

# INTERVIEW WITH CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE

## Gratified by East Side Response, Elizabeth Flynn Tells Reporter

By LESTER RODNEY

The reporter about to climb three flights of steps to interview City Council candidate Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in her East Side apartment runs into the old Flynn sparkle before he even begins.

"Well," comes the sympathetic, chuckling voice from the top floor, "You're an athlete. Or do you only write about it?"

Less than four months out of prison on the now crumbling Smith Act fraud, the veteran Communist leader is, typically, up to her ears in activity. She showed me two separate desks at which she is simultaneously working on her Alderson prison story, and the continuous biography of her life. And, of course, nights and weekends she is involved all the way in the stirring campaign to get onto the ballot, a campaign which goes into its climax this weekend needing a last big push to insure the 4,000 signatures considered a safe margin.

"It has been a wonderful campaign," the vibrant, newly-slimmed, 67-year-old People Rights Party candidate said, "Really gratifying to me, both the number and spirit of the canvassers, and the response of the people. I just want to urge everyone who has helped to stay with us these last few crucial days, and ask others to come down and help. . . . We're near enough that we can do it. We can win the fight to get on the ballot."

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INEVITABLY, there are comparisons with the 1954 campaign to get onto the ballot in the Bronx, a campaign which also succeeded in spite of what Miss Flynn calls "the greater atmosphere of fear then."

With fewer canvassers this time, the campaign is bringing a higher rate of returns.

"You should be in the headquarters (at 15 Second Avenue) when the canvassers come back," she said, "The way they report about how the people of the area, the Puerto Ricans, Negroes and Italians are dissatisfied with conditions, and want SOME WAY to express this dissatisfaction, to protest."

The Saturday night open air meeting at the famed corner of Norfolk and Delaney encountered no hostility whatsoever, she reported, and much applause. Former city councilman Ben Davis spoke of the contributions made by progressive members of the Council in past years, including Communists like himself and the late Pete Cacchione. The first bill to end discrimination in nearby Stuyvesant Town came from the Communist councilmen.

"The canvassers," emphasized Miss Flynn, "tell the people that I am a Communist, and was in prison. That get very little reaction, and that is mainly not antagonism, but fear."

While the Lower East Side has changed in its composition from the days it sent Socialists to the State Assembly, she said, "it remains a politically conscious area, because of the conditions there. The housing, the lack of schools, prices. . . .

"One woman," she smiled, "took the canvasser into the apartment, showed her a rathole in the wall

and said 'You tell Elizabeth about this!'"

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MANY DOUBTED the practicality of his campaign when it was initially discussed, she said. "I'm not talking about opposing the concept of the campaign," she explained, "But its practicality. Oh, they would be glad to see it, but were afraid it couldn't be done now."

These people are now surprised and gratified, she said. "In this sense, it has given a shot in the arm to our party," she went on, "And so will be helpful in all future work the party faces, not only in this campaign to preserve the right of independent candidates." Miss Flynn sees preserving this right as very important, and not at all in conflict with proper outgoing election tactics. "On the City Council level it is a splendid opportunity to register dissatisfaction with the two big parties," she said.

Canvassers makes the clear distinction between the right of independents to get on the ballot, and voting for whom one pleases on election day. "Of course," she explained, "canvassers hope those who sign will vote for me, but make clear they are basically being asked to sign now for the American tradition of a fair shake for all."

A Democratic leader in the district who signed said he stood for the right of minority parties to be on the ballot.

"This," Miss Flynn said with her down-to-earth humor, "may also express the fact that he probably wasn't too afraid of us taking a lot of votes away from the Democrats."

But seriously, she added, "I really expect a better vote than the 1954 Bronx vote if I get on the ballot."

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"IT'S BEEN wonderful, so soon after coming back, to see so many old familiar faces at the headquarters," she mused, "And so many young people! That's really good to see. Some of them bring guitars, they've composed a campaign song . . . so many progressives have been wanting something to DO. . . ."

While the area has changed, she said, there are still echoes of past peoples' fights to be found. "There has been a fine response reported among Italian people," she said, "They've been impressed to hear that this candidate fought for the freedom of Sacco and Vanzetti. 'You sign too' some Italian old-timers told their children, explaining about Sacco and Vanzetti."

There is still some Jewish socialist tradition in the area, too, and a sprinkling of Irish who perk up at mention of her role in the fight to free Tom Mooney. "We got a voter named McCarthy too," she laughed.

As we concluded our chat, she talked about the Communist Party. "Our big task," she said, "is to turn the face of our party outward, meet the people, get back down on the ground, so to speak, and once again, in the long and honorable tradition of our party, identify our-

### East Side Doesn't Like the Kluxers

A leaflet entitled "IKE: STOP THE ARKANSAS KLUXERS, says Elizabeth Gurley Flynn" has received a fine reaction from people of the 24th Senatorial District, who agree with it completely. It is given out by canvassers to put Miss Flynn on the ballot for City Council.

selves with the basic interests of the people."

She stopped for a moment and then went on. "We HAVE that long and honorable history of 38 years. We must never lose sight of it, in spite of our mistakes, and goodness knows we must recognize and learn from our mistakes. I think we have to unite around the resolution adopted at the National Convention, which I think was an excellent resolution, and move forward."

### Raps President



Jackie Robinson, the man who shattered jimcrow in baseball ten years ago, has accused President Eisenhower of failing to make a sufficient effort to speed public school integration in the South. The former Brooklyn Dodger baseball star, addressing an NAACP luncheon here, urged Negroes to "do everything short of violence to achieve our rights" in their efforts to achieve integration.

### Separated Siamese Twin Marks 6th Year

FERRIS, Ill., Sept. 16—Rodney Dee Brodie, survivor of the first successful operation separating head-joined Siamese twins, today celebrated his sixth birthday in apparent good health.

### CITY CIO CALLS TO SAVE HOUSING

The New York City CIO and unionists to immediately winning immediate passage of the bill against discrimination in housing.

In a communication to all secretaries-treasurers of the Council, the CIO said: "Bill is in danger. ACTION NOW."