

Our Party's Election Campaign

By JAY LOVESTONE.

This year will see the American Communists participating in a parliamentary campaign more intensively and on a greater scale than in any previous year. For a number of months, the Workers (Communist) Party has been engaged in direct preparations for putting the Party on the ballot in its own name in as many of the 48 states as possible.

Leaflets and pamphlets have been issued. Election conventions have already been held in over 20 states.

A highly successful national nominating convention was held at the close of May for the adoption of an election platform and the selection of Comrades Foster and Gitlow as the presidential standard bearers of our Party in the November elections.

Hundreds of Communist mass meetings are being arranged throughout the country. Scores of thousands of copies of the election platform are being distributed.

Several organizers to reach new industrial centers where the Party organization is weak or non-existent have been put into the field. For the first time in the history of the Party an organized intensive effort is being made to pierce the Solid South—the most reactionary tier of states in the country, notorious for their disfranchising and severe oppression and lynching of the Negro masses.

Increased attention is being paid to the exploited farmers, the Negro masses, the youth and the working women.

The entire election campaign has as its keynote, the class struggle, and is based on such activities of the Party as the great miners' strike, the textile workers' fight and the long drawn out struggle of the needle trades workers.

The Present Situation in the United States.

Before proceeding to analyse the election campaign policy and activities of our Party, it is necessary to sketch briefly the economic and political situation in the country. The economic recession which set in about a year ago has developed into an acute depression. "Business is irregular." There still persists "a lack of buoyancy" among the major industries. There are not many confident expectations. The bourgeoisie speak of "extreme spot-tiness in trade, crop and industrial reports." But there is not sufficient evidence at hand to indicate that we are immediately approaching an economic crisis as severe in character as in 1921. Certainly the depression is acute, with at least four million still out of work, but it would be utterly wrong to con-

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clude that American capitalism now has its basic crisis and is already on the downgrade.

Big capitalist reaction continues in the saddle. There are no fundamental issues sharply dividing the two big bourgeois parties. Whatever issues have developed are largely within these parties rather than between them. The extent of reaction is marked by such events as the brazen acquittal of the multimillionaire Sinclair, one of the principal heroes in the Teapot Dome scandal; the arrogance characterizing Coolidge's use of his executive power in vetoing the McNary-Haugen bill; the granting of a huge subsidy to American shipping magnates; the decision of the supreme court legalising wire tapping; the increasingly aggressive role of American imperialism as shown by the war on Nicaragua; the big naval budget and the attack on China; the widespread use of the injunction in the continued aggressive campaign by the biggest capitalists to smash the organizations of labor and wipe out such elementary rights as the right to organize and strike.

The nomination of Hoover by the republican party, which is the dominant party of big business, is only another index of the strength of capitalist reaction and the growth in power of the executive department of the government. Hoover has been director-general of American Big Business for seven years. His nomination for the presidency marks for the first time in the history of the country the significant fact that someone is put up for the highest position in capitalist politics without previously having held a single elective office in his life. It is only additional striking evidence of the growing fusion of big business with the highest government officers.

The democratic party has nominated Al Smith, New York State governor, for president. The attitude of Wall Street towards Hoover and Smith is instructively summed up by the "Magazine of Wall Street" for May 19, 1928. When discussing the "business qualifications of the leading presidential candidates" it said:

"It is not an exaggeration to say that he (Hoover) has considered himself and has actually been director-general of American business. Never before here, or anywhere else, has a governmental department been so completely fused with business. He re-

spects big business and admires big business men... There can be no doubt that Hoover as president would be without precedent. He would be a dynamic business president, even as Coolidge has been a static business president. He would be the first business, as distinguished from political, president the country has had.

"Al Smith's record in politics is the best possible pledge that he will make a successful administrator of the biggest business of all... that of managing the political business organizations of the United States. But what about the Smith policies? They are just the reverse of Hoover's in relation to business. Hoover emphasizes economics, Smith, politics. Hoover would serve the public by serving business; Smith would serve business by serving the public."

American imperialism, because of the narrowing of the domestic market which has been one of its main sources of strength, and the increasing competition by other imperialist powers is waging an evermore aggressive imperialist policy.

Wall Street's frontiers are being thrown out ever further. The export of capital continues apace. Yankee imperialism is strangling Nicaragua, securing a tighter grip on the Philippines, making further inroads towards complete domination of Latin America, waging a ruthless imperialist policy in the Pacific against China, beating back decisively British imperialism on every front, winning a new hold on the financial resources of such European countries as Germany, Poland and Italy, and continuously at work preparing the most devastating weapons for the impending imperialist war. This hostility of the American government towards the Soviet Union remains vigorous.

The labor movement is in a crisis. Such basic organizations of the trade union movement as the United Mine Workers of America are being wiped out. This has narrowed the best proletarian base of the American Federation of Labor considerably so that today it is primarily a movement of the labor aristocracy though it still has hundreds of thousands of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The trade union bureaucracy is becoming evermore reactionary and is bound up integrally with the employers and government in their fight to determine the

standards of living and the organizations of the working class.

Politically, the American labor movement is very backward. President Green of the American Federation of Labor drew up a program of five planks which he had presented for the republican and democratic conventions in the usual formal routine manner without even the slightest pretense on the part of the capitalist politicians to heed these demands. The policy of "non-partisan political action," which in effect means selling out the great mass of workers to the republican and democratic parties, continues. The railroad brotherhoods which formerly were the champions of the Conference for Progressive Political Action, have moved so far to the right that they recently gave a blanket endorsement to Hoover. The entire labor party movement is at a low ebb today organizationally.

What is left of what was once the socialist party—a membership of less than 5,000—is organically tied up with the reactionary trade union bureaucracy. At its last convention it has moved even further to the right and has taken decisive steps to break with whatever remnants of working class ideology there might have been in its ranks.

But because of the economic depression and particularly the acute crisis in certain industries, like coal, there is today a greater volume of radicalization in the United States than at any time since the LaFollette movement of 1924. The masses are showing increasing readiness to resist the attacks of the capitalists on their organizations and their standards. This radicalization is not yet national nor general. It is primarily limited to specific sections and industries of the country.

Our Party has responded promptly and effectively to this increased readiness of the masses to struggle and has taken the initiative and leadership in such great class fights as the miners, textile workers and needle trades as well as in the general campaign of organizing the unorganized workers. We have likewise been most actively engaged in fighting American imperialist policies and for the development of an independent mass political party of the workers as the next big step in their political development as a class—for the organization of a labor party.

Our Party has, through these struggles, grown in influence and numbers. Today, it is the only organization of the workers consciously, persistently and energetically fighting against capitalist reaction.

(To be continued.)