# Elections Prove Need For Independent Labor Action

## A Pointed Lesson At the Polls

The receding wave of the New Deal left the Republican Party with losses of only three Governorships among important State or Federal posts, their delegation in the House of Representatives approximately doubled, their Senators increased by eight, and their candidates in control of fifteen new State Ad-

If the campaign had involved the Presidency, the Republican electoral votes would have been increased from the all-time low of 8 in 1936 to about 210. Discounting the Solid South, there was a Republican popular majority, or very close to it, in the remainder of the country.

The Republican vote was made up of nine-tenths of the bosses, two-thirds or more of the middle classes, including the farmers, and a small fraction of the workers.

The overwhelming majority of the workers, however, voted for the candidates of the Democratic Party. This fact, confirmed equally by the preliminary polls and by the election returns, is of enormous importance. As in 1936, so last week, the workers voted as a class. In every election prior to 1936 the workers were divided in about the same percentages as the other classes of the population. Today they are acting politically as a class, however distortedly the existing parties may reflect genuine class

#### WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

The elections turned out as they did, with the middle classes shifting over to open reaction, because, primarily, the New Deal demagogy is losing its hold on the bulk of the middle classes, and labor has offered no alternative program or perspective.

The New Deal is losing its hold for a very good reason: because it has failed, because after six years of its promises the results in practice are merely the continued unemployment of 12,000,000, universal insecurity, and the close threat of war. Promises that never come true cannot remain eternally attractive.

The bosses are growing impatient with the New Deal's "social experiments." They want to deal more bluntly with labor, to cut down relief expenditures, to lift all restrictions on profits. They no longer have the fear of total collapse which so terrified them that in 1933 their majority accepted Roosevelt, the N.R.A., and even concessions to the workers, as saviors for themselves. They speak today with a bolder and more insistent voice, and the middle classes swing as always to the side which seems the

It is interesting to observe, nevertheless, that the Republican Party did not dare campaign with the program and methods of the old-fashioned Harding-Coolidge type of reaction. The Republicans had to appeal in part through liberal-looking candidates like Dewey in New York, Stassen in Minnesota, Taft in Ohio, whom they put up as shirt-fronts. More than half of the newly victorious Republican Congressional candidates were "pensionites," and endorsed by Dr. Townsend. At the same time the Republicans appealed from another direction to middle-class prejudices through anti-Semitism (New York) and anti-unionism (Michigan, the Far West).

#### WHAT WILL BE PROPOSED?

The bosses liked the election returns, and showed their approval by sending the stock market up to a new high for the year on the day following the elections. They believe they are now in a position to carry through a drive for amending the Wagner Labor Act in such a way as to deprive the unions of essential rights, to revise taxation in their favor, to block any moves toward regulation of monopoly profits, and to reduce drastically expenditures for unemployment relief.

It is a foregone conclusion that Roosevelt cannot and will not put up any serious resistance to this drive. It is not excluded, it is even probable, that Roosevelt will continue to prate about "the New Deal" and to appear publicly as the "champion of the masses" against the Tories, in order to keep a grip on popular support; but at every crucial point he will give way. A coalition of Republicans and right-wing Democrats will control Congress

Roosevelt will now concentrate, above all, on the one remaining and supreme ace in his deck: on his war program. It is by this that he will try to confound his opponents-since here none of them can attack him-and to sustain an atmosphere which will make the public afraid to move too far away from him.

And, in order both to consolidate the chief remaining base of his own support and at the same time to complement his war program as he understands it, he will devote renewed and strong energies to bringing about labor unity. In order to keep control of the outcome, it is quite-probable that he or one of his immediate subordinates will take the initiative toward new unity steps.

The response of the majority of labor bureaucrats, both A. F. of L. and C.I.O., to the elections will be: to become more conservative and timid, to pull in even further the tentative feelers which some of them have put out toward independent class action, to crawl in deeper beneath the bedraggled New Deal wing in order to escape the sight of the Republican bogeyman.

#### WHAT MUST THE WORKERS DO?

If the workers themselves follow the policy of labor's officialdom, and through it of Roosevelt, the result will be disastrous. Reaction was strengthened by last week's election, that is true. But all modern history teaches us that to retreat under such circumstances only makes certain far greater defeats. The workers must reply to the gains of reaction by going ahead, by a determined advance.

On the economic field the workers must take the question of labor unity into their own hands, not turning it over to a Roosevelt-Perkins-Lewis-Green combine for bureaucratic solution. The workers must force in the quickest possible time a solid reunification of the ranks of labor on a democratic and militant founda-

And at the same time labor must undertake an aggressive campaign to extend organization into the still vast unorganized sections of industry-Ford looks like the first job to be cleared up.

On the political field, the workers must set before themselves as the immediate goal: independent class politics. This means shaking off the dead and dragging weight of the New Deal, of 'Roosevelt and of all "liberal," "progressive" capitalist politicians-who have already shown that they "lead" the workers only to defeats-and striking out to build a party of labor's

It is necessary, of course, to fight against the attempts that will be made to alter the Labor Relations Act in favor of the employers, to cut down relief and to pass anti-labor taxation measures. But such a fight cannot be made by supporting Roosevelt who has neither the intention nor the power to carry it through.

### Connecticut Workers Vote Independently

Heavy Vote for Jasper McLevy Shows Readiness of Workers to Support Independent Labor Ticket

By B. HARDE (This is the first of two articles on the recent election in Connecticut and its meaning for workers.)

Upsetting all political applecarts, the refurnished Connecticut Republican machine last week crept back into state power, nosing out by scant pluralities the Democratic apparatus of staunch New Deal Governor Wilbur Cross.

Republican pluralities, however, spelled victory only in the traditional language of patronage opportunities and control of political plums, rather than in the more satisfying terms of popular support and approval. Victorious Republicans and defeated Democrats alike shook worried heads and pondered pessimistically over the significance of the election returns, which gave evidence that a current of third party sentiment had reared its lusty head throughout the state, under the aegis of Old Guard Socialist Jasper McLevy, mayor of Bridgeport.

Election Figures

The bare election figures are themselves startling enough to seasoned machine politicians of the major parties: rock-ribbed Yankee Democrat Wilbur Cross, darling of lady reformers and professorial liberal, polled a mere 225,000 votes; Baldwin, white hope of the new young blood in the Grand Old Party, rolled up only 228,000 votes; while Jasper, the crusading Socialist advocate of clean government and the merit system, and deeply-scarred veteran of reformist political battles since 1900, garnered the neat third-party vote of more than 163,000.

Revealing Percentages ceived in any election since 1930. pressed. Their plurality of 2,500 was Coughlin's Union party, which

McLevy increased his vote 100% over that which he rolled up in 1934, when he received 38,000 yotes, and 800% over 1936. Dark horse McLevy carried 18 tol and the towns of East Hart-He came in second in 20 more by "revelations." towns. Most of his votes came from cities and large towns, from the most heavily industrialized western regions of the state;

ticut river. Industrial Vote of the state, Hartford, New Haven and Fairfield, gave McLevy chieftains, who made unprein the election campaign.

have a chance." If the A.F. of ocrats!

League (C.I.O.) had not worked with might and main to stem the drift away from the New Deal candidates toward third-party support, the Socialist candidate might very well have won hands

From Both Parties In most of the eight counties of the state, McLevy drew more

votes from the Democrats than from the Republicans. The disiffection which resulted in the taggering Socialist vote was ampant in both parties. It is clear as daylight that ε adical change has come ove.

he Connecticut electorate since

he precipitate New Deal landslides of 1934 and 1936. The attempt is now being overenthusiastically made to explain away the McLevy boom on the basis of his "clean government" program, which, it is monotoncusly repeated, won him a huge

'protest vote."

There is, to be sure, a certain garbled truth in the statement. and corruption amongst those high in public office have rocked the state in the last year. First the sordid plundering and mismanagement of the Merritt highway affair, under Republican heels, came the incredible grand milking of public funds in Waterbury, this time under Dem-Lieutenant-Governor and Mayor blessed by LaGuardia, was electof Waterbury were indicted, ed.

the Democratic fold). Honor Among Thieves emerge once they are broken for his honesty-stomping. Parad-

along with 26 local dignitaries of

threw its support to Baldwin in vote. That muckraking paper bulk of McLevy's votes came the gubernatorial race. Had the knows full well that sober mid- from working-class sources, Democrats won, their plurality declass people do get sufficient- which could not have been very amongst the electorate would by incensed at large-scale graft- much aroused by the scandals have been scarcely more com- ing to protest with their ballots, themselves, since those scandals and workers are notoriously cal- and middle-class circles. loused to the question of corruptowns, including the cities of tion in public office; they rather

Lessons of Vote ment editorially: "McLevy's campaign, attacking Governor Cross less than 10% came from the for not taking action to prevent four counties east of the Connec- the Merritt parkway scandal and for not acting sooner regarding ates. the disclosures made about lob-The three most populous coun- bying and corruption in the with diverting thousands of votes from the Democratic ticket to The predominantly industrial not appear that this offers a character of McLevy's support complete explanation of the shift can hardly have been a comfort- in electoral vote . . ." Besides, ing thought to the old-party the Herald points out, the reaction in Waterbury, the scene of cedented bids for labor's vote the municipal scandals, was not away from the Democrats alone, McLevy could easily have been although it was under their ad-

L. and Labor's Non-Partisan The immediate lessons of the

It can be successful only if labor displays its independent class

The workers must understand that the first and primary object of labor in politics is not the immediate election of an illusory majority to office, but the organization of the working class for struggle. Only this makes labor strong; without this, elections can win exactly nothing.

Finally, the workers must set for themselves new and bolder and wider aims. If they turn now in fear, and remain content with scraps from the bosses' tables, labor will itself sink into passivity and despair and the middle class will continue their rush toward reaction. Only a perspective which openly and audaciously asserts the rights and claims and ideals of the workers can rouse the enthusiasm and courage of labor for the struggle ahead, and can draw along with labor the great majority from the middle classes who share with labor the oppression and exploitation of a declining society and who with labor seek a way out of the crisis.

This perspective—the bold, independent class action of the workers on both the economic and political fronts-is the way and the only way to stop reaction, and to move ahead.

MAKE GOOD SHOWING



Reading from left to right are Ruben Plaskett, Frank Shapiro and Willis Crews, S.W.P. candidates in the recent elections in Essex County, New Jersey.

## **ALP Pays Price For** Sleazy Deals In N.Y.

Vote Falls Off by 100,000 as Workers See No Difference Between Labor Party and Democratic Machine

Last week's elections struck a heavy blow at New York State's tism. It carried on an intensive ate doubling of the W.P.A. quota American Labor Party, and wrote a devastating comment on the "realistic" policy of deals with boss parties which was followed by the present A.L.P. leadership.

In New York City, the home and fortress of the A.L.P., the Scandalous revelations of graft party's vote declined about 150,000 from last year's mayoralty election. Increases in other cities doubled the upstate count; but this meant a rise to only 60,000, from 30,000, so that the total was more than 100,000 behind 1937.

Of the A.L.P.'s five incumbent State Assemblymen, not a single auspices, was brought into the one was returned to office, and open a year ago. Then, on its only one new candidate (Garcia Rivera) was elected to the Asjury discovery of systematic sembly. Of the Congressional candidates, only the Stalinist hack, Vito Marcantonio, running ocratic auspices (the Democratic also on the Republican ticket and

Failure to Lead

The setback to the A.L.P. in votes, however, was less decisive, own candidates, for minor of-Understandably, neither of the bad as it was, than its failure to fices, and endorsed the remainder major parties chose to make po- lead and organize the workers of of the Democratic slate-headed If the mere figures gave the litical capital out of these scan- New York in independent strug- by that stalwart trade unionist, managers of the Republican and dals, for fear of their boomerang gle. The workers were simply Herbert H. Lehman, high on the Democratic plunderbunds food effect; there is still a certain not convinced that the A.L.P. for much sober thought, their honor among thieves. McLevy, was their party; they did not significance, and the facts which therefore, had a beautiful set-up see in practice any sharp line

under the slogan: "Don't Let the across major party lines, seem-The Republicans polled only Raiders Ride Again!" Naturally, ing to hit the Democrats more policy was proved by the elec-37% of the total vote, a smaller more than a few honest, upright heavily only because the latter tions to be a total loss. percentage than they have re- and righteous citizens were im- had previously been riding the crests of popularity. (2) The real significance of McLevy's corrupt government. (3) The But not enough of them to ex- have been an open secret for plain the Socialist vote. It is years, "Revelations" took their clear that McLevy got a very toll chiefly among the more insubstantial working class vote- nocent pillars of honesty in rural

Some 'Explanations' a necessary concomitant of the pressive labor vote. The best that ford, Manchester, Glastonbury, old two-party squabbling for the liberal Herald could do was Watertown, Fairfield, Stratfield. power, and fail to be impressed to announce, in its post-election headlines, that the returns signifled a "Workers' Slap At Demo-The Herald is forced to com- cratic Bosses." According to this explanation, Connecticut labor was incensed at the failure of the state Democratic party to run genuinely "liberal" candid-

Despite Roosevelt's maneuver ing, New Deal Congressman ties, seats of the chief industries Waterbury scandal, were credited Koppelman failed to receive the as many promises to labor as senatorial nomination, and Old "old Toby" Cross ever did. Guard Democrat Lonergan was His campaign was character-135,000 of his nearly 165,000 votes. the Socialist ticket, yet it does run again. Similarly, the Demo- ized by continual strictures acrats failed to nominate Tone, gainst the "stuffed shirts" of the "liberal" State Labor Commis- old Republican party, and promsioner, for Lieutenant-Governor, ises of liberal labor legislation all preferring to run the "reaction- aong the line. His running mate,

The Full Truth

elected. Thousands of voters ministration that the plundering leading. It is a half-truth, and, to please the wealthy class. The inroads of the Stalinists, who are wanted to cast their ballots for took place. In Waterbury Mc- by that token, an untruth. For it great middle class and the work- now close to control of the A.L.P. McLevy, a state-wide poll by the Levy carried with a plurality of fails to explain why the dissat- ing men are the people we must local clubs, and who, as proved Bridgeport Herald revealed, and 400 over the Democrats, but he isfaction with the "growing con- serve." refrained from doing so only be- took more votes away from the servatism" of the Democrats did cause they thought "he didn't Republicans than from the Dem- not rebound to the benefit ers have risen in the ranks of capitalist parties? the party. These leaders make as the New Deal.

advisor to the A.F. of L., made publican parties.

separating the A.L.P. from the boss parties.

On both scores, the failure of the A.L.P. is the direct result of the policy which was followed. In New York City a shameless deal was made with Kenneth Simpson's Republican machine, whereby the A.L.P. endorsed a couple of dozen of the Republican candidates. On a State scale, the A.L.P. put up only two of its list of America's Sixty Families.

"practical politics," which was would spurt. he sole slogan by which Alex As though in order to doubly

The Morning After So resentful were the workers But hardly 165,000 of them. swing had far too much of a at the deals that on the day plight of the workers and farmthrown their way by the few Even the Bridgeport Herald is mass character to be interpreted after the elections, Antonini, tattered remnants of Father forced to seek elsewhere for the merely as a protest vote against Chairman of the A.L.P.'s State Executive, tried to crawl out of responsibility for them with a statement that he had been out or town when they were made, never approved, and remained silent only in order not to "hurt the party at the polls." A careful reading of Antonini's statement with the Republican Party that trolled paper organizations and he disavowed; he made no criticism of the equally reprehensible Commentators are hard put to coalition with the Democratic Bridgeport, Waterbury and Bris- cynically accept the grafting as it to explain away McLevy's im- Party. Alex Rose meanwhile de-

The election results in Connecticut provide an instructive and Levy ran for Governor on a comrates about zero among the champions of genuine socialism, and that his campaign, conduct-

Danaher, who was elected to the senatorship, proclaimed in the

Why Leftward Then?

of the Republicans. The Republicans rected merely against a once- A.L.P. ballots. The old-time trade lican machine has been com- liberal New Deal party suffering union officials might make the unions. pletely overhauled. Now that dic- from arteriosclerosis because of influence of the Stalinists the tator Roraback, czar of Connectoo great job security, why did pretext for pulling out from unticut utilities and erstwhile it not manifest itself in a swing | der, and hopping back into the power-behind-the-throne of the to the right, rather than in a Democratic Party proper. old G.O.P., has been buried for all leftward swing toward an indetime, new and "progressive" lead- pendent vote against both major now got to assert their rights well into the Stalinist People's

## Benson Defeat Shows Disgust For New Deal

Farmer-Labor Party Goes Into Slump as Victim of Attempt to Become Prop of Roosevelt Regime

By JULES GELLER

whelmingly defeated in last tion, of the dangers ahead. week's elections. It staked every-Deal, and went down with it.

tion on a pro-New Deal, ineffecby over 250,000 votes.

Lost 500,000 Votes

While Governor-elect Stassen himself posed as a liberal, the victorious Republican party studded its campaign with Anti-Semithat Benson, elected in 1936 by a program, a state public works million votes in two short years. ment and proclaimed its servility this program, the letter demand-

in bewilderment, the easy prey of the Republican Party. Hanging on to Roosevelt's coattails, the Farmer-Labor Party brought down upon itself the farmers' hostility to curtailment of crops, and the resentment of W.P.A. and relief workers to their status as second-class citi- sen.

Republican Promises

Far from being grateful for the relief handouts of the government, the farmers and workers wanted a "normal" status. The Republicans promised it to them by holding out the hope that un-Judged even by the standard of der their administration, business fought is proof that the Farmer-

public, he went forth crusading swing to McLevy cut squarely Pose and his friends tried to seal its fate, the Farmer-Labor sell the deal to the workers, this party adopted for its 1938 program a watered-down, faintly liberal series of planks that had to be "liberal," but a party ostennothing serious to offer toward a sibly based on the workers and solution or alleviation of the farmers had to offer a program ers of the state.

Minneapolis labor leaders Minnesota, as throughout the namonths ago demanded that the tion, was a protest against this Farmer-Labor platform be given some teeth. To implement this demand, trade unionists proposed talist politics in action. that the labor movement be given its full voice in the Farmer-Labor Party, which has drifted more and more into the hands of small shows that it was only the deals town liberals and Stalinist-consewing societies.

ed chiefly on "good government" issues, was about as empty of militant class content as it could be. Nevertheless the Connecticut workers responded enthusiasticironic contrast with what hap- ally to a candidate freed of the pened to the A.L.P. There Mac- old boss parties and running as a socialist. McLevy finished close pletely independent Socialist behind the Democrat and the ticket. It is true that MacLevy Republican, and carried over both of them the largest city in the State and its industrial center-Bridgeport-as well as a dozen other towns and cities. Dangers Ahead

There is a real danger now that the A.L.P. will collapse. Its Farmer-Labor councils, and mepresent officials, if unchecked, ulterated New Dealism in the face of the Republican advance, fearing that otherwise hey will lose the favor of the White House, which means more to them than the needs of the The explanation, of course, is name of the Republican party workers. They will be stimulated intentionally superficial and mis- that "We are all through trying further in this direction by the by the vote for their one independent candidate (Amter), pro- will never again be allowed to If labor's discontent was di- vided more than 100,000 of the take the labor party movement

and live up to their responsibil- Front idea of what a labor party The more thorough-going im- ities. They have got to take over should be, will go back to roost fine-sounding and radical prom- plications of the elections cannot the A.L.P. from top to bottom where they belong, in the Repubises as the best rabble-rousers of be sidestepped by any amount of and re-make it as their own full lican Party. The Stalinists helped word juggling. The bare fact is and genuine class political in them water down the F.L.P. pro-If, therefore, the laboring election this: Connecticut labor has bestrument. This means absolute gram, and now that the job is torate is incensed merely be- gun to stir out of its political independence, an end to all deals done, they wash their hands of cause the Democrats were not lethargy. Its first groping step is of any kind with the boss par- the Stalinists and the F.L.P. tosufficiently responsive to their in the direction of support of Mc- ties; it means a bold program of gether. dictates, if they wanted a can- Levy, an independent candidate workers' demands. And it means Progressives throughout the didate here and there which the running on a Socialist ticket. Re- a realization that a labor party state are prepared to defend the Democrats would not give them, gardless of the multifold motives is not just another vote-gather- labor movement against any and why didn't they turn to the Re- for that step, however confused ing machine, but primarily a all blows directed at it under the publicans to vent their wrath? and unorganized the step may means of organizing the workers cover of the Republican adminis-They would have received a re- have been, it represents a quite for struggle: from which it fol- tration. Meanwhile, they look forceptive ear in those circles. No obvious slap in the face for both lows that the A.L.P. must not ward to the formation of a fightone was ever more solicitous to- traditional parties of capital. It be allowed to go to sleep now ing labor party on a nation-wide wards labor than the Republican represents the beginnings of sat-candidates. Baldwin himself, son lation with the high-flown enter non-parliamentary fields, reaction, and serve as a rallying of an old "crusader for labor's phrases and vote-getting labels and must become the leader in point for the exploited millions rights" who was for years legal of the twin Democratic and Re- the day-to-day battles of the not only of Minnesota, but of the

The Socialist Workers Party of MINNEAPOLIS-After an un- Minnesota, in an open letter to interrupted eight-year reign in Benson and the Farmer-Labor the State Capitol, the Minnesota State Campaign committee, had Farmer-Labor party was over- warned, weeks before the elec-

"The present program of the thing in the election campaign on Farmer-Labor party is one which identifying itself with the New can scarcely inspire the workers and farmers to close ranks and After narrowly defeating Hjal- conduct the stubborn fight which mar Peterson, Farmer-Labor ren- is necessary for victory in the egade, in the primaries, Governor state elections," the letter said, Benson campaigned for re-elec- "The truth is that the Farmer-Labor Party is in danger of mortual and purely defensive pro- tal defeat at the hands of reacgram that resulted in his defeat tion, unless the workers and farmers can be armed with a program which will spur them to the utmost efforts to achieve victory."

The S.W.P. open letter to Benson went on to propose a program, which included an immedired-baiting barrage. But neither of the state, a \$40,000,000 relief of these methods explain the fact appropriation, a state housing plurality of 250,000, lost a half program, opposition to Roosevelt's war program, and the im-When the Farmer-Labor Party mediate calling of a special sesof Minnesota turned its back on sion of the legislature to put the the national labor party move- program into effect. To carry out to Roosevelt politics, workers and ed that the F.L.P. break with the farmers by the tens of thousands New Deal, and publicly propose lost faith in it as their political the formation of a national labor representative, and they were left party.

Ineffectual Program

But instead of campaigning on such a fighting program, the F.L.P. candidates stuck to their ineffectual program, which was almost identical to the fake liberalism espoused by the Republican Governor-elect, Harold Stas-

This fact was se obvious that, commenting on the defeat, Governor Benson was obliged to say: "The fact that the Republican party found it necessary to promise the people the very kind of a program for which the Farmer-Labor party has always Labor movement has made the

What he failed to understand. was that any, party could afford which would inspire the masses of the population. The vote in meaningless liberalism, which was no different than old-time capi-

Future Course

When the labor party movement genuine independent political instrument of the unions and farm organizations, as part of a national labor party movement. The workers will never again support a party in which they have little if any voice, in which paper organizations and ward clubs swing the majority vote, and which does not separate itself from the old

capitalist parties. The Communist Party in Minnesota, as the extreme right wing of the F.L.P., contributed no little to Benson's defeat. Through their various stooges, who were close to Benson, they pushed the Farmer - Labor leaders toward alignment with Roosevelt, excluded the labor movement from chanically railroaded through the F.L.P. convention in Duluth, the meaningless and conservative program that sealed the doom of

the party in the elections.

The hundreds of state job holders, who were only too willthe Farmer-Labor party as long as they felt it meant a job, now are deserting to the Republican a sinking ship. These elements

Most of the small town bankers, lawyers and business men who supposedly represented the far-The workers themselves have Party convention, and who fit very

country as a whole.