

FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS AND THE ELECTIONS

By WM. Z. FOSTER.

NEVER have American workers confronted worse economic conditions than those now existing. Unemployment on a gigantic scale, wage cuts being enforced on all sides, speed-up in all industries. And with the coming winter, conditions grow steadily worse in every direction.

No section of the working class feels more acutely the effects of the economic crisis than do the foreign-born workers. For the most part unskilled, they are the first to feel the blow of unemployment, and, with poverty wage levels, they are financially the least able to bear unemployment. It is also in the great unorganized industries, where the foreign-born workers predominate, that the employers are most drastically driving on with their program of wage slashing.

Besides this the foreign-born workers are subject to a whole series of governmental persecution. Among these are the proposed legislation for finger-printing, registration and wholesale deportation, not to speak of innumerable other harrassments of non-native workers. The employers especially fear the foreign-born workers as a rule have a revolutionary background, and they leave no stone unturned to make their organization difficult and to hamstring them in the general struggle of the workers.

The A. F. L. and the S. P.

The program of the American Federation of Labor and the socialist party has been one of betrayal of the foreign born workers, as well as of the workers generally. The A. F. of L. has never tried to organize the unskilled, foreign-born workers, but has systematically sold them out for concessions to the labor aristocracy. It has bitterly opposed unemployment insurance. It has supported all the anti-foreign-born legislation, especially distinguishing itself in its fight for restriction of immigration. A classical example of the A. F. of L. positions towards these workers was the adoption by the United Mine Workers, three years ago, of a motion, prohibiting non-citizen workers from holding office in the union.

As for the socialist party, despite its pretense at radicalism, it gives practical cooperation with the A. F. of L. in its anti-working

class program. At the recent New York banquet to Cahan, editor of the Jewish Daily Forward, the principal speaker was the fascist Matthew Wolf. This incident symbolizes the united front between the A. F. of L. and the socialist party leadership and their basic unity on policy. The Fish Committee, which concentrates heavy attacks against foreign-born workers, also recognizes the assistance it receives from the socialist party by categorically refusing to permit any criticism of that party to come before its hearings.

The Communist Party.

For organization and leadership, the foreign-born workers, like the various other sections of the working class, look to the revolutionary movement—to the Communist Party. In every battle of the workers, foreign born and native, the Communist Party stands in the very forefront. Its fight for unemployment insurance, for the 7-hour day, 5-day week, against wage-cuts, against foreign-born legislation, in defense of the rights of Negroes, against imperialist war, for defense of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Soviet Republic, are of the most fundamental importance to the foreign-born. In the coming elections every foreign-born worker should rally to the support of the candidates and program of the Communist Party. The election must be made a great protest against the intolerable conditions under which the workers work and live. But it must also be utilized as a vast campaign to organize the workers for struggle for immediate demands and for the ultimate overthrow of capitalism. It is not enough simply to vote for the Communist Party candidates. In the campaign we must build the Communist Party and the revolutionary unions of the Trade Union Unity League and greatly intensify all their work and struggle.

Foreign-born workers, support the Communist Party election ticket. In your language fraternal organization build committees to support the Communist Party. In the factories and in your home neighborhoods join with other workers in the formation of the "Vote Communist" committees and clubs. Let the coming elections be the occasion for a great mobilization of the revolutionary forces of the working class.