

Workers Hail Paris Commune

By JIM ALLEN

March 18, 1931, will be exactly 60 years after the day when the workers of Paris raised the Red Flag in the capitol of France and proclaimed a workers' government.

It was during the war between France and Germany. Paris was being besieged by the Germany Army. The working class of Paris was feeding on rats and dogs. The revolution was organized against the oppressive capitalist government of King Louis Bonaparte by the workers of Paris. The National Guard joined the revolution. The government was forced to abdicate and fled to Versailles. The workers set up their government in the City Hall of Paris on March 18, 1871. They organized their own army and passed new laws giving the workers the 8-hour day, nationalizing certain industries and laying the basis for a workers' government. This workers' government, the first in history, existed for 72 days.

Bosses Unite Against Workers

But the rising German Empire at war with the French government and capitalists, in order to get more land and industries to exploit, forgot the war for a moment to meet a new danger to them. The workers of Paris could not be allowed to maintain their own government, for the workers of Germany would be sure to follow their example and revolt. The German generals released the French army of 600,000 men penned up as prisoners in the North of France, to be sent against the workers of Paris. When it comes to fighting the working class the interests of all bosses are the same.

With the German troops guarding all avenues of approach to the city to prevent contact with revolting workers in the Southern cities of France, the French troops attacked the city. There were weeks of fierce fighting. The French workers fought for every inch of ground, throwing up barricades when the troops forced their way into the city, fighting to the last man. Men, women and children fought in defense of the Paris Commune, the first workers' government in history. On the 72nd day of the Commune the workers were overcome. The government of Louis Bonaparte, with the nobility and bosses of France, again took possession of Paris.

Boss Vengeance

The bosses of France took bloody vengeance upon the working class of Paris. In the "Bloody Week" that

followed tens of thousands of working class men, women and children were stood up against a wall and shot in cold blood. The ladies of the nobility took great delight in these massacres. The streets of Paris ran with the workers' blood. Because the workers of Paris allowed traitors, spies and representatives of the boss government to remain in Paris during the Commune instead of beginning immediately a war against the ruling class, was one of the reasons the Commune was defeated. For the Commune showed, for all workers thereafter to learn, that the ruling class will stop at no act of brutality and violence to smash a revolting working class. For a working class revolution to be successful, there must be set up immediately a strong dictatorship of the workers, with iron discipline.

This lesson was well learned. Lenin, the leader of the Russian workers' and peasants' revolution, wrote many articles about the Paris Commune, pointing out why it was defeated and what the workers must do in order to have a successful revolution. The revolution of November, 1917, in Russia showed that the workers had learned the lesson. This time there was a strong, well-disciplined Communist Party to lead the revolution. The workers set up their dictatorship. The bosses and the old ruling class was immediately wiped out. The old order was so thoroughly smashed that it could not be set up again, even with the help of the British, French and American troops. This time the workers won.

Sets Example Today

The Paris Commune lasted 72 days and the blood of the workers of Paris flowed. But the Paris Commune was not defeated. It was an introduction to a new day for the workers of the world. The Russian revolution succeeded and the Paris Commune helped its success, for it taught many lessons. As a result the Soviet Union is in existence today, covering one-sixth of the earth's surface, building a socialist society.

There have also been revolutions in Germany, Hungary, and Austria after the world war. There is revolution going on today in China. The Paris Commune lived on to find fulfillment in the Soviet Union. In the same way, both the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution live on today for workers thruout the world, to find fulfillment in a world-wide chain of workers' republics.