

The Communist and Election Activity

The approaching election finds the parties of reaction, reform and revolution in full swing. The stock market is bolstered up, the bourgeois economists speak of a revival, the papers talk of wage increase, the politicians dodge the real issues and spout demagoguery. The reactionaries do this in an effort to keep the workers from moving to the Left.

And to the left, the parties of reform: the socialist party; the socialist labor party; the farmer-labor party, etc., are struggling in their own way, to keep the workers from moving into the revolutionary stream, toward the Communist party, to paralyze their militancy.

The capitalists have done all in their power to keep the revolutionary party off the ballot. At present we have only 11 states on the ballot. In many states a struggle to get on the ballot has not yet been won. Meetings throughout the country have been broken up by the police. Foster, the presidential candidate, has been arrested several times in different parts of the country on his national tour.

A Criticism of the Stalinist Methods in the Campaign

Germany and devoted their main blows at Hoover who drove the veterans out of Washington with machine guns, tear gas bombs, and tanks. This important climax of the Bonus March was elevated above the more important question, rather than used as a springboard to the explanation of the war danger connected with threatening Fascism in Germany. We pointed out before that the demand for emergency relief for the farmers was wrong and must be changed to emergency or immediate relief for the WORKERS and Farmers. In New York the party tried to correct this error but only created more errors. The party-controlled unemployment councils called a conference on August 15th, and a Relief March on September 10th. The whole program is based upon immediate relief for the workers. They first separate the demand for immediate relief from the more fundamental demands against capitalism and second, they forget entirely that capitalism which is the cause of unemployment must be overthrown. Nowhere in their propaganda, articles, or speeches are these three factors coordinated. First to leave the demand out of the program and then to base a campaign in New York exclusively on the demand of immediate relief that was omitted from the platform—these are flip-flops, detrimental to the party and the class.

Favorable Chances for Communism

This third presidential election campaign of the Communists in America is the most favorable we have yet entered. The reactionary parties have exposed themselves and have shown incompetence in handling the situation. The reformist parties are weak and as yet cannot be compared to the reformist parties in Europe. This leaves the Communist party an open field.

Can the party be equal to this task? This depends upon the program the Communists present in the present campaign and how the Communists conduct the campaign. Previous articles in *The Militant* criticized the C. P. platform for its opportunism. The program divorces the immediate demands from the ultimate demands, and presents immediate demands that are not satisfactory. A program that does not formulate the immediate needs of the class in coordination with the revolutionary goal is opportunistic. Let us determine the party action since the Nominating Convention in Chicago and find out if it has corrected these mistakes.

The party must present its immediate demands as the election platform, demands based upon class struggle and connected with the revolutionary end to be attained. In the campaign, local, national and international issues develop which momentarily gain the spot light of the class attention. The Communist must utilize these struggles to more forcefully bring to the attention of the workers, a revolutionary program in opposition to the reformist and reactionary ones. Or, one may pose the problem this way: The election campaign should be used by the Communists to bring our INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM to the attention of the class through our immediate demands in conjunction with the national and international struggles that develop in the election period. Only on this basis will we be able to put in motion the class and bring recruits to our ranks, workers who come to our ranks on the basis of Marxism.

The platform forgets the struggle for the shorter work day. However, the bosses have not forgotten this struggle and are busy trying to reorganize labor power (overpopulation to production accumulation), a necessary step for their way out of the crisis. If they succeed in reorganizing and "reducing hours" at the workers' expense it will give them a breathing spell. On the other hand if, through class struggle we force through the "Six Hour Day, Five Day Week, with NO REDUCTION IN PAY", our class will be able to take a big step forward. The Communists must give the lead in this struggle.

For a Realistic Defense of the U. S. S. R.

In the election platform the defense of the Soviet Union is linked with the defense of the Chinese people. Events have proven that the danger of Fascism in Germany is the determining factor in world politics and the election platform

and campaign can only put life into the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union by mobilizing the workers to support the fight against Fascism in Germany. The Stalinists fail in this major task.

In New York the party has issued the slogan, "For Bread and Freedom.—With Foster, Ford and Amter." As the election date nears we find Stalinism floundering deeper into the swamp of opportunism.

These activities—the Bonus march, reduction of hours, immediate relief, Anti-War activity and German struggles are not utilized in the election campaign to contrast the party of revolution to the parties of reform and reaction. Rather the party's way of handling these tasks under the Stalinist leadership has pushed the membership and the party farther to the right, farther into opportunism. Not satisfied with the distance to the right the leaders have dragged the members they top the whole thing with a statement in the *Daily Worker* which has nothing in common with Marxism.

Who Was Exposed?

First they issue a blast against E. Haldeman-Julius, the well-known reformer, a socialist. They "expose" him. Catch him red handed stealing Foster's acceptance speech. He changes the word Communist to socialist and prints Foster's speech for his platform. We know Haldeman-Julius. It is not Haldeman-Julius who has made a mistake. It is not Haldeman-Julius who should be criticized. He recognized his reformist wares even when they were labeled Communism. Labels don't mean much to reformers. Purcell and Hicks recognized the wares of the "four-class party," a socialist. Chang Kai-Shek recognized the wares of the "four-class party," Barbusse, Rolland and Sinclair recognized the wares of the Stalinist World Anti-War Congress. The name, Communism, without the content of Marxism frightens no one.

The election campaign must be based upon the pressing immediate needs of the class, formulated concretely, but not divorced from the class struggles of the world that develop between the convention and election day. The political consciousness of the workers during the election campaign can only be transformed into class consciousness by the correct coordination of these two factors on the broad basis of our International program which must run as a red thread through the election platform and the election campaign.

The Party's Meeting on German Fascist Danger

(Continued from page 1)

and the United Red Front Against Fascism, Hunger and War! Fight the Socialist leaders, the Forerunners and Allies of Fascism! etc."

The meeting itself was poorly attended and lacked the enthusiasm and the vitality that the issue requires. This is easily comprehensible. For it was called in all haste, without any serious preparation and advance propaganda, on the spur of the moment, under the direct fire of the Left Opposition campaign and under the pressure from the ranks. It was meant by the bureaucrats largely to offset and to side-track the flow of rising criticism within the party and to screen their own, previous miserable silence and lethargy.

The Meeting Revolves Around E. O.

Max Bedacht spoke before an audience of no more than 400. Since the manifesto of the National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) was carefully and energetically distributed to the participants, the speakers naturally had to revolve their speeches around the position of the Left Opposition. The chairman, Alexander, as well as Bedacht stammered and attacked the Left Opposition very feebly before an altogether unresponsive audience of workers. As if in answer to the impotent screeching of the bureaucrats; the workers in every part of the hall held the Opposition leaflets in their hands, many of them reading it on the spot.

The Stalinist speeches were dominated by all sorts of apologies and sophistries. On the other hand, Bedacht tried to prove that the Berlin-Brandenburg United Front action contradicts the Opposition's criticism. On the other, he queried indignantly: "Can comrade Thaelmann be expected to sit at one table with the Noskes?" All without an attempt to reconcile these two conflicting views, without any attempt at a Marxist explanation, displaying ignorance of even elementary facts. For instance, he did not even know that the Central Committee of the German C. P. had repudiated the Berlin-Brandenburg United Front action. And as a matter of fact, Bedacht expressed approval of it! But if we know our Max, he'll manage to come clean again—if it isn't too late.

With this party meeting, the Left Opposition has won a heat. Our campaign has gained ground. The treacherous, bureaucratic silence of the Stalinists have been broken. The international struggle against Hitlerism has gathered momentum. We will not stop at this point, we will continue our campaign tirelessly, until the whole party wakes up to its task, until every party member becomes a conscious fighter for the German revolution, a powerful agitator for international solidarity with the German working class in their struggle against Fascist reaction, against the danger of imperialist war on the Soviet Union.

Expulsion of Carl Coster

Mink and Bureaucracy Run Rampant on the Waterfront

On Thursday, August 11, the *Daily Worker*, in an obscure corner of an inside page, announced the expulsion of Carl Coster from the Communist Party and the Marine Workers Industrial Union "for gangsterism and Lovestonism". The name of this comrade is not unfamiliar to readers of *The Militant*. We have referred to the struggle against bureaucracy in the Marine Workers Industrial Union before and to the parts played by such militants as Coster, Johannesen and Jacobsen in this fight. The expulsion of Coster is another outrageous act of the Stalinist bureaucracy which deserves the attention of all revolutionary workers.

Carl Coster has been one of the most active leading workers of the party on the waterfront for many months past. His organizational ability, his courage, his devotion are unchallenged facts. He has been entrusted with responsible posts ever since he joined the Marine Workers Union. From the first, he carried on a struggle against the bureaucracy within the union, all the time remaining at his post and fulfilling his tasks in exemplary fashion. About a year ago, the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy came to a head on the New York waterfront. The bureaucracy countered by breaking up what it termed the "elite" of the militants fighting against it. Johannesen was "exiled" to Duluth, Coster to Boston.

The Boston party bureaucracy it appears, sabotaged the work of Coster, who was sent there as port organizer. After several months of futile attempts to combat this sabotage, Coster returned to New York to take up the case with the leadership at the center. The Stalinists in New York did everything possible to put off the case, they successively assigned the comrade to responsible work in the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League, the Independent Shoeworkers Union, the T. U. L. etc. Every task was fulfilled by Coster with his customary courage and energy. In spite of the despicable behavior of the bureaucrats, he remained firmly disciplined.

One day last week, the Stalinist waterfront bureaucrat, George Mink, one of the yellowest and most corrupt wretches in the whole bureaucratic outfit, made an unheard-of, unprecedented, shameful threat against some militant non-conformist rank and file workers up for trial before the State Supreme Court for participation in the April Unemployed demonstration at City Hall—in the presence of Coster and others. Exasperated and outraged by this unexampled piece of skunkery, Coster issued a warning to the Mink in unmistakable proletarian terms, lest the threat be carried out. This took place in a crowded union hall, in the full view of numerous workers. That is what the "gangsterism" amounts to.

The outrageous threat of the bureaucrat was, therefore, not carried out. The Mink sunk back into the woods. But for that, on Wednesday, August 10, the expulsion of Coster from the M. W. I. U.

and from the C. P. was announced at a membership meeting of the union. This happened at 9 o'clock in the evening. At 11 o'clock, the *Daily Worker* appeared with the expulsion statement. Coster was not even given the formality of a party trial, he received no hearing. The expulsion took place in typical, ungarish, bureaucratic style.

Nevertheless, members of the Marine Workers Industrial Union were aroused by this treacherous act of arbitrary action and the bureaucrats became uneasy. On Wednesday night, August 17, the membership meeting for the M. W. I. U. was packed with the benches of Mink. Coster demanded to be admitted for a hearing of his case. Several Stalinists immediately pounced on him and carried him bodily out of the hall. Workers on the inside protested vigorously and requested the floor. The bureaucrats running the meeting, Mink, Hudson and Co. quickly got their heads together and organized a struggle against the bureaucracy within the union, all the time remaining at his post and fulfilling his tasks in exemplary fashion. About a year ago, the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy came to a head on the New York waterfront. The bureaucracy countered by breaking up what it termed the "elite" of the militants fighting against it. Johannesen was "exiled" to Duluth, Coster to Boston.

Speeches from the floor were immediately restricted to 3 minutes, under shouts of protest from the rank and file. In their brief and forcibly limited speeches, the comrades from the rank and file nevertheless forced the bureaucrats to cut their words and retract the charge of "Lovestonism". Coster has been known far and wide as an unremitting fighter against the right wing opportunists. They pushed Mink to the wall and made him admit his dastardly, anti-Communist and reactionary threat. But the bureaucrats had the meeting packed and in spite of their damaging admissions, made in the presence of all workers, they nevertheless succeeded in railroad the militant Coster by a fake vote.

The marine worker, Robert Kohl, a Communist militant with a revolutionary past both in Germany and in this country left the meetings in disgust after protesting strongly but to no avail against the tactic employed by the bureaucrats against Coster. The latest reports have it that Kohl too has been expelled from the union with no other charge against him except his action in defense of Coster's membership rights. The bureaucratic frenzy knows no bounds!

The revolutionary marine workers have with their own eyes witnessed a spectacle that reflects the very height of bureaucratic degeneracy. They have seen the whole repulsive face of the Stalinist bureaucracy. They are just aroused. Their task is now to draw the political conclusions from the fight against bureaucracy. It is the whole reactionary, non-Leninist line of Centralism that makes bureaucratism possible in the Communist Party and in the class struggle unions. The fight of the marine militants is the fight of the Left Opposition. The bureaucracy can be swept away only by returning the Communist movement to the path of proletarian internationalism—to the path of Lenin and Trotsky.

German Campaign of Czech Opp.

Months ago, the International Left Opposition already declared that Germany had become the key to the International situation. The Czech Left also pointed to this crux of the world situation and the general tasks of the proletariat flowing from it, at its Spring conference, in its newspaper, in many discussion meetings and wherever the opportunity arose. But the Stalinists, elsewhere, here too did not notice the decisive struggles approaching in Germany at a rapid tempo. They subscribed for the most part to the view that the influence of Fascism would be liquidated by Hitler seizing the power himself.

Sabotage German Campaign

This salutary thought was always behind the lethargy of the Stalinists distinctly expressed in the following incident. When, upon the proposal of the Left Opposition comrades, the Prague leadership of the Red Building Trades Union called a plenary meeting with the subject "The Struggle of the German Proletariat against Fascism", the meeting was called off at the last moment through the bureaucratic intervention of

the Red Trade Union Central Committee. The reasons given for calling the meeting off are significant: "Due to an overabundance of work, there is at present (that is, in June 1932) no man available in the Central Committee of the Unions, who is informed on the situation in Germany at the same time, has the time to speak on it."

The leaders of the C. P. C. conduct themselves with such manifest shamelessness in fateful hours like these. Even the sympathetic layers of intellectuals showed a better understanding of the political situation. In an open meeting **Effects of the Prussian Coup d'Etat**

The Prussian coup d'Etat and the half-turn of the German C. E. C. in the united front tactic first woke up the C. P. C. of the C. P. CZ from its slumber. It finally called upon the Czech and Slovak workers to come to the aid of the German proletariat, but postponed concrete action till August 1. The Left Opposition immediately issued a manifesto to the members of the C. P. C. in which it demanded the acceptance of the proposals of the German Left Opposition made in October 1931. The leaflet created very favorable repercussions. When Left Oppositionists distributed the leaflets before a meeting of party functionaries in Greater-Prague, the party leaders attempted to provoke physical attacks by sending out uninformed and falsely informed shock-troops against the alleged "counter-revolutionists". But the party proletarians recognized in the Trotskyists comrades-in-the-struggle, and instead of attacking them, they discussed with them the situation in Germany and the tasks of the International.

Last week there was an open meeting in a Prague suburb in which there was introduced, expectationally enough, a free discussion. The Left Opposition took advantage of the situation immediately and its representatives presented the situation in Germany and explained the tasks of the German proletariat.

The predominantly proletarian audience expressed its agreement with the proposals of the Left Opposition in vivid fashion. Characteristic for the developments in the International is the fact that the Left Opposition speakers were "refuted" with "arguments" which have in Germany already been dropped. The official party speaker stressed the view that the united front can never be made with the "top" and further said that the situation in Germany is not at all so critical, it is only a matter of changing the methods of bourgeois rule!

No matter how threadbare and shopworn these phrases may sound for our German comrades in their struggle, they have nevertheless a special sense in this country. They show that the Stalinists in Czechoslovakia are not prepared to draw the necessary lessons from the German mistakes on the one hand, and on the other hand, that the progressive proletarians of Czechoslovakia are coming closer to the International Left Opposition and are partly, already showing their warmest sympathies for the fighting German Left Opposition.

Prague, August 2, 1932. —K. SCHMIDT.

The Convention of Father Cox's Quasi-Fascist «Jobless Party»

August 18th, 1932. ST. LOUIS, MO.

Father Cox is a priest who has grown politically ambitious. He went to Europe to "talk it over" with the Pope of Rome, with the agents of Mussolini and Hitler. He received more support and the Jobless Party was organized "to solve the hardships and injustices of the present social order".

The "Jobless Party's" demagogic platform included—Government control of the banking system and public utilities, immediate payment of the soldiers' bonus, conscription of wealth "in case of an emergency", pro-beer-ity, "mighty" army, navy, and air forces, unemployment insurance and old-age pensions, 5 day week and 6 hour day abolition of "unjust" injunctions and yellow-dog contracts, relief for the farmers, and right to "peaceful" picketing in strikes. This was similar to Colonel "Cohn" Harvey's Liberty Party's confused program "against usury and for the free coinage of silver, etc." and inasmuch as both agreed "down with the communists", agreements were made to merge both parties and to hold a national convention of the fusion, the Jobless-Liberty Party.

The site picked out was St. Louis. Cox to lead the masses from the East, and Harvey to come with the hordes from the West. Cox issued advance press notices stating that one million jobless from all parts of the U. S. would be in attendance. Naturally immediate objections to the convention were raised by the St. Louis police. The Chamber of Commerce visualized riots of hungry unemployed. Cox replied that "no hungry bums will be delegates", that only "business men" would be elected and that they would spend upwards of a million dollars for hotel accommodations, food, etc.

But the city administration remained adamant; the contemplated program was too radical. Accordingly advance arrangements were made for the convention to be held on Aug. 17th and 18th, in an old mosquito-bitten race track, in St. Louis county, at Creve Coeur Lake. Cox now revised his figures downwards and stated "only" 50,000 would be at Creve Coeur. Then the St. Louis County Health Officials threatened an injunction, claiming that there was not sufficient water for such a crowd, nor laboratories, nor garbage dispensaries, and that the convention would be a "health menace" unless adequate preliminary arrangements

were made for the necessary sanitary facilities. Cox replied he would defy the injunction if it was issued, and if necessary would hold the convention on the state highway.

Thus was the situation when the Harveyites with their "White Ribbons" (Liberty Party delegates) came to Creve Coeur Lake. Fifteen concession stands were waiting for the 50,000 customers and only two persons were in sight, lolloping about, rubbing mud on their mosquito-bites, both of whom admitted they were curiosity seekers, and incidentally "broke". The press stated Cox was on the way from Pittsburgh by a motor-caravan of approximately 500 people. The National Committee of the Liberty Party was exasperated. They had brought about fifty people with them (from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Washington, California) and were beginning to see that they had been uncombed by Cox as to the number he would bring. The Liberty Party immediately issued statements to the papers saying they would hold a separate mass-meeting under their own auspices several miles from the site of the proposed united convention. Harvey said they still expected to merge with Cox but that Cox had bitterly disappointed them by the smallness of his delegation.

The automobile arrival of Cox's caravan was to have heralded the fusion of the confusionists. Meeting in a one room cabin, the national committees of both parties met, hallowed, shook hands and posed for the newspaper photographers before getting down to brass tacks. Instead of the celebration of the birth of the Jobless-Liberty Party a furious fight started over who should be the political god-father.

The Jobless-Liberty Party split right on the hyphen. The fight was not concerning their respective platforms—they both agree they have practically identical programs. The demagogues debated, discussed and disagreed on—who should be the presidential candidate? Cox or Harvey? Priest or Colonel? Tweedle-dee or Tweedle-dum?

Forty-five minutes of verbal fighting and shouts of "Hear"; one minute the reverend priest denouncing religious intolerance, the next moment the old Colonel repeating that he had just celebrated his 81st birthday and should be the people's choice. Father Cox's hopes that Harvey would approve him as presidential candidate and Colonel Harvey's expectation that Cox would see the wisdom of him being the nominee both were

groundless. Neither withdrew, except for mud to plaster their mosquito-bites, and the meeting was summarily adjourned. Harvey and his 50 "White Ribbon" Libertyites holding their own convention several miles from Cox.

The "Blue Shirt" Jobless Party, with approximately 1,000 in attendance (500 or more curiosity seekers) ratified the proposals and program of their national committee, nominating Father Cox for presidential candidate and Doctor Tisdale, 32nd mass-degree mason of Elk City, Okla., as candidate for vice-president. Then everyone jumped in their machines and immediately started returning home. The Missouri mosquito was the real victor.

However despite all the setbacks and mosquito-bites and trials and tribulations that beset Father Cox in launching his Jobless Party, the importance of the entire affair is in his he eadtrudiu entire affair is that this is the FIRST APING OF THE EUROPEAN FASCIST MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES. The blood brother of Hitler and Mussolini can be readily recognized by its demagogic platform and all of the well-known Fascist trimmings, vehemently anti-Communist, blue-shirt, caesar salutes, etc. In the words of the Reverend Cox, its members are to be "not only working people but business men who have been pushed out of their business enterprises and unemployed professional men." And "we are not reds—we are anti-Communist. Our Party is the only organization that can save the country from a Communist revolution this winter."

Of course, none of the Communists have the perspective for a "Communist" revolution this winter (U. S.) but it is indisputable that a section of the capitalist class quiver in their boots everytime the workers hold protest meetings or mass demonstration, and a portion of them would support a Fascist movement in the United States. The only reason all of the capitalist are not in favor of Fascism (except as a last resort) is because the Fascist system of continual, unrelenting terror, armed dictatorship, spies, and general thuggery is more expensive than maintaining the democratic illusions of "freedom, justice and equality".

If Hitler comes to power in Germany, it will mean the immediate strengthening of the reactionary forces in the United States, and their simultaneous growth. So all eyes and all support to the German workers. —MARTIN PAYER.

LEON TROTSKY

WHAT NEXT?

Vital Questions for the German Proletariat

BLANKENBERG? NATIONAL SOCIALISM? HINDENBURG? LEFT OPPOSITION? ADOLF HITLER? SOCIAL DEMOCRACY? PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION? ULTIMATISM? THAELMANN? RED STRATEGY? RED ARMY? DICTATORSHIP? SEYDEWITZ? CENTRISM? FASCISM? SOVIET UNION? BRUENING? BOLSHEVISM? COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALS? DEMOCRACY?

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