

They Knock on Every Door on the East Side

By PHILLIP BONOFSKY

DOWN ON Second Avenue, 15 Second Ave., in a room well-known to all of us from no matter what town or state who have fought in struggles where the only thing missing was money, members of the Communist Party, friends, and perhaps even foes, are working.

They are working hard. And everyone who knows that work means life will find a lot of life here. The buzzards who sit on the limb waiting for the death, the undertakers cooling their heels in the parlor, the crepe-hangers, and those too who ran as from a sinking ship—all these who gamble on a funeral for the Communist Party are losing their gamble here.

For the men and women raining knocks on doors all over the East Side are determined to put Elizabeth Gurley Flynn on the ballot. And Elizabeth Gurley Flynn is a Communist, and she is very much alive!

★
I'VE SPENT HOURS talking to canvassers. I've talked to canvassers before, in other campaigns. But there is something entirely different in this case! And in that difference lies the key to the future revitalization of the Communist Party in this city.

Whatever else anyone might have said in the past year, it would have been a calamity of a profound order if the only party that holds up to the workers everywhere the hope that one day they will be rid of the huge burden of capitalism, had collapsed.

And those men and women living in slums, or struggling so desperately to meet the high cost of living, or suffering from discrimination—those who suffer most in this city welcome the evidence that the Communist Party is not only alive but hard at work. The Communist Party has materialized in the steady knocking on doors all over the East Side, it has come into focus again in the shape of men and women speaking quietly and modestly to workers—Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jewish, Italians, Chinese—explaining to them how Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a member of the national committee of the Communist Party and candidate for City Council on the People's Rights Party ticket, will fight in City Hall. These men and women who enter homes where only the rent-collectors, or the mice and cockroaches go, are regaining the ear of the workers, and are reforging bonds in the only way in which these bonds can be forged: directly, in the flesh, by actual contact.

★
CANVASSERS WHO come back from a night's knocking on doors bring words of cheer with them. Sober words, but still of vast encouragement. They say, for instance, that the only fear there is is fear itself. For the obstacle that exists lies within the Communist Party itself. Not outside.

The people are there ready to



ELIZABETH FLYNN

sign. Those who projected upon the ordinary people their own inner political struggles have miscalculated. For the people on the East Side are not demanding an opinion on Tito or Stalin; but: what about housing? What about discrimination? What about the struggle against the high cost of living? And every Marxist who is worthy of the name knows that underneath all other matters, this is the bedrock of their reality.

Struggle, Marx said, is the one-word description of life. And struggle cannot be destroyed, and it alone cures all ills, and removes all obstacles. Stagnation, skepticism, or cynicism is a poison that only corrodes the human soul.

Not only do I believe that Gurley Flynn will get on the ballot. I believe further that if she conducts a bare-knuckles campaign, an impolite, truth-telling, Marcantonio-type campaign, she will get to the people of the East Side, whose minds are owned by nobody!

If Elizabeth throws away the book, and wages an uninhibited, no-holds-bar-red campaign; if she goes to the people of the East Side and passionately puts forward their hopes and aspirations for a better life—they will listen to her, and they will believe her.

★
AND SHE possesses all the necessary guarantees that she will fight for them, and them only. The very fact that she just finished a jail sentence strikes many who are told why she was jailed with great force. And they take this loyalty to her ideas as sure proof that Elizabeth Gurley Flynn will stick to her pledged word to them.

So canvassers proudly reveal Elizabeth's jailing, and why. They point out that she will fight for better housing, better wages, against HCL, for Puerto Rican rights, and, unlike certain past politicians, including a famous mayor, will not be hanging around waiting for an envelope stuffed with dollars to be placed somewhere where she can put