

The Minneapolis Elections

Comrade C. R. Hedlund Is Our Candidate for Mayor

By Vincent R. Dunne

Minneapolis workers have the opportunity, in the 1929 municipal election campaign, to vote for a Communist candidate. The entry of comrade C. R. Hedlund for the post of mayor by the Opposition has a meaning of more than ordinary importance for the revolutionary movement here. It signifies the adherence to the teachings of Lenin of those energetic and trusted fighters who have been expelled from the Party by a small group of apparatus agents of the Lovestone-Foster regime.

In Spite of the Split

It is a significant fact that after the split in the Party in the Twin Cities caused by the expulsion of the majority of the leading comrades who constitute the Party's mass connections in the trade unions, the labor party movement, the Jewish workers' organizations and the Scandinavian clubs, the "official" Party has made not even a single gesture that would indicate an intention to take advantage of the splendid opportunity offered for Communist work in the present city election. In-

In spite of the fact that most of the expelled comrades were the very ones, because of their experience and ability, to be called upon to carry out the Party program in the political campaign in Minnesota during the national election last fall, as well as in all past campaigns, and did an excellent job by placing Minnesota among the first few states in the whole country in the number of votes for the Communist candidates, these same comrades are now singled out in the press of the Party as the ones who have no understanding of the tasks of the Party and are, in fact, the ones who deliberately tried to betray the Party to the fakers of the farmer-labor movement.

Shady Proposals of Lovestoneites

The expelled comrades of the Opposition formed the only bloc within the Party during the last campaign to put up a determined struggle against the opportunist maneuvers of the majority of the D. E. C. when they tried time after time to go into some backdoor deal with these same fakers. It is unquestionably true that the comrades of the Opposition, together with the whole Party, had a false perspective on the development of the Labor Party, having been taught over a long period by the leaders of the Party and the Comintern, the dangerous and reactionary theory of a political party based upon two classes—the workers and the farmers. Because of this numerous mistakes were made in the labor party work. But it is just as true that the comrades of the Opposition never made the mistake of advocating the support of Democrats posing as Farmer-Laborites, as was proposed by Tallentire in the 8th Congressional District, and again by Lovestone, while denouncing Shipstead before the D. E. C. last March and almost in the same breath proposing to put up the reactionary county attorney Olson for Governor (see Lovestone's speech printed in the April 1928 Communist).

It is also a matter of record that during the election work last November and also after the campaign, the question of the Party's participation in the Minneapolis municipal election was raised by the comrades now expelled. An outline of the work before the Party in this campaign was made and generally accepted by the then majority of the D. E. C. Since that time events have demonstrated the correctness of that estimate. The Labor officialdom have gone over more and more to the side of the adventurous political charlatans in the Farmer-Labor Party. This, together with the still more recent collaboration of the trade union officials with the so-called labor representatives in the city council, who are part of the machine of the local gas and street car company, in preventing the development of a real rank and file fight on the big scab building job of the N. W. National Bank, presents an opportunity for revolutionary campaign work which must be utilized.

Our Candidate

Our candidate for the post of mayor, C. R. Hedlund, is qualified for the responsibilities of this fight by a life-long record of left wing activity in the railroad unions as well as by years of membership and active life in the Party and finally by his complete acceptance of the platform of the Opposition. His unhesitating stand in defense of the comrades first expelled is in keeping with his whole history in the labor movement. He has carried the banner of the Party in previous campaigns. In this campaign, with the additional handicap of a fight against the Opposition by vicious and unscrupulous Party bureaucrats, we will have need of such a standard bearer. Comrade Hedlund, on a Communist platform, contested the 10th Congressional District in the general election last November and in spite of a full fight by the Republican machine and a bitter fight from the farmer-labor officials received some twenty-four thousand votes.

The platform for the campaign in this election consists of several local and partial proposals based on the needs of the workers in the industries generally, making up in the aggregate the following demands:

The right to organize, to strike and to picket without police interference. The abolition of all employment agencies and the placing of work-

ers on the job through their unions. A fund administered by the unions for the relief of unemployment. The substitution of party designation for the present system of "non-partisan" filings for political office. The organization of a labor party. The recognition by the United States of the Soviet Republic and the defense of the Soviet Union against the war danger. In addition, our agitation in the campaign will emphasize the need for the amalgamation of the craft unions and the strengthening of the fighting power of the workers. The organization of the unorganized workers. Rank and file control of the several strikes now going on and the rallying of the unorganized workers to support them. Against the growing danger of imperialist war. For the union of all revolutionary workers in on the basis of Leninist teachings in the fight for power in the United States.

Comrade Hedlund has already spoken before several workers' organizations, and endorsement of the platform will be secured from a number of unions and other working class organizations. The comrades of the Opposition will organize meetings in the different sections of the city and as the weather permits we will hold outdoor gatherings in support of the campaign. Literature will of course be distributed to the extent that available funds permit.

We are out in the name of the Communist Opposition in the present election struggle to make a serious and determined attempt to organize against the Bosses! Against their state machinery! Against the bureaucrats in the labor and revolutionary movement! For registering a big Communist vote for our candidate!

NOTE: Since this article was written, the Stalinites have entered their candidate in the primaries. Ed.

The Lost Leader

In the normal development of a revolutionary movement its leaders grow in the course of protracted struggles; they are tested and retested in responsibilities; they become widely known to the rank and file and acquire a great moral authority as a unifying and guiding force. This was the case throughout the Comintern in Lenin's day. He above all others understood the great role of leadership and explained, especially in his brochure in "The Infantile Sickness of 'Left' Communism its function, its organic connection with the masses and the importance of its stability and continuity.

The regime of Stalinism, which revises and distorts all the precepts of Lenin, reduces the Leninist conception of leadership to a ghastly caricature. Nowadays leaders are made to order from above, their authority is artificially conferred upon them and they rule by decree. The moral and political authority of real leadership is replaced by the simple operation of apparatus mechanics. The Party members, who play no real part in selection of leadership, never know from one day to another who their leaders will be; but experiences teach them to expect sudden changes and to be prepared to wake up one morning to confront a new set of leaders without prior consultation about the matter. They learn also to remain calm at the spectacle of a bureaucratic wildcat power one day and "sinking without a trace" the next. Sometimes there are interludes when nobody, least of all the Party members, knows whether their leaders, politically speaking, are dead or alive and they stand like ticket holders at a raffle, waiting to see what number will turn up.

We are now witnessing one of these Strange Interludes, and the leader whose fate is spinning on the wheel is none other than John Pepper, the scoundrel who put Communists in jail in Hungary and who has made a political living in recent years as a mercenary in the war against "Trotskyism." Pepper is as transparent a charlatan, as characterless a demagogue as ever strutted across the stage of the workers' movement. But so much has corruptionist politics superseded the normal relations between leaders and masses and the natural selection of the former by the latter—these qualities were no handicap to Pepper's "career" in our Party. He bobbed up one day and assumed command in military fashion, putting the membership through some paces and forced marches from which they are still leg-weary and foot-sore. He marched them to the Federated Farmer Labor Party and back again without a single bivouac along the way; and his comic opera crusade for the "Third American Revolution" and the "Unarmed Spartacus Uprising" in the South will surely receive mention when the history of the movement is written and everything can be told.

His most recent campaign was against American "Trotskyism." He made the report against us at the December Plenum, presented the motion for our expulsion and wrote all the "theses" and "declarations" against us. He spoke there—a brief five months ago—as the leader of the party hurling mud at people who were fighting on the side of the workers when he was toasting the war with Austrian Generals. But, alas! Life is full of changes and uncertainty. Already the mighty modern Caesar has fallen and there are none so poor to do him reverence.

The campaign against "Trotskyism" was his undoing. So much of the varnish was scraped off the party leadership in the fight that the setting up of a new "front" became a matter of urgency to the Stalin regime. Besides that there was the little matter of the flirtation with Bucharin in the Comintern to look into more closely. The pushing forward of Foster as candidate for Party Secretary in place of the discredited Lovestone was the first move to change the appearance of the party leadership. The next was the demand that Pepper be taken for a ride to Moscow.

Pepper, who knows the racket, refused at first to take the ride. Insistent cablegrams, one after another, repeated the demand. Still Pepper did not go; America was his land of golden opportunity—why should he leave it? Finally after a peremptory demand threatening drastic disciplinary action, it was decided to give Pepper his ticket of leave. He forthwith disappeared, and many naive comrades actually thought he was on the high seas.

Came the dawn. And a Cablegram from Moscow asking where was Pepper and why. No answer and no Pepper. It was feared that he was lost, and the funny part of it all was the fact that the American working class movement went on in blissful unconsciousness of its misfortune. Then suddenly Pepper turned up, and in New York City of all places it seems that a keen-eyed Fosterite, strolling around the streets of Manhattan in search of the missing Apex Theory, perceived the lost leader slinking in and out of doorways and alleys around Union Square when he should have been slinking from boot to boot in Moscow. A hue and cry was raised immediately, the tocin was sounded, and after securing consent by cablegrams from Moscow, Pepper was expelled from the same Communist Party out of which he had expelled only a short few months before. In expulsion, as in death princes and paupers meet.

But matters did not end there. It soon transpired that Pepper had been in New York all the time, living not uncomfortably at a decent hotel, and that Lovestone, prior to his own departure for Moscow, had visited him there regularly even after he was supposed to have left the country.

These complications compelled a reconsideration of the decision. It was decided to bargain the whole thing out and to whitewash Lovestone by whitewashing Pepper. The latter helped with one of the most unique and fascinating alibis that has ever been concocted to our knowledge. The story, briefly, as told by Pepper in all seriousness to explain his apparent violation of discipline, was as follows:

He attempted to get to Moscow via Mexico. Disguised as a Hot Tamale he had crossed to the border when the Mexican revolution broke out in full force. There he was seized by the rebels on a foraging expedition who discovered, when they stripped the supposed Tamale of its corn husk, that the inside was all Pepper and no corn meal. This made them suspicious and they wrapped the corn husk around him again, loaded him into a big cannon and shot him back across the border. He lit on his feet running north and kept going till he reached New York City to tell the Polcom about it. He was on his way to report when he was seen on the street.

Before the Fosterites could think up an answer to this story, Pepper's faction confederates rushed through a motion modifying the expulsion so as to allow him to proceed to Moscow and to refer the case there for final disposition. Thereupon, we are informed, Pepper left for Moscow immediately and was last sighted rolling Eastward through Germany disguised as a keg of beer.

Meanwhile the question of the party leadership hangs in the balance. How it will be settled the party membership have no way of knowing since they are not consulted in the matter. But one thing is certain: there will be other Peppers; they grow plentifully on the tree of Stalinism. This one who became a leader of the American Party without election, who wielded authority without accountability and who departs from leadership without even the knowledge of the party members or the left wing workers who follow the party, is a symbol of the degeneration which has taken place in questions of party administration since the death of Lenin. Here, as in all decisive questions of policy, the situation in the Russian Party is reflected in all the parties of the Comintern.

Uniting the Textile Struggles

It is difficult to obtain completely rounded and accurate information of all the details of the important strikes taking place in the Carolinas and in Tennessee by reading the frothy accounts in the capitalist press, or even the blissfully optimistic reports in the official Communist Party press. But sufficient material is available to make it possible to estimate the situation with a fair degree of sureness.

The most sensational feature of the North Carolina strikes, particularly in Gastonia, has undoubtedly been the leadership of the National Textile Workers Union, with its Communist direction. The bourgeois and yellow socialist press have been unable to conceal their chagrin at the progress made by the militants in this strike situation. For the first time on any consequential scale, the Communists have appeared in the Bourbon South with a militant program of demands in a strike struggle, have succeeded to a relatively great extent in breaking down the poisonous barriers that divided the Negro workers from the white, and have begun to teach many of the strikers their first concepts of class organization and struggle.

The Successes Achieved

The militancy of the workers—despite their almost total lack of class consciousness—in these few weeks of the half a dozen or more strikes in the three Southern states is a refutation once and for all of the myth about the impossibility for the labor movement to break into the South. It puts an end to the prevalent bourgeois theory—expressed in the Communist movement particularly by Lovestone—that the South is another Ruhr for the American bourgeoisie, that is, an almost inexhaustible reservoir for capitalist growth and reaction.

The progress already made for the militant labor movement in the Southern states must be zealously guarded so that the gains be not dissipated. This has happened too often in the past. It is quite true that absolute guarantees for success do not exist and never did. But a correct policy of struggle, it is equally true, gives the only guarantee that is possible under the circumstances of the moment. Such a policy has not yet been sufficiently applied in this situation.

The strike situation is not limited to the struggles led in North Carolina by the National Textile Workers Union. The vicious conditions in the textile industry have caused similar outbreaks elsewhere. In Elizabethton, Tennessee, a strike is in progress under the leadership of the United Textile Workers Union, the A. F. of L. organization. In Stroudsburg, Pa., a struggle is being led by the Associated Silk Workers. In South Carolina, spontaneous textile strikes have broken out which have no definitely organized leadership. Numerous struggles, tremendous possibilities, untouched reservoirs of strength on the one hand, separate organizations, separate leaderships, separate appeals for support on the other hand. None of the competing unions in the field is sufficiently strong to completely dominate the situation by itself.

The workers who are engaged in struggle, and those who can be brought into struggle are interested primarily in improving their conditions and building a movement that can enforce the maintenance of constantly better conditions. That section of the working class that can best represent and fight for these interests is the section which will rally the textile slaves to its banner. These interests are paramount for the workers now. Just as McGrady and Hoffman in Elizabethton can hardly organize the strikers for any mass battle against "Communism in the textile fields," so the N. T. W. U. can hardly organize the Gastonia strikers for mass resistance against the A. F. of L. bureaucracy. What the workers want is an end to the "stretch-out" system, to long hours and short wages.

The Task of the Militants

The task of the militants and the left wing in the situation is to agitate constantly for the unification of all the forces available in the

textile field for an onslaught against the powerful mill barons. It is necessary for the left wing union to say to the A. F. of L. leaders: "You maintain that you are for improving the conditions of the textile workers. Prove it by deeds. Let the ranks of the workers be united in the struggle so that more forces will be organized to resist the murderous conditions imposed by the bosses. Instead of separate struggles, with separate appeals for strike relief, let us have joint action in a common battle."

It is true that the McGrady's, Greens and Wolls will reject this demand. They are not for the unity of the working class, they stand for split and division. They will have nothing to do with any movement in which the militant left wing is engaged. They lead struggles only to strangle them and turn them over to the mercies of the bosses whom the A. F. of L. serves. That is one side of the coin. But the other side is this:

The left wing, which is followed so far only by a small minority of the workers, will demonstrate to the textile strikers in all four states that the A. F. of L. reactionaries will not lead the workers in successful struggle. The left wing will show the textile workers that it stands for unity in the fight, for the greatest possible mobilization of forces against the mill owners, which is what the strikers are interested in right now. The left wing will strengthen its support not only in the ranks of the workers now following it, but it will create a movement in support of the left wing also in the ranks of the workers now following McGrady.

A Letter to International Labor Defense

March 22, 1929.

International Labor Defense
80 East 11th Street, Room 402
New York City

Dear Comrades:

The undersigned members of the National Executive Committee of the I. L. D. wish to call your attention to a number of important matters relating to the work of the I. L. D. which in our opinion should be considered by a meeting of the National Executive Committee.

1. *The Christmas Fund.* We have seen statements in various papers and have also been informed from other sources that the I. L. D. failed to make the customary distribution of funds to the class war prisoners and their families during the Christmas period for which the Christmas fund was primarily instituted. Are these statements true? If so, what were the proceeds of the Christmas fund and how were they distributed?

2. *The Monthly Relief for Class War Prisoners and Dependents.* We have been informed that the I. L. D. during the recent period has been failing to make the regular monthly contributions to the prisoners and their dependents which was the established practice of the I. L. D. carried out unfailingly over a period of more than three years since the fund was started. Are these statements true? If so, what is the reason for the failure and what steps are being taken to overcome it?

3. *The Mooney-Billings Campaign.* What is the reason for the failure to develop this campaign for which the ground had been fully prepared before we left the office of the I. L. D. last October, and which Mooney had publicly endorsed? Is there any truth in the report that Mooney has repudiated the I. L. D.? If so, what steps are being taken to adjust matters and come to an agreement for the active participation of the I. L. D. in a United Front struggle for the freedom of Mooney and Billings?

4. *The question of maintaining the non-partisan policy of the I. L. D. in defense of the rights of all workers to free speech and assembly.* The I. L. D. was founded on the principle of non-partisan defense of workers' rights, regardless of party or other affiliation and it carried out that line in practice. One of its first important cases was the defense of the Anarchist workers at Fall River, Mass. Recently comrades have been denied the right to sell the Militant at I. L. D. affairs in New York City although the Daily Worker and other Party publications were given this right. The same attempt to prevent the sale of the Militant was made at an I. L. D. meeting in Chicago. Not only that, but at the I. L. D. Bazaar an organized group of hoodlums, claiming to speak in the name of the New York Section of the I. L. D., attempted to deny the right to sell the Militant on the sidewalk outside the Bazaar. Is this the present policy of the I. L. D., or does the organization as such condemn such acts of discrimination and suppression.

We believe these questions are of such great importance for the work and future of the I. L. D. as to make a meeting of the National Executive Committee absolutely imperative. Since October, nearly five months ago, there has not been a single meeting of the National Executive Committee. Therefore the actual responsibility of its members is very slight, but since we, as members, bear a certain public responsibility for the work and affairs of the I. L. D. we deem it necessary, in view of the questions which have arisen, to have precise information and reports on the activities of the period

If this tactic is properly pursued, these workers will demand of the McGrady's why they refuse to accept the left wing's proposals for united struggle.

We would emphasize that this policy has nothing in common with the one pursued by the Party in the Passaic strike, which showed that workers' militancy alone—and there was plenty of that in Passaic—without correct policy, is insufficient. We are not for turning the workers organized by the left wing over to the A. F. of L. bureaucrats without extracting any guarantees from the latter, and without safeguarding the movement by maintaining the independence of the left wing, its right to criticize, its right to its own leaders, etc., etc. This suicidal course virtually destroyed the Passaic union.

But to react against the Passaic distortion—if not the perversion—of the united front tactics by swinging blithely to the other extreme (a customary "corrective" in the Party nowadays) would be profoundly wrong. The Party and its press is speaking of the North Carolina strikes now as if the left wing had the South by the throat, as if it did not at all have to consider the hundreds of thousands of workers who do not yet follow the left wing.

It will not do for a moment to minimize the colossal difficulties in the way of organizing the textile workers and leading them along the path of class struggle and out of the swamp of class collaboration. A consciousness of these difficulties, militancy, level-headedness, persistence are prerequisites for victory. Necessary above all is a shunning of sectarianism and isolation, and the pursuit of a course that represents the interests and actual needs of the workers in general, and lays the basis for achieving solidarity and unity.—M. S.

which has elapsed since October. Otherwise any form of responsibility will become impossible for us. We request you to call a meeting of the National Executive Committee without delay.

Yours fraternally,
JAMES P. CANNON
MAX SHAGHTMAN
ROSE KARSNER

NOTE: Since this letter was written, we have been informed that a so-called meeting of the Executive Committee of the I. L. D. was called together by the faction agents of Lovestone and Foster, to which comrades Cannon, Shachtman and Karsner—despite the fact that they are regular members of the Executive—were not invited. The essential purpose of this meeting was apparently to officially O. K. the replacement of Wagenknecht as secretary by Juliet Poyntz and the juggling of other positions in the organization by the factionalists. Another act taken was the arbitrary removal from the Committee of comrades Cannon, Shachtman and Karsner. No reasons were given. No charges were preferred. The comrades were not informed either of the meeting or the removals. The only possible reason for the removals is the fact that the three above-named comrades support the Communist Opposition. That is how the Stalinite splitters maintain the non-partisan character of the I. L. D. We will treat of this matter more extensively in coming issue.—Ed.

Stalin Praised by Lahor's Foe

The Saturday Evening Post of April 13, 1929, says in its editorial on "The Kellogg Pact in Practice":

"It is reported in Europe that the Soviet Government of Russia has concluded broad agreements with the governments of Poland and of the East Baltic States under which their future relations are to be founded on the spirit and the letter of the Kellogg Pact. In view of the delicate problems involving boundary relations between these countries, the agreements represent an extraordinary step forward in principle. Significant, also, is the fact that the scope of the Kellogg Pact has been found a satisfactory basis for agreements between governments as far apart in type as that of Russia and those of her neighbors to the northwest.

"It seems to be taken for granted in Europe that this attitude of Russia corresponds to the policy of the moderate right wing, the group of Stalin, and represents another public victory over the left wing, the group of Trotsky."

The Post represents all that is reactionary, low, smug, anti-labor, anti-Communist, anti-Soviet in bourgeois America. Its praise of Stalin and Litvinov is well-deserved by the latter. The bourgeois reactionary Post knows how to estimate its friends and its enemies. It knows the direction in which Stalinism is moving, and it is more than satisfied with Stalin for his "public victory over the left wing." Stalin's delivery of comrade Trotsky to White Guardist Turkey is the price the Communist movement pays to buy praise for Stalin from the organ of black reaction, the Saturday Evening Post. Let every Communist think!