

Labor Fakers Aid Anti-Labor Politicians

By ARNE SWABECK

At the April 10 Illinois primary elections, a number of so-called labor friends were snowed under by an avalanche of hostile votes. The Small-Thompson-Smith-Crowe republican clique suffered the worst defeat of its career. The much-heralded "America First" ship was sunk, but as the smoke of the battle is clearing away, one question now becomes of first rate importance:

Does Labor, and particularly its organized section, begin to perceive the treasonable character of the political policy pursued by the trade union officialdom, of supporting "Labor's friends" and punishing its enemies, on the capitalist party tickets? Certainly in these primaries the bankruptcy of that policy was exposed.

Huge Stakes.

While an anxious world was holding its breath preparing to watch Chicago shooting its way to the polls, the primary fight showed the mad scramble of the various corrupt political cliques to capture the alluring offices. The stakes were great for the capitalist politicians. There were the immense omnibus bills passed by the last legislature, making nearly 100 million dollars available for state administrative purposes. There was the immense Cook County budget mounting into millions of dollars, and the immense payroll for thousands of political hangers-on, in addition to the right of state and county patronage dispensing.

Governor Small, Bill Bill Thompson, former senator-elect Frank L. Smith and State Attorney Robert E. Crowe, had succeeded in patching up their jealous differences, organized an air-tight clique and reached out for complete political control of the state. The Insull slush funds of fame in the 1926 primaries made unity possible. The price to be paid to the Insull corporation was to be a perpetual franchise of the Chicago traction system, increased rates for street car and elevated fares, as well as the building of a subway to be operated by Insull. There were millions of dollars of additional profit in prospect for this corporation.

Big Bill Thompson during the 1926 primaries jumped into a questionable sort of fame by issuing the slogan "America First." It then provided an

effective antidote for the world court. He promised to lick the King of England and began to organize his America First Foundation which was destined to sweep the country. He advocated relief for flood sufferers and supported a good old-style pork-barrel flood-control bill in congress. He advocated the building of deep waterways and efficient air ports. He almost visioned himself as the next incumbent in the white house. With the backing of the Insull millions, this clique seemed almost invincible.

Labor Misleaders Aid.

The labor officialdom of the state began to apply the traditional A. F. of L. political policy, stretching it to its broadest possible ramifications. The officials of the Illinois Federation of Labor, the official machine of the miners' union, all of them endorsed the Small-Thompson-Crowe-Smith clique all the way down the line, and recommended them as true friends of labor. The Wage Earners League of Chicago, an aggregation of union officials, even went them one better in endorsing Charles H. Weber, running for the general assembly against Agnes Nestor, secretary of the Women's Trade Union League. Weber ran on a record of helping to defeat the women's eight hour bill.

As to the candidates endorsed by the labor officials as true friends of labor, the following are but a few examples:

First, Governor Small, who, when state treasurer, failed to account for sums perhaps mounting into millions, for interest on state money and for which he has since been ordered by the courts to pay back to the state \$650,000. Under Governor Small's administration, state jobs were freely given out to contractors using non-union labor exclusively. Under his administration, hundreds of miles of hard roads were built under absolutely non-union conditions, workers being employed at 40 cents an hour and working 10 hours a day.

Aid Smith.

Frank L. Smith was endorsed as the candidate for senator by the Labor officialdom in spite of the fact that after the 1926 primaries he was found guilty by the special senate investigation committee of having received \$237,935 in slush funds from the Insull corporation, and numerous smaller sums from other employers. He worked actively to effect a wage

reduction for the Chicago street car workers in 1922. He was barred from the senate for corrupt practices.

The Labor officials endorsed John Dailey, as candidate for attorney general! This is the same Dailey who, preceding the Chicago Landis awards fight, formed a Chicago commission and headed the investigation into the building trades unions, made screaming publicity against the unions and effectively prepared the basis for the enforcement of the Landis award.

The labor officials further endorsed for candidate for state attorney Robert F. Crowe. During the Ladies Garment Workers strike, Crowe held office and furnished police for protection of scabs. Indeed, in 1924 Crowe's entire labor record in the Chicago Ladies Garment Workers strike became so hostile, that the Chicago Federation of Labor published a special issue of the official paper of the Federation, devoted to exposing Crowe. They charged that Crowe had turned over the state's attorney's office completely to the employers association and their injunction attorney, Dudley E. Taylor. They charged that Crowe made an unveiled threat to break the back of organized Labor in Chicago, support-

ed by the "wheat king" James Patton, and the employers association.

These Labor officials never raised one single labor issue or questioned the candidates as to their stand. Today almost 100,000 coal miners face a life-and-death struggle for the maintenance of their standards and the existence of their union, which is being fiercely attacked by the operators aided by the treasonable miners' officials. Today the injunction abuse is running rampant throughout the state despite the fact that the so-called injunction limitation law is supposed to be enforced. Every dispute of labor against capital during the last few years has found ever more drastic labor injunctions. Today unemployment in the state of Illinois and particularly in Chicago has become as high as during the depression of 1920-21 with nothing whatever done by the authorities towards unemployment relief. Today factory workers are employed under constantly increasing speed-up conditions, low wages and long hours. The employers are preparing a general offensive against labor and the labor unions, already so clearly shown in the fight against the miners. The Labor officials never raised any of these issues, never at one time proposed any labor candidates or the need for building a labor party.

Anti-Labor Records.

Their policy was a blanket endorsement of one particular corrupt republican clique. Some of the candidates of this clique had tried to pose as labor friends but all of them, as well as their republican opponents, were pledged to the program of the republican party which is definitely anti-labor and for capitalism. This does not mean that the candidates of the democratic primaries were any better, since they too were pledged to an entirely anti-labor program. This action of the labor officials represents an endeavor to make labor merely an adjunct to the capitalist parties, to leave the workers entirely a prey in the claws of their class enemies—the capitalist class and the capitalist politicians.

The candidates winning the republican nominations, of course, are in no way different from those who were defeated, except perhaps, that they do not try to pose as labor's friends, but stand openly for their capitalist policies. Louis Emmerson, for instance, the winning candidate

for governor, is an important shareholder in several great open shop concerns in the state. Otis F. Glenn, the winning candidate for senator, was the prosecuting attorney against the Herrin, Illinois miners. All the winning candidates are definitely anti-labor and enjoy the support of the great majority of the Chicago capitalist press, of the manufacturers and of the bankers.

Workers Misled.

The labor officials who so freely gave their endorsement to the corrupt Small-Thompson-Smith-Crowe clique perhaps now will proclaim this primary election as a defeat for labor. This is not so. While the overwhelming vote for the Small-Thompson opponents administered a defeat to the labor officials with their policy of supporting of so-called labor friends, so far as the rank and file working class is concerned the victory of the one crooked capitalist clique over the other will make no difference. Yet the tremendous republican vote shows the extent of working class illusions in regards to the capitalist political parties. The development of a labor party would thus become one important step away from these illusions and one step toward political consciousness.

It cannot be expected that the labor officials with their bankrupt political policy will do anything whatever to advance the political consciousness of labor, organized or unorganized. We cannot look to them for any support for a labor party. They have shown themselves definitely as its enemies. It remains for the rank and file workers to carry on this struggle. Its most conscious section will lead the way. In this spirit the Workers (Communist) Party will enter its candidates for the coming elections to help advance the political consciousness of the workers, give real support for the building of a labor party, take up the issues of meeting the employers' offensive, strengthening the rank and file coal miners in their struggle, fighting for relief for the unemployed and for better conditions for factory workers, fighting to smash the injunction evil, and fighting for the complete abolition of the capitalist system.

The working class of Illinois will be asked to support the Workers Party candidates on the basis of these issues. It will be asked to cast its vote on class lines.



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