

RUTHENBERG AND THE C. P. LEADERS

by Ben Gitlow

At the last minute, three days after the anniversary of the death of Comrade Ruthenberg, the *Daily Worker* came out (March 7, 1932) with a superficial and desultory editorial on Ruthenberg. That even this gesture was made under pressure of the rank and file protest in the Party, there can be no doubt. But still no Ruthenberg Memorial Meeting. A few days ago a small meeting in some obscure hall arranged under the auspices of the *League for the Struggle for Negro Rights for a discussion by M. Olgin on the national minorities in the U.S.S.R.*, was suddenly transformed into a "Ruthenberg meeting" with W. W. Weinstone and Wm. F. Dunne, of all people, as speakers. This is how the Party today honors Ruthenberg.

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Charles E. Ruthenberg, the founder and builder of the Communist Party of the United States, died five years ago, on March 2, 1927.

"Forget!" is the edict of the present leadership of the Communist Party.

The Party must forget its founder and builder.

The Party press must keep silent. Not a word must be printed.

The old members who remember the erect figure, the piercing eyes, the resolute courage, the enthusiasm and devotion of Comrade Ruthenberg the embodiment of the Communist spirit, that energy to push forward regardless of difficulties and dangers, always keeping the interest of the movement above all personal considerations, must now forget their old comrade and departed leader.

The new members and the young who could draw inspiration from Ruthenberg's life for a life of Communist activity, must be kept in ignorance. They must be kept in darkness concerning his role and leadership.

Forget, obliterate, wipe out the name of Chas. E. Ruthenberg—that is the only interpretation which can be given to the void in the Party press and the failure of the Party to hold Ruthenberg memorial meetings, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the death of Comrade Ruth-

enberg.

Why? Because those placed in the leadership of the Communist Party have been the very ones who fought against the policies and leadership of Ruthenberg. Because this very leadership continues today a line of policy which has nothing in common with the policies of Ruthenberg and the best traditions of our young Communist movement of the United States.

But the record of Ruthenberg cannot be wiped out by edict. Ruthenberg was not imposed upon the movement. Ruthenberg is the product of the American class struggle. He was part of the very fibre, life and aspirations of the toiling and exploited masses of America.

One might as well attempt to obstruct the light rays of the sun in order to throw the world into eternal darkness as to keep back all the knowledge and appreciation of the life and activity of Ruthenberg.

A fighter against war, in the Socialist party. A leader of the masses in militant resistance to the imperialist war, he is thrown into prison repeatedly. He is an uncompromising opponent of reformism and opportunism, leader of the left wing in the Socialist party. The proletarian revolution of 1917 is hailed by Ruthenberg. He becomes its staunchest supporter. He becomes a Communist. He is among the first to join the Communist International. He organizes the Communist Party. He is thrown into prison for his Communist activity. He comes out of jail. The working class finds him at the head of its struggles against American capitalism. The Communist Party makes him its standard-bearer and leader.

He is again thrown into prison. He gets a short respite on appeal. He works tirelessly—fearlessly. He is for a mass Communist Party, united and entrenched in the working class organizations.

Slowly his efforts are being crowned with success. The Party breaks thru. It begins to sink its roots deep in American soil. It shapes itself to American conditions.

Untimely death deprives the movement of a real man, a good fighter and an American Communist leader.

His death is a loss to the entire

ands of revolutionary soldiers rotting in the capitalist jails the world over. He probably has never heard of the workers heads that were chopped off on the streets and permitted to lie in the gutter, during the Chinese reaction a couple of years ago! All in the name of the "democracy and civilization", of the capitalist class and its system.

—E.

The *Militant* of March 5 carries an article on the wicked, wicked "Lovestoneites", who are, as usual, busily at work "disrupting" and "betraying" the working class movement. If they didn't what would the *Militant* have to write about?

But a new note is struck in this article. "The Left wing", the writer declares, of course meaning the Party cover-organization, "has a great task to perform . . . The Rank and File Committee must stave off their (the "Lovestoneites"—Editor) demagogic advances. This cannot be accomplished by merely disrupting their meetings, even tho they may not deserve any other treatment. . . ."

So—the *Militant* openly advises the disruption, the breaking up of "Lovestoneite" meetings. Only it's not enough . . .

The *Daily Worker* of March 6 contains in a special feature box on the last page a direct attack upon M. Olgin, the editor of the *Freiheit*, for his conduct at a Newark meeting.

What is the meaning of this? Is M. Olgin the candidate for the post of the bearer of "rotten liberalism" in the American Party? Stranger things could happen!

international working class and Communist movement.

Ruthenberg's life is the Communist flame that cannot be blown out. It will continue to burn and inspire the workers to revolution and to victory.

That leadership of the Communist Party which dares hide and forget the name of Ruthenberg because it fears the power of the Ruthenberg line, even tho Ruthenberg is dead, is not capable of leadership, cannot measure up to the demands of the movement.

Their action on Ruthenberg must be condemned.

Party members, remember your Comrade Ruthenberg! Protest and demand that the despicable action on Ruthenberg shall be corrected!

Demand that Ruthenberg's life and service to the working class and the Communist movement be used to inspire and build our movement!