

Pro-Political Action Wins in Mexico

NOTE:—This is the fourth and concluding article in the series on the Second National Convention of the Mexican Communist Party:

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MEXICO CITY.—The big struggle of the Second National Convention of the Mexican Communist Party began when a member of the national executive moved the approval of a resolution on participation in the forthcoming municipal elections. He opened the debate by reading the theses of the Communist International on the subject.

This "voice of the International" died away, and there is silence, painful, hostile. Everyone waits. Finally, Manuel Ramirez, secretary of the Party, rises and begins the most brilliant speech of the convention. He is obviously an outstanding figure. He draws examples from the history of Argentina, Brazil and Chile; from England, Germany, Russia. He speaks of "historical facts that we cannot destroy by a mere cloud of words."

"This country has been the scene of a series of inspirations, intermittent, but ever possible and often present, from 1821 to 1910. Governments were not elected into office but insurrected into office. Elections had little significance, often did not occur. But conditions here have changed since 1910 and the party has condemned itself to stagnation because it has not perceived this and adapted its tactics to changed conditions."

He speaks clearly, intensely, brilliantly and with relentless logic and his face seems more Indian than ever under the stress of his thinking. He speaks without notes, yet never drops a link in the chain of his thought. He takes the wind out of the sails of the opposition and steals its thunder by branding in scaring phrases the parliamentarism of careerists of the labor movement.

He gives ten measures whereby the party can prevent careerism and assure itself that the conduct of its parliamentary fraction be revolutionary and not bourgeois. These are: (1) Inspection by the central committee of the personnel of local nominations; (2) Responsibility of elected officials and nominees to the central committee; (3) Full power of the committee to set aside local nominations; (4) Be ruthless with careerists. Choose not "experienced parliamentarians" who tend to form a professional bureaucracy in the labor movement. Choose rather workers without parliamentary experience so long as they be trusted fighters of proved ability and courage and long experience in the labor movement; (5) Limit their salaries to a workers' wage; (6) The Central Committee must control the parliamentary fraction, instruct it, be represented in its caucuses, prepare with it, its debates on vital issues, select its spokesmen, define its attitudes; (7) Every candidate must render a signed resignation in advance of the campaign which the central committee may use at any time after he is in office to force his resignation from office; (8) Work within parliament must be subordinated to vital mass issues outside of parliament. Elected officials must never lose contact with masses; (9) They are not legislators and statesmen but workers' representatives inside an institution which serves the enemy, which they must



M. LORENZO, Member of the Central Executive Committee, Mexican Communist Party

show up, and which the workers will eventually destroy; (10) Let the fraction be small so long as it be dependable, rather than large and wavering.

"There is only one Communist in the British House of Commons, but the whole country rang with the audacity of his attack on the throne in answer to the address of the crown. Even the labor delegation was stirred. He denounced the throne altho it was high treason, because that was his mission. It was not his mission to keep within the law, regard himself as a statesman, receive his salary and give alms from it to the party."

Long silence follows his speech. The opposition finds itself robbed of its thunder. When its leader rises to the attack, he is weak, uncertain and a bit awed. Young Carrillo of the Communist Youth follows with a clever speech outlining the disastrous results of non-participation in elections with well-selected examples from recent local history in various states. "Our comrades believed that the masses yearned for a political party that was anti-parliamentary," he challenged. "They believed that by abstention we would conquer mass support. We have not. The experiment of conquest of mass support thru abstention has been tried and has failed. Let us abandon our unsuccessful tactic."

All that day and all the next, the debate goes on pro and con. Slowly it changes its character from a debate to a school room lesson. When the vote is taken it is **UNANIMOUS!** Every delegate has been educated to the viewpoint of the National Executive and the anti-parliamentary period of the Communist Party of Mexico is at an end.

The convention draws near to a close. It is the last day, Sunday. The week's labors are ended. The new committee is elected. Among the new names is that of Mexico's leading artist, Diego Rivera. Lorenzo, the bearded "philosopher", and Ramirez, the canny secretary are re-elected to the new committee.

At Sunday noon they sing the International and adjourn to a dinner given in their honor. The dinner is followed by sweet, melancholy Mexican songs. Then come exhibitions of Indian and Mexican dancing. Ragged workers come in their ragged Sunday best—some barefoot, some sockless and sandaled, some in native Indian costume with long serapis or blankets of many colors wrapped around them—squalor, misery and hope.

Follows the cheering—the inevitable "long live's" or yivas. Once more the International is sung, and the convention is over.

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