

Workers Party Free Speech Fight Rousing Masses in Western Pennsylvania

By JAY LOVESTONE

While Coolidge and the other agents of "law and order" are making a lot of noise in their celebration of "Constitution Week," the Workers Party is in the midst of a vigorous fight for free speech for all workers in Western Pennsylvania. This campaign of the Party is assuming serious proportions. How much interest this fight has aroused amongst the steel workers and coal miners of the Pittsburgh District, the workshop of the world, can be seen from the great attention being paid to these Party activities even by the trade union bureaucrats.

At the enthusiastic rally held by the Workers Party last Sunday in Pittsburgh there were present such renowned reactionary Labor leaders as Duffy, one of the Vice-Presidents of the American Federation of Labor; Daniel J. Tobin, Treasurer of the American Federation of Labor; and Fred Smith, Vice-President of the Boilermakers.

Maurer Visits Pittsburgh.

The whole Organized Labor movement of Pennsylvania is turning its attention to the Party's fight against

the Steel and Coal Barons. As per instructions of a resolution considered by the State Federation of Labor Executive Council, President James H. Maurer has gone into Pittsburgh to look things over and report on the persecutions to which many workers of Western Pennsylvania are subject.

Because of the Party's entrance into McKeesport many conservative trade unionists are becoming interested and are lining up for a showdown fight against Mayor Lysle, who has banned workers' meetings for years. In the mining sections especially, local unions are responding to the defense appeals.

Senators Take a Hand.

Despite his being busy with the coal strike settlement Governor Pinchot manifested an active interest in the whole affair. He has instructed States Attorney General George W. Woodruff to demand full details of the proceedings in McKeesport from Mayor Lysle. We have already presented our side of the case to the Governor and have demanded that Mayor Lysle be instantly removed from office for violation of the State Constitution.

United States Senator George Wharton Pepper is also following very closely the development of this fight for free speech led by the Party. Furthermore he is getting his colleague United States Senator Reed who comes from Western Pennsylvania himself, interested in the case. Steel Magnates Desperate.

Because of the great attention from the outside that is being focussed on his high-handed actions and because of the intense interest that the McKeesport workers are showing in the Party's campaign, Mayor Lysle has become desperate. The other day he had the owner of the lot where our meeting was held come before him. The Mayor grilled this workingman for an hour and thundered condemnation of all communists. Mr. Lysle swore that he would have all foreign radicals deported and all American radicals imprisoned.

At the same time the McKeesport Tin Plate Co. and the National Tube Co. who are the real bosses of Mayor Lysle are also in the campaign. The owner of the lot, for twelve years a heater at the tube plant, was severely lectured to by the Superintendent

of the mill for over three hours. At the tin plate mill three workers have already been discharged because they were suspected of being members of the Workers Party.

Frame Ridiculous Charges.

Preparing for the big legal battle also being waged by the Party, the local authorities of McKeesport have taken refuge in filing a most ridiculous charge against the workers arrested for speaking on the Constitution and Civil Rights in McKeesport on September 9th. Fred Merrick, Robert Dunn of the Civil Liberties Union, Patrick Toohey, Jr. of the United Mine Workers, and Mikadas, and the writer are now being charged with the violation of "an ordinance to preserve the good order of the city of McKeesport and to restrain and suppress disorderly houses, houses of prostitution and places where liquors are sold without license."

The workers know that this charge is ridiculous on the very face of it. This is causing them to take all the more interest in the fight.

The workingmen of McKeesport and Western Pennsylvania are especially

sore because while Lieutenant Mermelstein and his highly armed police were breaking up the Workers Party political meeting at the orders of Mayor Lysle, the Mayor himself was addressing a political meeting of the Republican Party in McKeesport. There is also considerable agitation amongst the steel workers and miners over the fact that a police lieutenant testifying against the arrested workers boasted to the Magistrate that "they did not get very far. They only got as far as the Constitution."

Await Outcome of Legal Tests.

Many are eagerly waiting for the outcome of the court proceedings instituted by the Party. In the Allegheny Court there will be an argument on the appeal from the decision of Magistrate Langsdorf imposing a fine on us. Plans are also afoot to take the whole case of Mayor Lysle's petty tyranny into the Federal Courts in order to prevent him, Lieutenant Mermelstein, and the other agents of the McKeesport Tin Plate Co. and the National Tube Co. from interfering with the workers' civil rights in Western Pennsylvania.