

## Boycott the Elections!

THE Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party of New York City, in accord with the plan to capture the old party, recently made contests in the primary elections for its own candidates on the Socialist Party ticket. In a number of districts the Left Wing nominees defeated the old Socialist Party nominees. The Left Wing Section having now almost unanimously become the Communist Party of New York City, these victorious nominees resigned as candidates from the Socialist Party ticket. But the election law prevents the acceptance of these resignations. Therefore, Communist Party comrades will appear as candidates on the Socialist Party ticket.

This apparently complicated situation is being solved very easily. The Communist Party comrades appearing on the Socialist Party ticket will make a campaign urging the workers NOT to vote for them, but to abstain from voting for any candidates. These comrades, accordingly, will campaign against their own elections, but this will mean an uncompromising campaign for revolutionary Communist principles.

The elections this year are a test. They are a test of the Communist claims of elements formerly affiliated with the Left Wing. A. Wagenknecht, the Executive Secretary of the Communist Labor Party, urges Socialist Party locals in Ohio affiliating with his Party to participate in the elections under the name Socialist Party. This is a characteristic expression of vicious Centrism, of wavering between the old and the new, of compromise and inconsistency. Still clinging to the discredited name, Socialist Party! Still playing the old game of votes, votes, votes! And THIS is the Party that claims to represent Communist fundamentals!

The decision of the Communist Party to boycott the coming elections while participating in the campaign is in accord not only with the temporary necessity of absolutely severing all relations with the old Socialist Party, but with the general character of Communist parliamentarism and the prevailing conditions in the proletarian class struggle.

Campaigns and elections are not necessarily interwoven: they may be separated. There is in fact a clear distinction between campaigns and elections; there are moments when the Communist Party will participate in the campaign but boycott the elections, in order to emphasize the mass character of the proletarian struggle. These moments are determined by the general considerations of the class struggle, by the maturity of development of proletarian action against Capitalism, by whether the mass action of the workers at a particular moment may the more rapidly be promoted through abstention from the elections, thereby emphasizing in the minds of the workers the necessity for extra-parliamentary action.

The Communist Party participates in the political campaigns for purposes of propaganda, and in order to emphasize the political character of the class struggle. The workers must be convinced of the futility of the isolated strike against the employers and of the necessity of action against the state by means of general political strikes, culminating in the conquest of the power of the state by the revolutionary proletariat. The Communist Party, accordingly, uses parliamentarism to emphasize the political character of the class struggle, but equally to emphasize the impossibility of parliamentarism conquering the power of the state.

This being our general policy, at particular moments the Communist Party will participate in the political campaign, in order to emphasize the objective—conquest of the power of the state; but will boycott the elections in order to emphasize the means necessary to attain this objective—the general political strikes of

the proletariat and the development of proletarian organs of state power.

The proletarian revolution is a process, each phase developing its own problems and requiring the application of appropriate tactics in accord with Communist fundamentals and life itself. It is the characteristic of the Socialist betrayer of Socialism to evade all actual problems of the revolution. The proletarian revolution is a process; it has its own peculiar problems at particular stages of its development; our tactics, accordingly, must be pliable, living, in accord with the problems of each phase of development. In preliminary stages, we shall find it necessary to boycott the elections while participating in the campaign; in the final stage it may become necessary to boycott parliamentarism completely, as did the Spartacan-Communists in Germany during the elections to the Constituent Assembly.

At this moment, in the United States, the workers are instinctively adopting the tactic of mass action. They realize vaguely the futility of parliamentarism solving their problems: even the conservative railway workers responsible for the Plumb Plan feel that they may have to use the strike in order to coerce the government to accept their plan. The giant steel strike is the most vivid portent in the struggles of the American proletariat, a strike potential of revolutionary action against Capitalism. These mass strikes of the workers are of the utmost importance, the development that must determine the tactics of the Communist Party in the immediate days to come. The United States, apparently, is on the verge of a revolutionary crisis, as in England, where the Communist Party boycotted the elections to Parliament. The Communist Party task is to unify these strikes, to make them adopt larger means and purposes, to develop the consciousness and action of the general political strike. Out of these mass industrial struggles must issue the means and the inspiration for the conquest of power by the proletariat.

These mass strikes are still directed against the employers, although often equally a challenge to the state. The Communist Party must develop the consciousness of action against the state, of the political character of the class struggle which we accomplish by means of participation in political campaigns and our general agitation—but, simultaneously, the Communist Party must emphasize the impossibility of parliamentarism and elections realizing the conquest of power—and this we accomplish by means of a boycott of the elections.

The American workers are emerging into a period of intense and aggressive mass struggles. They must not look to the state for action: they must struggle against the state. They must not depend upon parliamentarism, but must bend parliamentarism to the requirements of the mass struggle. The Communist Party, accordingly, urges: Boycott the elections!

The accomplishment of the revolutionary task—the conquest of the power of the state, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the realization of the Communist Republic—is the vital problem of the Workers of the World, the conscious elements of whom are organizing in the international Communist Party.

This problem and this task are gigantic. They mean nothing short of a transformation of the world, an implacable struggle against Capitalism representing the most powerful class of exploiters in history. We shall meet temporary victory and defeat, a process out of which will come a weakening of Capitalism and a strengthening of the class power of the proletariat. In this struggle, programs and words are not alone necessary: a movement must be judged by its deeds, by its application of program and words. The conception of parliamentarism and elections is a test of Communist understanding and sincerity.

## Arbitration

COMPROMISE, miserable and deadening compromise, is bred in the bone of A. F. of L. officials. They can never pursue the policy of consistent, aggressive action: always in the crisis they weaken, and betray.

The General Strike in Seattle was in great shape, the workers determined and united. Then the government intervened, with threats of drastic action; union officials weakened, spoke of agreement and compromise, and contributed directly to the strike's collapse.

Now again, apparently, in the steel strike. This strike has assumed gigantic proportions. Capitalism is aghast at this terrific portent of what may come. Unions not directly affiliated with the unions participating in the strike, such as the Great Lakes Marine Unions, are deciding for a general strike. This steel strike may mark a new epoch in American labor history, if the spirit of the workers is mobilized for definite, uncompromising action.

But even prior to the strike the A. F. of L. officials in control were bent upon compromise. They asked a conference with E. H. Gary of the U. S. Steel Corporation; and when this was refused the order for a strike was issued, in spite of Wilson's plea and because of the determined spirit of the men.

Now the strike is a great fact. But still the A. F. of L. speaks compromise—this time arbitration. At a session of the Senate Committee on Labor, investigating the steel strike, John Fitzpatrick, chairman of the Strike Committee, pledged the end of the strike in the event that the steel concerns submit to arbitration. This is the record:

"Will the men go back to work if the steel company will agree to submit the case to arbitration?" asked Senator Kenyon of Iowa.

"Yes," promptly replied Mr. Fitzpatrick.

"Would the men be willing to lay the case before a commission appointed by the president?" asked Senator Kenyon.

"Yes," responded Mr. Fitzpatrick.

And Fitzpatrick even said the strike could be called off if Gary agreed to arbitrate, and that the men would abide by the decisions of an arbitration commission!

This is frightful weakening. It may break the spirit of the strike. It creates illusions in the minds of the workers concerning arbitration. Nothing permanent is secured from arbitration, which is always determined by fundamental capitalist interests. Arbitration invariably betrays. The value of the strike is not in the immediate concessions secured, but in the reserves developed for action in the days to come.

The steel strike is arousing the spirit of proletarian revolt. The steel workers are sensing their power, developing the consciousness of action. Small concessions secured from arbitration mean nothing, since it destroys the independence and class spirit of the workers. The victory of the steel workers can come only from determined action against Capitalism.

Why arbitration and compromise? The steel workers control the situation, and will control still more as other workers strike. They are developing not alone power for immediate gains, but for larger action in the days to come. Fitzpatrick speaks of the dead and injured among the strikers: but these dead and injured are less than the dead and injured from industry itself. Let the steel workers reject arbitration and compromise: they must conquer, not arbitrate.