

CALIFORNIA PARTY DISPLAYS RECORD GROWTH, ACTIVITY

By Glen Trimble

SAN FRANCISCO.—On August 11 the National Executive Committee suspended the charter of the California State organization without a hearing. On Saturday, August 28, we were given a mock "trial" by a hand-picked committee appointed by the NEC to "take over" our organization. The party activists from all over the state attended the session en masse and we put our accusers on trial before them. The irrefutable facts brought out at this hearing will have an interest for comrades in other states who have been hearing so much about California.

We were charged with "demoralization of the state membership and stultification of party activity by incessant factional warfare." Local by local and member by member we proved that the presumably responsible SEC majority had recorded 100 per cent failure in recruiting and 100 per cent success in demoralizing and stultifying its own locals and its own members. Clarity has so demoralized itself that it has not been able to present a single candidate for responsible state or active local office since the state convention in February of this year.

Simultaneously the Appeal locals and members presented a record of strengthened morale, increased activity, and actual membership growth. Despite the resignation of the Jaggard old-guard Finnish Branch and the Stalinist-influenced Oxnard Local (both Clarity supporters of a sort), and the "stultification" of the Clarityite Stockton local, and the anti-trade union-discipline Bakersfield local the total membership of the State is larger than it was immediately after the Old Guard split and the Workers Party entry. By comparison with the national totals for the same period California has exceeded more than twice the national average.

Registration High

Registration despite a widespread boycott by Clarity supporters, totaled 349 on August 15th. This figure may be compared with 237 non-Old Guard members in March, 1936 (figures

taken from official local secretaries' reports of the period). The actual membership allowing for registration stragglers is approximately 300. Let any other state match the California record of 249 registrations out of 300 membership by August 15, 1937.

Numbers have significance only in terms of Socialist work—official delegates from local after local reported no sign of Clarity, state. The challenge went unanswering, lectures, classes, trade union strength, street meetings, recruiting, nevertheless. Above all, the youth has advanced, recording a growth from 40 to 125 in Los Angeles, 4 to 18 in East Bay, new circles in Stockton, Dominguez Hills, San Bernardino, tightened state and regional organization, active organizers touring the state. No better evidence of the political health of the Appeal group and the political decay and rottenness of its opponents could be presented.

Another charge was "sabotage and neglect of the party press and literature". This charge, made farcical by the miserable paucity of literature issued by the National Office in the past year, was turned against its makers. We challenged them to prove sales or support of any party publication even approaching that of the Appeal comrades in the west. We proved consistent and openly admitted sabotage of the official state paper, Labor Action, and practical non-support of the Call by most of the Clarity supporters. Against this we presented our own record of support to a state paper through sixteen hard-won issues, a functioning book shop in Los Angeles and street meeting literature distribution.

We produced a bulletin issued June 1, 1937 regarding re-registration, and urged all locals to use the re-registration period to increase support to the party press, as well as generally revive and strengthen activity of inactive members. The secretary instructed locals to use the National Office Call drive bulletins as a basis for this phase of the re-registration visiting work. We suggest that if our record called for charter-jerking, Wisconsin's twenty-times worse percentage deserved at least a mild rebuke.

Clarity's Case

Against this proof of revolutionary accomplishment and of reformist failure what did Clarity offer? Rodgers read a document written for him (he is not trusted to extemporize), reiterating the old charges and buttressing them with no evidence except a rather smelly mess of irrelevant an innocuous stolen personal letters, hear-say, slander, distorted quotation and warnings that "communism" would destroy us. The delegate from Fresno very pertinently characterized their case as charges of "liar, thief, slander and 'you don't play fair'" and commented, "It seems to me that in every factional fight where the struggle becomes bitter, the group that is being liquidated ideologically resorts to such charges to take the place of a political position that can be attacked".

Clarity failed to rally a single local, branch or YPSL delegate—official or unofficial—(this latter alternative for Clarity's benefit was included in Rodgers' invitation. Even the SEC majority, though called, failed to come. Only Rodgers, Clement and four lonely rank-and-filers could be resuscitated for the occasion. The attitude of this handful was "what does it matter? We have the NEC!" Just so, and the NEC has..... them.

The rest of the Socialist Party of California—every active local, the entire YPSL, ninety eight per cent of the active membership—has had an eye-witness demonstration of the determination of the NEC to expel "revolutionists within the Socialist Party". It was not fact, legalism, or the organizational charges which were at issue. Bursting through these comparative trifles was the clear fact that the Socialists of California were political enemies and that the verdict of "guilty" had already been signed, sealed, and delivered.

Reformism is in the ex-Socialist Party saddle, but the victory will be empty and bitter. Only revolutionary Socialism can expropriate the expropriators and lead the working-class in the conquest of the earth. California Socialists prefer to aid in and share that victory.

Farmer-Labor Leaders Plan The Dissolution of Their Party

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—When, on August 7 in New York City, Farmer-Labor Governor Elmer A. Benson of Minnesota said "he would be in favor of having President Roosevelt run for a third term," (N. Y. Times, Aug. 8), he was telling the people that the days of the party of which he is the standard-bearer, as a group independent from the Republican and Democratic parties, are drawing to a close. He was doing more. He was stating that the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party has not the slightest intention of participating in a national Farmer-Labor movement, but, instead, that its leaders have already made up their minds to lead it into a Liberal Republican-Liberal Democratic People's Front in the 1940 national campaign.

In short, the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party is treading the inevitable path to dissolution. To be sure, it is impelled at a more rapid pace in this direction by the Popular Front line of the Communist Party. But from the very first years of its political successes under Floyd B. Olson, the truth is that the FLP never was for one instant independent of the capitalist parties. The All-Party Committees (forerunner of the People's Front) which have been a feature of every election since 1928 assured the influence of the old political machines within the FLP.

Benson is not the only Farmer-Labor leader to go on record for the People's Front. On August 24, Senator Ernest Lundeen (a supporter of Lemke's candidacy in 1936) announced a sectional meeting of the Farmer-Labor bureau in Washington. "Lundeen, although insisting no attempt will be made to outline a program at this first meeting," says the report, "indicated efforts probably will be made to enlist support from the more liberal elements of both Republican and Democratic parties." This is the Stalinist formula for their People's Front.

To those in Minnesota who refer to themselves as "real Farmer-Laborites" (as distinguished from the "All Party Farmer-Laborites"), this means a triumph for the liquidationist All-Party line which has been fought by the rank-and-file of the Farmer-Labor Party ever since Floyd Olson first introduced it in his early campaign. This

means that the Communist Party has now infiltrated into the FLP apparatus to the point where the Stalinists will now be able quite rapidly to lead it into the Democratic party for the purpose of their "broad People's Front."

All this fine talk that "a Labor Party helps break the masses from their ties to the capitalist parties," in the light of these latest facts, is seen to be utterly unrealistic. In a very short period of time, it is more than likely that the FLP in Minnesota, for many years considered by the liberals a shining beacon of progress, will have little to distinguish it from the American Labor Party mess in New York City.

The actions of Benson, Lundeen, and many other leading F-L spokesmen follow closely upon the heels of the draft resolution of the state committee of the Minnesota Communist Party dated July 10, a copy of which has come into our hands.

"The organized labor movement, especially the CIO, Labor's Non-Partisan League, independent Farmer-Labor and progressive parties, large masses of toiling farmers and city middle classes (reads the draft) have tended to rally around Roosevelt in the Democratic Party, seeking by independent organization and struggle to influence that party... to work for progressive and democratic solutions to the pressing problems that confront the masses. This regrouping of the class forces was already foreshadowed in the vanguard state of Minnesota by the alliance between the liberal Democratic forces with the Farmer-Labor Party behind Roosevelt and Benson against the Republican alliance with the Liberty League Democrats.... This advance of labor and the people is further being stimulated in Minnesota by the Farmer-Labor administration, by the transformation of the Farmer-Labor Party in the direction of a broad people's front and by the increased activity and influence of the Communist Party," etc., etc.

If there exists a single honest Socialist who had the slightest hopes that the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party would be a means of developing independent political action of the workers on a national scale, these recent developments should root out such illusions.

APPEAL GREETINGS

"The resumption of the publication of the APPEAL is more than justified. More than the violation of the promises, by the NEC, to publish an inner-party bulletin, more than the fact that the Call is essentially a factional organ of Clarity (with permission to Thomas for the publication of his particular confusion) is the pressing necessity of an organ of revolutionary Marxism to educate the advanced workers on the significance of the great events of the day. We would be remiss in our duty if we were to continue to permit the miserable Call to pass off as the organ of revolutionary socialism. Revolutionary Marxism must have its champion and the APPEAL must assume that role."—Albert Goldman, Chicago.

City Central Committee, Local Boston, voted to send revolutionary greetings to the SOCIALIST APPEAL and donate five dollars.

From Fresno Branch, California:

"Were we elated when we re-

ceived the copy of the APPEAL! The idea of having a paper that expresses our views at the present moment gives us an added spur in our struggle against the right wingers."

"I have just received—and 'devoured'—the first issue of the new SOCIALIST APPEAL. It is a good job. And what a relief to have once more a 'revolutionary voice' to read! I think this one issue will mean a big boost in left-wing morale. I am enclosing \$5 for my subscription and donation. And I'll send you at least \$2 every month—more if possible—to help keep it going. I certainly think every left-winger should make every financial sacrifice possible to keep it a weekly paper."—Hildegard Smith, Hutchinson, Kansas.

"I extend greetings, and I commend you for your decision and action in republishing the SOCIALIST APPEAL. Now and at all times, the Socialist movement requires clear thinking and courageous action. I enclose \$5.

Kindly renew my subscription and accept the four new ones, names of which I herewith enclose."—Chas. L. H. - Marston Mills, Cape Cod, Mass.

Party organizations and leaders throughout the country are greeting the appearance of the revolutionary organ. We reprint a few:

Louisville, Kentucky

"The Socialist Appeal is a real paper. Please send us ten more copies of the new issue for which we will send the money upon sale.

"For a Revolutionary Party Enrico Panicali
Louisville, Kentucky"

Rochester Y.P.S.L.

"The Y.P.S.L. of Rochester extends you their warm greetings as you venture forth to defend revolutionary Marxism in the Socialist Appeal. Last evening (Aug. 25) the circle unanimously accepted the position of the Appeal on the crucial political issues, coming out solidly for a new revolutionary Fourth International. We also passed a blistering denunciation of the left-wing purgings by the Alt-

man-Clarity bloc in New York which I have just mailed to the New York City Central Committee.

"The first issue of Appeal was taken up so quickly that I am personally sending in this order for thirty more copies of the first issue, and enclose payment.

Fraternally,
Richard E. Posner,
Asst. Organizer"

St. Paul, Minnesota

"We have just received the first issue of the Socialist Ap-

peal and all comments indicate that they are all glad to get it and like the appearance. More later.

Paul A. Rasmussen."

Local Rochester

"Greetings to Socialist Appeal from one who as a delegate to the Chicago National Convention was unaffiliated with any faction, but who observed and learned from the left wing.

B. C. Bennen, Organizer,
Local Rochester
Chairman, Monroe County

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