

WORKING WOMEN AND THE PRESENT ELECTION DRIVE

By ROSE WORTIS

With the approach of the elections we see the familiar spectacle of the capitalist parties mobilizing their various women's organizations; the League For Women Voters, Daughters of the American Revolution, and all other reactionary vote-catching organizations to line up the support of the working women for the parties of their class enemies.

The fake investigation campaigns into the food racketeering instituted by the same politicians who are the main beneficiaries of the graft and corruption are intended to mislead the working women and to create the illusion that by supporting one or the other of these parties their problems will be solved. The graft investigations, however, prove that both Republicans and Democratic parties have shared equally in the graft.

The Democratic politician, Healy, and the Republican politician, Keller, both received handsome sums from the publishing companies for selecting trash text books on which to feed the children of the working class. The Democratic and Republican inspectors alike close their eyes to the violation of the 48-hour laws, tenement inspection, etc., for a few dollars graft. The Socialist Party regretfully looks on to see the other parties getting the lions share of the graft while it must limit itself to graft in the Labor organizations.

As the campaign develops we read in the newspapers of housewarming parties for women voters. Women politicians are sent down to the poor neighborhoods to show their concern and seeming sympathy for the welfare of the working women. The fake slogan of the Hoover campaign, "a chicken in every pot," which has actually meant unemployment and starvation or the workers is now being repeated in another form. The capitalist slogans of 1930 hold no greater promise for working women than the slogans of the 1928 campaign.

What are the actual problems facing the working women and which of the parties can help the working women to solve these problems?

How Hard Times Burden Working Women.

This is the question that every woman must ask herself.

The United States census of 1930 shows that thirty-three million women have to do some sort of work in order to earn a livelihood. Ten million are engaged in various industries and twenty-three million as housewives. The miserable conditions under which the women in industry are compelled to work are shown in the report of the U. S. Labor Department of 1928. According to this report the wages of women workers are half to one-fourth lower than men workers. Sixty percent of women workers in all industries receive less than \$14 a week and 45 percent less than \$10 a week. The 48 hour law which exists on the statute books is practically abolished. Women are working ten and twelve hours a day, overtime, and night work. They work in dirty workrooms under insanitary conditions. Cellars, which are cold and damp in the spring and excessively hot from boilers in the winter, are used as work rooms. They work with artificial light under a terrific speed-up system. Working under such conditions we find an ever greater increase of accidents, disease, and permanent disability amongst working women. Fifteen percent of all cases that went before the Compensation Board in 1929 were women workers, a large number of them were permanently disabled.

These were the conditions of working women during the years of 1928-29. With the sharpening of the crisis the conditions of the working women become even worse. Since most women are concentrated in the irregular, unskilled, and highly seasonal industries and the percentage of women on the reserve army of unemployed is larger than that of men workers, the increase of unemployment gen-

erally has greatly affected working women. In some industries such as the textile industry in the South, 40 percent are entirely unemployed, the others working two and three days a week. For the first time in the history of this city do we find working women, many with children in their arms applying to the city lodging houses for a night's rest.

While the suffering amongst the workers, particularly the working women, is becoming more acute, tons of food are being dumped into the river and the prices of food are increasing.

These are the problems confronting the working women in the present election campaign. On the basis of these issues, every woman must decide to which of the political parties she must give her support. The capitalists who talk about the sanctity of womanhood and motherhood do not hesitate to compel the women workers to slave for them 70 hours a week for starvation wages. They are successfully disregarding the meagre protective laws that exist in the state for working women. They are indignant over the fact that women at the city unemployment agency refused to accept jobs at \$6.00 a week.

The record of the Socialist Party with regard to working women is in no way better than that of the capitalist parties. In all the struggles of the working women for better conditions in New York City and elsewhere the Socialist Party and its supporters in the ranks of the A. F. of L. have openly betrayed the working women, acting as strike breakers. In the strikes of the dressmakers and millinery workers' of New York City, in the strikes of the textile workers, the Socialists acted as the agents of the bosses, resorting to injunctions and imprisonment for working class women. Surely the working women who struggle to improve their conditions by organizing into the militant unions cannot give their support on election day to their class enemies every day.

The Communist Party comes to the working women not only on election day but in the every day struggles in the shops and factories, in the strikes and on the picket line. The Communist Party supports the working women in the struggle against the bosses and the fascist bureaucrats who have for years pursued the policy of discrimination against working women and have sold out their interests to the bosses in order to get some slight concessions for the privileged few skilled workers. In the present election campaign the Communist Party has come forth with a program which deals with the vital issues of the working class as a whole and the working women in particular. The Communist Party fights for equal pay for equal work, 7-hour, 5-day week, no discrimination on account of race, unemployment and maternity insurance, protective legislation for women workers.

It is the duty of every working woman whether in industry or in the home to give her support to the Communist Party, the leader of the working class. It is the duty of every workingclass woman to bring the issues of the present campaign into the shops and factories, into the housewives and fraternal organizations, and to help line up a vote for the Communist Party which will indicate the awakening of the working women to their class interests.

The working women of Germany in the recent election have supported the Communist Party in thousands. The working women of New York City and the whole U. S., inspired by the examples of our comrades in Berlin, must cast their votes for the Communist Party. Working women are called upon to send their delegates to the Working Women's Communist Election Campaign Conference Saturday, September 20, 2 P. M. at Irving Plaza.