

Call on N. Y. Communists to Spur Legislative Activities

New York Communists need to revive "the fighting spirit of past years," the party's state committee declared over the weekend in a statement calling for "mass legislative action" on the issues before the legislature in Albany and the civil rights battle in Washington.

The statement was signed by George Blake Charney, chairman and Lillian Gates, legislative director. It stressed that the legislature is entering on the final two weeks of the 1957 session and the Washington civil rights is now at a critical stage.

Issues in Albany singled out were rent controls, anti-discrimination bills, labor's economic demands, telephone rates, and the Security Risk law.

The legislative statement follows:

AN URGENT CALL FOR MASS LEGISLATIVE ACTION

To All New York Communists:
To All New York Progressives:

Several legislative questions of vital importance to the people of our country and state are nearing the point of decision.

What the U. S. Congress and the New York legislature do within the next two weeks will determine the fate of important measures affecting the civil rights, civil liberties and economic security of our whole people.

IN WASHINGTON

The most urgent question before Congress is civil rights; and the fight centers around the Administration's Civil Rights Bill.

Despite its serious limitations, passage of this bill would greatly strengthen the Negro people's right

to vote and safeguard their personal security. It would give heart to the embattled southern Negro masses now planning a pilgrimage of prayer by the nation's capital. And it would advance the struggle against the Dixiecrat enemies of labor and all other democratic Americans.

The House Judiciary Committee has repeatedly allowed the Dixiecrats to delay action on this bill, and still has not reported it out for action.

The Senate Subcommittee on Civil Rights completed hearings on the bill last week, but has not yet met to consider its recommendation to the full Senate Judiciary Committee—where Chairman James O. Eastland will do all he can to kill the measure.

If this bill is not enacted before the Easter recess, it will probably be sidetracked in the rush of appropriations and other "must" legislation. And it will have to reach the floor in both houses by the end of March if it is to pass before Easter.

Here is THE question on which labor and people's organizations should center their attention during the next few days and weeks.

IN ALBANY

The legislature in Albany, due to end this session by March 29, will act on bills that reach into every worker's pocket, family and home. These include rent controls, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, disability benefits, discrimination in housing, telephone rates and other issues.

With two weeks to go, it is up to the people, in the first place, organized labor to campaign for their legislative program. Otherwise the landlords and employers

will come out on top when the smoke and oratory will have cleared away.

What are the chief issues?

1) **Rent Controls:** Tenants want rent controls continued for another two years at least after the June 1 expiration date; and a tightening of these controls as called for by the state CIO, tenants groups and others.

The GOP in Albany, which controls the legislature, wants to weaken rent controls as demanded by the powerful landlord lobby. The danger now is that they may succeed, because labor and tenants groups have not until now aroused a broad fighting movement on this stormy issue.

2) **Discrimination in Housing:** The Baker-Metcalf bill would ban bias in privately-owned housing. Such discrimination is already outlawed in public housing. This bill strikes deep at the heart of segregation in the North, the jimcrow housing setup.

The powerful real estate interests in New York, defenders of racism and segregation, are fighting this measure. The GOP wants to kill it.

Here is a crucial test for all in New York who speak with sympathy of the anti-segregation battles of the Negro people in the South.

3) **Labor's Economic Demands in Albany:** The CIO and AFL want substantial improvements in New York's relatively backward social security system—unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation and disability benefits.

Some concessions to labor's demands are being promised by the GOP and Democrats in the legislature—but the GOP, cooperating

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with an active big business lobby, is trying to tie such possible concessions to provisions which would weaken the whole social security system in the state and make it tougher for workers to get any benefits altogether.

All told, labor is bound to gain little at this session on these issues unless it mobilizes unionists to battle in Albany in the way the thousands of Indiana unionists fought a scab anti-labor law in their state.

4.) The Telephone Rates: With many workers and virtually all farmers have telephones in their homes, the move by the telephone utility to get a big boost in monthly rates strikes at every family's budget. This is a bread-and-butter issue of concern to every union and farm organization in the state. It is a battle against a private monopoly seeking to gouge the general public.

5.) The So-called Security Risk: This McCarthyite measure, enacted during the Korean war, was given another year of life last week by the Legislature. Gov. Harri-man is now being called on to veto this reactionary law by such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union, American Jewish Congress, N.Y. Post, and others.

This fight for civil liberties in our state can be won now. The Governor should be called upon to veto the measure and put an end to a disgraceful McCarthyite witch-hunt in what prides itself on being the most liberal state in the nation.

With the mayoralty elections coming up this year and the gubernatorial-state election next year, the politicians in the Legislature are especially sensitive now to public pressure.

So far, sad to say, they have felt as much heat from the landlord-employer lobbies as from labor and the peoples' organizations.

But the picture can change drastically in the homestretch. Mass labor lobbies in Albany, barrages of letters and telegrams to each State Senator and Assemblyman, delegations to the legislators at home, and other such actions can win real gains for the working people.

The fighting spirit of past years when the Left was strong in the labor - people's movement and which produced legislative results needs to be revived.

We ask all Communists and progressives to get into this legislative struggle in the next two weeks in whatever way is possible.

We call on the labor-liberal movement to take the path of mass action, the path pioneered so effectively by the Left. This is the only way to arouse the workers and all the people, to win labor's demands, beat back the landlords and employers, influence politicians, and strengthen labor as a vital public force for the general welfare.