

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Stalin Tightens the Screws on His Plebiscite

Stalin's Central Committee sat in plenary session for two days on October 11-12 to "take up the question of the electoral campaign". While the decisions of this session have yet to be published in full, the keynote of the campaign has been issued, and the fear of the ruling clique given a more graphic expression.

Under the slogan of "Strengthen the Ties With the Non-Party Masses!" joint slates with 'non-party Bolsheviks' have been made mandatory. All indications point to the certainty that "non-Party" delegates will constitute a very substantial block, if not the majority of those elected to the Supreme Soviet. The press features the nominations of members of this new aristocracy from among the "well-to-do" kolkhozniki, Stakhanovites, technicians, Stalinist "intelligentsia" and so on. They receive prominence second only to that of Stalin and his closest henchmen-pro-tem.

Whatever Stalin's plan may be, his fears of possible hindrances are being given ever clearer expression, with the progress of the campaign. The press no longer speaks in generalities, but openly stresses not only the danger but the likelihood that anti-Stalin candidates will be elected! For days prior to an "official" confirmation in Pravda, "preventive" resolutions on this theme dotted its columns. We select one instance out of scores:

"We will strain all our efforts not to permit a single one of the vile enemies of the people from among the Trotskyite-Bukharinist-Rykov gang, not a single double-dealer and traitor to the interests of the people, to sneak into the highest organs of state power of our happy and free country". (Resolution of the Nevsky plant in Leningrad, Pravda, Oct. 14.)

Pravda more than bears out the "need" of straining "all efforts" Referring to "one of the most important, and perhaps the key organizational question of the electoral campaign," i.e., the election of district and regional electoral committees, Pravda wails:

"The enemy elements, understanding the full political significance of electoral committees, strive, and in some places not unsuccessfully, to sneak 'their own' creatures into them, especially into the district committees. In the Ordjonikidze province in five districts alone, from among 81 candidates put forward for the district electoral committee, 14 either had criminal records or were implicated in ties with enemies of the people. In the face of that, what good is all the talk about vigilance on the part of local regional party militants!" (October 18).

Another instance: "It is silly and dangerous to expect that the still lurking enemies—the splinters of the crushed counter-revolutionary parties, the Mensheviks and S.R.'s the churchmen, the most venomous of the enemies of the people from among the Trotskyite-Bukharinist Fascist gang—will not strive to and perpetrate abominations, and engage in wrecking on the sly". (October 17).

And again: "Despite the absolutely clear directives of the plenum of the C.C. of C.P.S.U. which stressed the paramount importance of electoral districts in the coming elections, party organizations and Soviets, in many places, did not attend in a Bolshevik manner to the selection of district electoral committees. In several places, shocking negligence was shown, which enabled shady elements to sneak into some district electoral committees. This occurred in the Kuibishev and Smolensk regions, as well as in the Ordjonikidze province." (October 27. Our emphasis throughout).

The disappearance of candidates is beginning to assume nationwide proportions. A certain number of these can doubtless be accounted for by clerical and typographical errors, but the illuminating comment in Pravda, coupled with the fact, that the remiss regions listed above have figured prominently in the latest reports of executions, is ample proof that Stalin's G.P.U. is

rectifying with bullets any acts of "negligence" in the "most democratic elections in the world."

But the G. P. U. is obviously having its hands full. So, on the initiative of Petrovsky, Chairman of the Ukrainian C.E.C. of the Soviets, the Komsomol (Y.C.L.) committees have mobilized pioneers and all school children of pioneer age "for active participation in the electoral campaign." Petrovsky in an article in Pionerskaya Pravda specifies just what this participation entails. Among the chief duties of school children is to agitate against the "excrements of the bourgeoisie, the nationalists, the followers of Petlura, the Trotskyites, the Rights and other traitors of the people."

With each passing day, the terror is gathering momentum. Krasnaya Gazeta for October 10, carries an announcement of a new regional conference of the Leningrad Komsomol, necessitated by "additional" exposure of "enemies of the people who had sneaked into leading posts"—of a Komsomol organization that has been purged three times in the last few weeks! At the head of these enemies, this time, was none other than Vaishlya, secretary of the Regional Committee, one of Zhdanov's closet henchmen and himself one of the most ruthless "purgers". In the five weeks ending with October 31, more than 400 individuals have been shot for "sabotage and wrecking"—according to reports published in the Soviet press. No sphere remains untouched by the purge, not even the Political Bureau! At the XVII Party Congress of February 10, 1934 Stalin handpicked 10 men for this body. Of these, three died; Kirov, Kuibishev and Ordjonikidze. They were replaced by Mikoyan, Chubar and Petrovsky, who were three of the 5 candidates likewise selected at the time. The other two were Rudzutak and Postyshev. In 1935, after Kirov's assassination, Zhdanov and Eikhe were appointed candidates. Rudzutak and Postyshev fell into "disgrace." And now with the appointment of Yezhov to the Political Bureau, the members of this body are (for the time being): Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Andreyev, Mikoyan, Chubar, S. V. Kossior, Zhdanov and Yezhov. Of those "missing", Eikhe has just been kicked down stairs into the People's Commissariat. Petrovsky is on the spot in the Ukraine. Who is next?

To cope with difficulties Stalin has found it necessary to add bribes to "agitation" and bullets. On November 1, the People's Commissariat issued a decree raising the wages "of lower paid workers and employes in industry and transport." The decree cautiously avoids specifying the precise amount of the raise, but specifies "guiding considerations" which establish minimum monthly wage scales of "not less than" 110 and 115 rubles "exclusive of premiums and other additional earnings." For the first time we have an "official" wage scale for "lower paid" workers, i.e. the bulk of the Soviet proletariat. The ruling clique has lifted a corner of the veil that hides one of its darkest secrets! That they have been compelled to do so is another indication of the growing ferment among the masses.

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On October 20, the Soviet press hailed the entry of the electoral campaign into a "new phase." The "first candidates" were nominated. Their names are, indeed, important: Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, Zhdanov and two "non-party" Stakhanovists Pichugina and Smetanin. Was it an accident that Voroshilov's and Kaganovich's names are conspicuously absent among these "first"?

Beginning with October 29 Pravda began printing long lists of organizations nominating Stalin. Only on November 2nd were the names of others included. Here is the order as of November 2nd, arranged according to the "number" of nominations.

Stalin	446
Molotov	106
Kaganovich	102
Yezhov	68
Voroshilov	68

On the first appearance of these "figures" Yezhov ran ahead of Voroshilov 37 to 36; and Kaganovich swamped Molotov by a score of 52 to 48. Knowing Stalin's gentle methods, these "hints" are highly significant, indeed!

J. G. W.

West Coast Labor Notes

Labor Editor Resigns

Somewhat of a sensation was caused throughout the ranks of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific last week when Ralph Chaplin, editor of the "Voice of the Federation" resigned, charging that the Communist Party, through a process of slow and deliberate strangulation, has put the "Voice" on the rocks.

In his statement printed in the paper, Chaplin, well-known working class poet, announced he "refused to serve as a scape-goat for the cunning plot hatched by the local Moscow wrecking crew... The principles of genuine industrial unionism upon which the Maritime Federation was founded are too important to be discarded for the cheap substitute proposed by the Communist CIO Maritime Council."

Indorse Independent Industrial Union

In the meantime, the progressive campaign for unity among the maritime unions gains headway. San Pedro and Seattle branches of the Marine Firemen and Oilers union, and the headquarters meeting of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific have all voted by an overwhelmingly majority to amalgamate the three unlicensed union groups on the Pacific Coast into an independent industrial union affiliated to the Maritime Federation.

By a majority of more than 14,000 votes, organized labor in San Francisco last week again prevented reactionaries from securing an antipicketing ordinance.

Unionists Framed

LOS ANGELES. — In recent months the District Attorney and the courts in Los Angeles have intensified their drive against the militants in the unions. Another attempt of the D. A. and the courts to break a strike occurred when two militant members of the I.L.G.W.U., Josephine Snyder and Frances Sanchez were arrested on charges of kidnapping and grand theft. These charges and arrests are as patent a frame-up as ever experienced by labor. Two weeks ago a scab attempting to enter the plant of the Chic Lingerie Co., whose employes were on strike, engaged in an argument with the picket. A fight ensued, during which the scab dropped her purse. Witnesses present proved that the purse had fallen into the gutter and was swept into the sewer. A while later, Marshall Ross, union attorney, accompanied by a detective, discovered the purse lying in the sewer.

The charge of kidnapping arises out of the following circumstances. During the first days of the strike, Mrs. Snyder and Frances Sanchez convinced a union member, employed in the plant, who was attempting to pass the picket line, to remain on strike. She was taken to the union headquarters, given lunch money, and after a further conversation asked to return home. The employer later visited the girl and prevailed upon her to return to work and sign a complaint for kidnapping.

This is one of many such experiences that unionism has encountered in Los Angeles. The forces of labor throughout the city must be aroused against this kind of vile strike-breaking.

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