

# The Campaign for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

By WILLIAM WEINSTONE

The announcement of Comrade Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's candidacy for City Council was made on Aug. 23 and already 500 signatures have been obtained.

Canvassers are enthusiastic about their work as letters published in the Daily Worker indicate. One canvasser by his own efforts has gotten a total of 52 during the week. Some report eight to 10 signatures in a night's work of two hours. Others less experienced reported fewer. Signatures have been obtained from all nationalities. This shows that a large number of people want an honest, militant, independent candidate in the field for City Council.

The task, however, is immense and the time is short and to ensure success all efforts must be speeded up. Three thousand signatures are required legally, but 4,000 are needed safely to put her candidacy across. This means about 1,200 a week for the remaining three weeks. A hundred canvassers a night and more on Sundays are needed. This is a big order but it has been done before and it can be done again.

The New York electoral struggle cries out for an independent candidate of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's stature and eloquence. As the appeal of the State Committee of the Communist Party said: Gurley Flynn's campaign will open up a splendid opportunity "to speak to masses on the streets, in meeting halls, over radio and television on the issues of the campaign and from the viewpoint of a communist." She will raise high the banner for peace, for stopping the H-bomb tests and for outlawing nuclear weapons and for elevating the rights and living conditions of the people of her severely exploited district and of the city as a whole.

The many needs of the community, cited in her open letter as well as the issues of graft and corruption in the city, the shameful witchhunt in municipal government, tied in with the fight for peace, civil rights and democracy, will be the vital issues which Gurley Flynn will fight for.

"It is my belief," she said, "that only by uniting against the horrors of the H-bomb can America move forward to a better tomorrow. That tomorrow in my judgment is socialism." Thus clearly and fearlessly presenting the peoples demands, fighting for unity of labor and the Negro and Puerto Rican people against the monopolists and exploiting real estate sharks and bankers, destroying the tissue of lies about Communism, Comrade Flynn's campaign will aid the peoples movements and coalitions, while advancing the rights and legality of the Communist Party and enlightening the people of the need for a new social order.

While non-Communists sup-

A special all-day Sunday mobilization of canvassers to circulate the petition to place Elizabeth Gurley Flynn on the November ballot in the City Council race was announced yesterday by the Flynn campaign committee.

Evelyn Wiener and Dr. Alfred E. Blumberg, co-chairmen of the committee, said it expected 200 canvassers to report at Flynn headquarters, 15 Second Ave., Sunday to move the signature campaign into high gear. The headquarters will be open from 10 a.m.

The New York County Committee of the Communist Party said it had set a goal of 90 canvassers from the organization. Brooklyn had been asked to come through with 50, Bronx and Queens with 50 apiece in addition to a good turnout of industrial workers,

port Comrade Flynn's candidacy the main burden of the campaign falls on the party members. All party organizations throughout the city must be involved in the campaign and immediately. This is a task which the Manhattan organization alone cannot fulfill. It needs the vigorous aid of Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and of many comrades in industry as well as the community. Every available member and sympathizer should be drawn into this fight no matter where he or she lives. Not only must promises be secured for canvassing but results must be achieved by a day-to-day checkup. Cars must be organized and people brought to the headquarters—15 Second Avenue—Room 104. No leader of a section or a club must come alone. They must come down with others. Making certain nights and Sundays special days for mobilization is alright but it is important to ensure a continuous flow of canvassers.

There are many enterprising, self-sacrificing comrades who can organize and bring down groups of people for canvassing. Such individuals should be sought out and urged to act. This is the kind of support that election struggles require because reactionaries give very little time for independents to get on the ballot. Without intense effort and sacrifice it is impossible these hard days to gain results.

The Party has discussed the campaign and has given Comrade Flynn's candidacy full support. Not only the State Committee but also a membership conference of the Manhattan organization has voted endorsement. Brooklyn, Queens and Bronx County Committees have also voted endorsement. Those members who may not agree with this campaign should nevertheless understand that it is their duty to participate in signature getting. In fact there are such comrades active in the campaign, some of whom as a result of their experience have modified their views and in general find this work rewarding. While an overwhelming majority has endorsed the launching of Flynn's candidacy, there have been some doubts and opposition regarding it. What are some of these?

First, that we cannot get the necessary signatures for Communist candidates. This is being effectively answered by the people themselves. In a sense this argument reflects old ways of thinking and a certain defeatism due

to the long period of repression. Of course, repression has had and still has its effects but the fact is that the response of the people in the campaign is better than in past campaigns. Many people, particularly the workers in this bitterly oppressed district want to know the views of the Communists and even where they disagree, favor a democratic hearing for them.

A second argument is that the Flynn campaign will detract from the mass work of the party. But this is wrong. The campaign is itself an important piece of mass work. Visiting about 30,000 people, talking with them on the issues, distributing leaflets, is this not mass work?

The Flynn campaign is of course not the sole activity of the Party in the electoral struggle. It is an integral part of an over-all program of action described in Albert Blumberg's article in the Daily Worker of Aug. 29. This includes among other tasks helping develop councilmanic coalitions in support of local progressives and especially Negro and Puerto Rican candidates. The Flynn campaign will benefit these coalition movements first by the stirring up of the Party for activity which it is doing, and secondly in consequence of Comrade Flynn's campaign, spurring independent candidates to place issues more sharply before the electorate.

A third and most important argument is that the campaign for an independent Communist candidate is in conflict with mass coalition policies. But why should this be so? Under present circumstances militants are not expected to seek union endorsements of Flynn's candidacy but many can give great help in other ways. The campaign will however help the militants whose main concern is to develop independent activity of unions and people's organizations on issues and candidates in the campaign.

Let's face certain facts: There is a growing disgust in the ranks of the Negro and Puerto Rican people with the Republican and Democratic Party for their failure to meet their needs. This must be vigorously expressed in the elections, and in the context of the present situation can be done through Flynn's candidacy. Also, as Blumberg wrote in his election article, "the labor movement does not give an independent lead" in the electoral struggle. He further wrote there is a great gap between the popular movements on the issues of

the H-Bomb, civil liberties and the like and the existing political alignments which retards the winning of these issues. To close this gap and to stimulate labor into independent action, it is necessary to explain political developments and class relations and to bring the issues in all possible ways to the people.

In this election it is essential to expose the extreme reactionary character of Christenberry, his program and backers. It is also necessary sharply to criticize the Wagner administration for its failures on many issues, for graft and corruption in the Democratic Party, for reactionary witchhunts, and other undemocratic actions. And on this basis to show why labor must act far more independently from the capitalists, why more labor candidates must be put forward in the future, why there should be unity of all popular forces and of labor and the Negro and Puerto Rican people around candidates' demands, etc. The Flynn campaign will do it, reaching large numbers of people, many of whom belong to unions and people's organizations.

Of course, militant trade unionists can do these things, too, but it would be folly to think that the job will be done only in that way, and that it does not require the independent public activities

of the party. After all, the workers are subjected to the bombardment of the capitalist press on issues and candidates as well as by capitalist-minded union officials. Militant trade unionists are also hampered by the bureaucratic conditions in labor which do not yet permit full and free discussion of politics, and by the fact that large numbers of workers do not attend meetings.

The independent activity of the Communist Party both in relation to immediate issues as well as socialist perspectives is absolutely essential therefore if the political level of the labor and people's movements is to be raised and if left and socialist-minded workers are to become an increasingly influential force in the labor and people's movements. And what better way to do it than during an electoral struggle when the political parties contend for votes, when the masses are more interested in politics, and when opportunities ordinarily closed to the Communists to speak to the masses on the questions of the day and socialism are opened a little. It would be short-sightedness to neglect such opportunities. What better way is there to advance these aims than through the candidacy of such a veteran campaigner like Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

## SPEAK YOUR PIECE

### Three Books On Hungary

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have recently completed a reading of three books on the thorny "Hungarian Question," which I would like to share with your readers.

Peter Fryer's "Hungarian Tragedy," Herbert Aptheker's "Truth About Hungary" and the "Memoirs of Michael Karolyi," make up a diversified trilogy.

Fryer's book gives one the impression of an honest person caught in the midst of a popular upheaval, who became so carried away and emotionally involved that he lost perspective and political judgment. There is no doubt as to the integrity or honesty of this work by the Hungarian correspondent of the London Daily Worker, who was subsequently expelled from the English CP.

Aptheker's work is a scholarly, well documented study which attempts to explain the events of October, 1956 in terms of the historical background.

The key to both the above works however, lies in a reading of what is neither an attack nor an apology; Count Karolyi's Memoirs. Though written in 1954 and published in 1956 with a reactionary introduction and blurb on the cover, this work provides a clearer insight into the ingredients that make up the explosion of less than a year ago.

Karolyi describes, without ran-

cor or bitterness, some of the same things Fryer cannot grasp historically and that Aptheker even with his forthright honest acknowledgment seems to dismiss; namely such things as; the degeneration of the Hungarian CP through the influx of ex-fascists and careerists, the subordination of Hungarian to Soviet interests, and the development of a terror regime overlaid upon a nation still quite feudal.

These three volumes read well together. But of all three, Karolyi's autobiography reads best and does more to convince one of the position Aptheker takes, for they clothe his cold scholarship with the flesh of individualized experience, which is understandable.

The question still left unanswered are: What is to prevent the same degeneration from taking place again? Are concepts like "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," "Monolithic unity" and "Democratic Centralism" valid for a socialist nation or party in 1957?—FRANCIS.

