stambuliski. The wild acts of persecution that followed, especially after the failure of the Communist Party to issue the call of action to the workers and peasants, are incredible. Emile Vandervelde, one of the leaders of the Second International, has stated that the Zankov government has murdered 16,000 opponents in the last eighteen months. Every leader of the Communist Party, of the Peasants' Party, of the Macedonian national revolutionary movement, stands in daily danger of his life. Not even the sanctity of parliament has prevented the brutal murder of revolutionary députés; even liberals, such as the lawyer, Patev, who defended the Communist deputy Dr. Maximov in court, are subjected to the bombs of assassins.

Throne of Reaction Shaky.

And yet not all this desperate terrorism has removed the towering difficulties that confront Zankov. In a country whose population numbers four million, there are over 100,

000 unemployed. Forty thousand civil servants have been fired; the partial eight-hour day which was won by the workers in the first years after the war has now been practically abolished; the wage of the workers goes swiftly along the decline, having decreased forty per cent in two years; the peasants, a good majority of whom had remained indifferent at the time of the coup against Stambuliski, have experienced

М. К. К. И.

 Центральная Секция
 ОТДЕЛА
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19.

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 МОСКВА.

THIS letterhead was used by the international forgery gang in fabricating the letter which serves Zankov's fiendish government as an excuse for the systematic massacre which it is now carrying on throughout Bulgaria. Purporting to contain "secret instructions" from Moscow to the Bulgarian Communists, it has been exposed by the London Daily Herald as a crude forgery emanating from the same sources which produced the famous "Zinoviev letter" in England. It masquerades as a communication from the Communist International, marked "absolutely secret, destroy after execution," giving elaborate directions for an insurrection on April 15.

Proof that this precious document is a brazen fake is contained in the letterhead itself which, translated from the Russian of the original, reads:

E. C. C. I.
 CENTRAL SECTION
 Department for Foreign Relations.

"Now such a paper never came out of the Comintern," points out the Daily Herald. "For the Comintern has no 'Department for Foreign Relations,' for the simple reason that it is an international organization, to which no country is more 'foreign' than another."

The document was not drawn up in Moscow but in Berlin. Evidence indicates that it is the handiwork of a former Wrangel officer named Gutschinski, now working as a secret agent and living at 96 Ansbacherstrasse, Berlin.

On the strength of this preposterous forgery two political parties—the Communists and the Peasant Party—are being indicted for murder and their leaders are being hunted down and shot like wild beasts.

a severe decline in agriculture and have had added to their burdens land taxes amounting to 340 million leva as compared to an income of three million leva in taxes from limited liability companies. And fifty foreign corporations are now engaged in exploiting the wealth and labor of the country.

Popular feeling rises daily to overthrow the shaking throne of Zankov. His ambitions to march on Bucharest and Belgrade are constantly balked by the revolutionary situation in his own domain. And so, every opportunity that can be found to wreak mass revenge against the Communists or Macedonian rebels is eagerly seized.

The bomb thrown in the cathedral of Sofia was such an opportunity.

Bulgarian Cauldron Boiling Over.

We need waste no tears over the two hundred that were killed there. Rage and horror over the thousands of noblest proletarian fighters murdered by the fascist camorra, and the thousands of others who still fill the dungeons with cries of anguish at the diabolical tortures that they un-

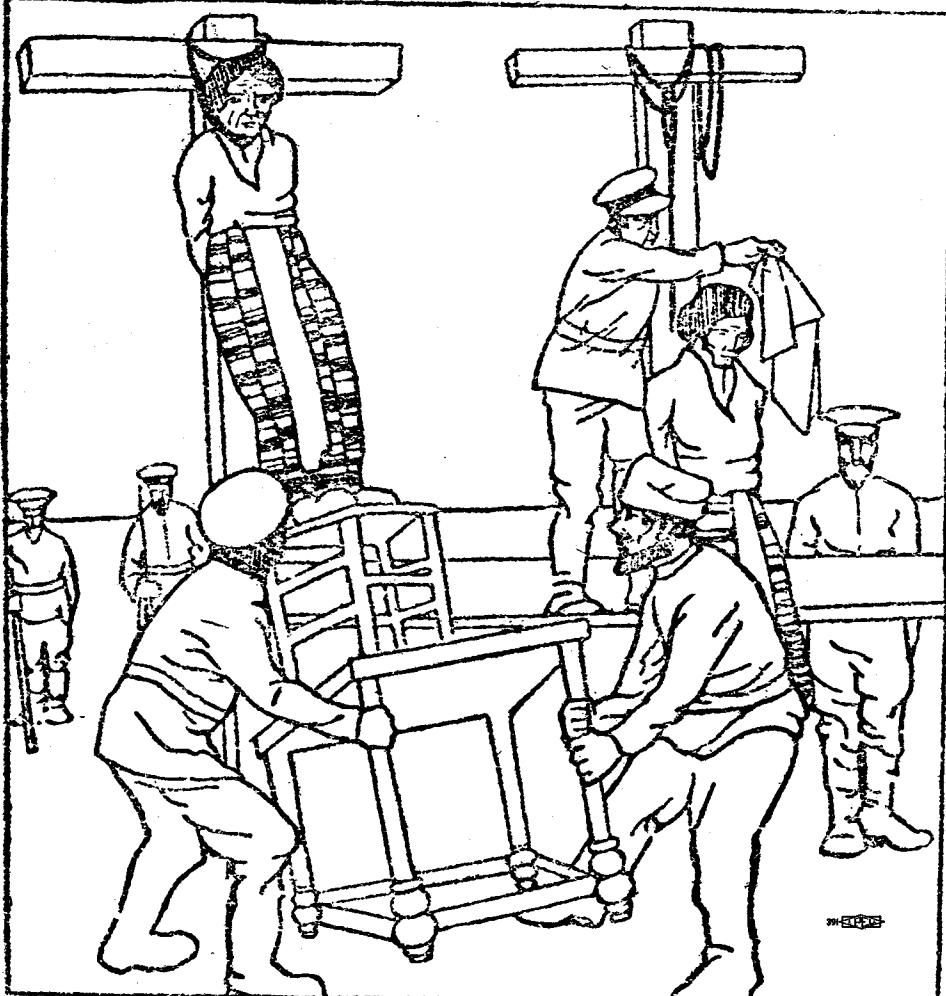
dergo, are a sufficiently strong deterrent. Suffice it to point out that it is ridiculous to ascribe the bomb-throwing to the Communists, one of whose historic struggles against anarchists has been the fight against individual terror. The deed was probably done by a group of Macedonian nationalists. But it is convenient to blame the Communists: it gives a formal excuse for a fresh wave of terror against them; it gives the international black press the opportunity to spew its bile in its hopeless efforts to prejudice forever the minds of the workers against the party of the revolution. On a much smaller scale the same thing was done when Professor Mileff was killed a few weeks ago: Two Communist deputies were immediately assassinated "in revenge"; a short time later the real murderer, a Macedonian revolutionary, was discovered.

But Zankov is involved in too many contradictions and difficulties, to settle them in this draconic but ineffective manner. It can be said that the Balkans, today more than ever, compose one huge boiling cauldron. The temporary alliances between essentially irreconcilable foes like Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Greece, cemented from

time to time by the frantic allies who go into a cold sweat every time they think of an outburst in the Balkans, are weakened by trembling links; the national revolutionary aspirations of the Macedonians, Croatians, and the Bessarabians; the rising peasants' movements; and above all the Communist Parties.

Allies Aid Zankov Reaction.

The disintegration of the anti-Bolshevik united front in the Balkans is horror-inspiring to the allied imperialists. In almost every well-informed capitalist sheet it is admitted that a successful revolution in Bulgaria means the likelihood of the realization of the hopes of the Balkan Communist Federation for these many years; the union of Soviet Republics in the Balkans. Not only does this prospect terrify the entente, but it also cuts at the heart of its preparations for a new attack upon Soviet Russia. Not even the fear of playing into the hands of Zankov, whose ambition to overpower his lesser neighbors has been frustrated by lack of sufficient military force, has restrained the allies for a moment in their decision to prevent at all costs a Bolshevik revolt in Bulgaria. The request of Zankov to the Inter-Allied Military Commission that he be permitted to raise 10,000 "conscript volunteers" to suppress the Communist movement has already been granted. A



PEASANT WOMEN HANGED BY ZANKOV'S SOLDIERS

This picture is drawn directly from photographs which have reached this country depicting the reign of terror. The pictures themselves cannot be reproduced for technical reasons.

reign of terror, under the benevolent eyes of the entente, may be expected, the horrors of which may sicken even Europe.

The Social-Democratic Stink.

The scoundrelly role played by the Bulgarian social-democracy must be mentioned. When the Zankov regime rode into power it formed a coalition government with the so-called "broad" socialists, in which the latter remained for practically eight months, never uttering a single protest against the murderous acts of the government; in February, 1924, when they were no longer useful to Zankov, they were dismissed. Such a stink was raised by the putrid heart of the social-democracy that the Second International was obliged to try the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party in Bucharest.

The Jugo-Slavian social-democrats demanded the expulsion of their Bulgarian comrades, but the upshot of the entire matter was a discreet silence.

Neither Zankov, nor the allies, and certainly not the despicable social-democrats, can prevent the persistent rise of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, the incredible sacrifices and heroism of which will forever occupy one of the highest places in the monuments of working class struggle. The temporary stabilization of one or two countries of Central Europe has not cooled the volcanoes in other lands. The Bulgarian fire is burning fiercely now, and its color is red. Should the cauldron boil over the hot waters of revolution will spread swiftly and surely over Europe's historic section of turmoil, the Balkans.

Big Joe's Birthday

By Michael Gold

OTHERS got tired, others lost hope and shut their mouths, or started little garages and grocery stores, found harbors of peace, Others sold out, turned respectable labor leader, or politician or foreman, But Big Joe never shut his mouth, or turned respectable. He stuck; the enemy nailed him to a hundred crosses, they strangled him in a hundred prisons, They spattered his body and soul with their machine-gun fire of lies, beatings and persecutions, His quieter friends thought Joe was wasting his life, his wife grew discouraged, his children became Americanized and left him, But Big Joe Connolly could never desert the labor movement, The cords of birth still held him to his mother.

They tried to make a foreman of him once, but he turned them down, And once a silly District Attorney tried to buy Joe, but Joe laughed at him in the prison. And once they tried to frame him up with a woman, but he laughed at the woman. And once they tried to lynch him, they strung him up and let him down, but they never made him show the yellow, The cords of birth still bound him to his mother.

He never knew why he was loyal or why he would rather die than desert the labor movement. And thinkers would argue with him, and try to understand his passion, but he could not explain it to them. He could not explain that his mother had given him birth on the stormy sea of poverty, Where strong men had wept, knowing the bitter fate before the child, But his mother's faith shone like a light on a rock, And she bred him to manhood, despite the black midnights and steep waves of poverty, And the cords of birth still bound him to his mother.

In the darkest city tenements she bred him. The sun was quenched there, and failure lived in each room,

And landlords and bosses guarded the prison; there was no escape.

But the gas-lit dungeons throbbed with his mother's fierce chant,

"The Poor must not die! The Poor must live and be brave!" So the cords of birth ever bound him to his mother.

Her back was twisted and bent with many loads, her hands scarred by a thousand labors.

She was small, weak, kind, but dark and terrible as a jaguar at times.

She sewed, swept, cooked, she never rested, She took in washing, she stole wood and coal from the railroad yards in winter,

When her man was killed, she did not despair, but went on fighting,

And Big Joe loved her, and never forgot her after she died, The years went by, jail-sentences, discords, strikes, defeats, spies, thirty-five years of tragedy and hope in the labor movement,

And the cords of birth still bound him to his mother.

Big Joe Connolly is fifty years old today. And it is thirty-five years since he entered the labor movement.

And the workers have brought a horseshoe of blood-red roses to the union hall,

And they present it to Joe, who blushes behind his big gray mustache like a school-boy,

And they shake his hand, punching him and hugging him like huge brother-bears, showing him their rough love,

The pretty young girls kiss him, and the big, slow, kind mothers in shawls smile as they clasp his hand,

The children climb his knees and grab his arms for affection, And someone makes a rough speech, built of honest words like bricks,

And Joe answers in a torrent of words like logs pouring down a Maine river,

And the workers listen with tears in their eyes, glad that he will be loyal to the grave, And glad that the cords of birth still bind him to his mother.