

# Kavanagh Explains Reason for Formation of Workers' Party

## Big Crowd Turns Out to Initial Meeting at the Colonial—Organization and Resistance on Part of Workers Essential in Class Struggle

THE "raison d'etre" of the new Workers' Party was set forth by Comrade Kavanagh in an hour's talk to a large audience at the Colonial Theatre on Sunday evening. The interest felt in the new departure was evidenced not only by the full attendance and the individual attention of those present, but also by the number and variety of the questions put to, and dealt with by, the speaker, during the second hour of the meeting. Comrade Bennett acted as chairman.

An announcement that the theatre was to have been used for an address by a professor of psychology gave Kavanagh occasion to remark on the extent to which psychology was utilized in the tactics of the ruling class, the obvious intent at the present time being to create a psychology of non-resistance to wage reductions, etc., and the idea that it is possible after all for the lion to lie down with the lamb.

The wiping out of autocracy in Russia in 1917 was universally applauded, but a different situation arose with the November revolution, the wiping out of the ruling class control by the workers, and the institution of their own control. The general discontent was emphasized after the Armistice and the Peace Treaty (which brought no peace); and it came at a time when capitalism was shaken, credit was shattered, and the whole world markets were destroyed.

### Terroristic Methods

The capitalist rulers greatly feared that their tenure of office was of short duration, and they commenced to institute terroristic methods—notably in Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Austria. In each instance they were aided and abetted by the social democrats, etc., of the Second International type. In every country outside Russia the workers were repelled. Organizations of White Guards indulged in activities with which the alleged atrocities of the Germans

ent there had always been White Guards; and now the American capitalists, owing to the fear created in their minds by the discontented working class, commenced repressive measures to track down the spirit of the workers and destroy the vitality of any organization of the working class. Enforced strikes that were really lockouts, Red raids, and prison sentences greater than were ever meted out in Russia under the Czar, were outstanding features in the greatest of all democracies. In this country the workers had not yet had to suffer from the same hysteria, because they came of a common stock which had resisted encroachments heretofore in the land from which it came.

### Unemployment

There had been unemployment before as widespread, but never as

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## UNEMPLOYED GET INFORMATION

### Rates of Relief for Married Men Are Explained

Many matters, from the price of eggs to missing letters, were discussed at the unemployed meeting held last Sunday in the Fender hall. The discussion of the price of eggs came up owing to the city relief officer setting his price on these edibles when handing out relief, and it was claimed that his price was greater than that charged in the stores.

The secretary informed the meeting, that a letter addressed to her found in Ireland's office, and it was also reported that a similar situation had arisen the year before. It was decided that a committee be appointed to see the postmaster, and ask for an explanation.

deeds committed in Hungary which could hardly be put in print. The Fascists in Italy were of the same class of would-be saviors.

On the North American contin-

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permanent, as today. Today there were no new markets to open—except another war market. The speaker noted that Japan was "stocking up," as never before, things that could be used as war munitions. "Japan is preparing to make secure her control of Siberia."

"How is unemployment being handled?" the speaker asked. At Hastings Park the standard of living was \$6.10 per week—away below the standard of government figures and the standard of last year. Yet labor organizations remained silent and took no action. In face of the serious menace to the general standard of living, they failed to realize the principle at stake.

"Men who fought for their country—now getting \$6.10 in one of their country's bull-pens! One can understand starvation in Russia, where there is famine; but there is no famine in this country. In some states they are burning their corn; yet there are people starving and dying in need of that very corn. This is capitalism! In one country not enough food; people starving because of the criminal negligence of the working class of the outside world. (Applause.) But here we starve because there is too much!"

## Broke from Old Party

With both the farmer and the industrial sections thus helpless "in the grip of the financial interests which govern this North American continent," said Kavanagh, "we broke from the old party and commenced to found this." For years past it had done useful and valuable work along educational lines; there was no doubt about that. But now, with international capital against an international working class, they were bent on organizing that working class to resist further encroachments in the meantime and eventually to take over the machinery of production and operate it for the common benefit.

Against the Red International of Moscow, the Black International of Washington could have no chance. There had been other Internationals. The Second International went to pieces in 1914. Then there was the Two-and-a-Half Party (the Third International (Comintern), claiming to represent the interests of the working class. We are either with the Third, or with the

Second and the Two-and-a-Half; there can be no neutral position."

"Then why not form a Communist Party? Because we don't know yet whether it is legal or not. We are obliged to keep within the law. We recognize power when we see it."

**In Line With Third**

"But we are in line with the terms of affiliation with the Third International—to take part at all times in the class struggle. How can we function as a working-class party if we refuse to go to the bat against encroachments?"

Organized even on the old lines, the worker had a better resisting power than unorganized, "but not so good as if those men understood more as to where they belonged." Those who saw room for "a party which could be able to show some front against the tactics of the ruling class" could stay with the older school no longer; it carried on its educational work, but did not organize; and they had broken away so that they could "start on that work without any restrictions."

"North America not being Russia, their methods are not necessarily ours," said Kavanagh. "But while we may not be able to line up with them, owing to the laws of the country in which we live, we can follow in suit with the programme they have outlined."

The speaker noted as an example of "the economic knowledge of our masters," how, with millions already out of employment, they were proceeding to "curtail the market by reducing the purchasing power of the working class," the demands of the market being determined, not by the needs of the people, but by their purchasing power.

In Russia, Germany, Poland, etc., there was pitiable need, but no power to buy—and so no market. It was a situation where the social life of mankind was being slowly but surely threatened. There was not only a possible, but a very probable, danger that humanity itself may be snuffed out—unless there is another war market or the working class takes over the power of state and the machinery of production.

**Must Resist**

"The problem can only be solved by a working class organized for that purpose. In the meantime they have got to resist reductions in the standard of living which would put them in such a position that they would lose every vestige of resistance."

In every country the army was always the best fed. "Well-fed men are fighting men. Ill-fed men have lost their fighting spirit." Men who were heroes in France had nothing heroic about them here, after being subject for a time to a course of deprivation. By such means the ruling class was slowly but surely creating a PSYCHOLOGY OF FEAR in the minds of the working class.

The press was criticized to the same end. In Russia, Ireland, or any place where the workers had taken over a factory or the like, the press heralded its failure. It was all "to give you a little idea that you are inefficient without their control." The workers had got to combat that.

The working class meant not only the pick-and-shovel men and the like, but the technicians as well—producers, overseers, managers and operators generally. But the technicians thought they were of a different class. Those regularly employed, too, had a concept that there was not much unemployment and that it was easy to get a job any time. Thus there was a psychology of indifference.

"These concepts have got to be broken down. We have got to break down their caste system. We have got to unify their concepts and give them one concept, so that they can at least be brought to the position where they will be prepared to fight rather than accept reductions. It's better to fight and starve than starve and never fight at all."

Emphatic applause followed the speaker's closing sentence, and Editor A. S. Wells, of the B. C. Federationist, then took the platform for a few moments to put in an urgent plea on the paper's behalf.

"There are enough of you here to put us where we don't need to ask help of anybody else," he said. "The bunk in the daily press is one of the greatest obstacles to working class emancipation. If we can break down that psychology, we have accomplished a lot."

The questions from the audience with Kavanagh's replies, cannot be adequately dealt with here owing to lack of space.