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THE WESTERN SOCIALIST

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE FOR SOCIALISM! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS

VOL. 27 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS No. 216

THE CHURCH AND THE ELECTION

Should an adherent of the Catholic Church be elected president of the United States? Can a Roman Catholic conduct his political affairs completely independent of the politics of the Vatican? Would the Catholic hierarchy adopt a hands-off policy toward a Catholic president of the United States or would it attempt to exercise an influence over such an individual and thus mould American policy to conform with its own, not necessarily identical, interests? Will Catholics vote as a bloc for a candidate simply because he is a Catholic? — These are some of the questions which are being presented to the working class of America in this election year of 1960.

A FEW QUESTIONS

Inasmuch as the questioning season is upon us we would like to ask a few of our own. Are these issues really important to the workers? Is the religion of an American president of any real concern to those who possess no propertied interests? Is the religion of those who appropriate the surplus value in this country — the employers — of any great consequence to those who get legally robbed? It is our contention that the raising of such issues serves but to deepen the smokescreen which hides from view the real problems and helps to prevent the workers from recognizing the only worthwhile activity they can engage in, the organization for the abolition of capitalism and the introduction of socialism. There could be no disunity among religions on a question of this type. It is a foregone conclusion that the warring sects and denominations would close ranks and fight as one against such a "frightful" prospect.

But the debate continues and everybody seems to be joining in the argument. The Catholic hierarchy, on the one hand, is making all-out efforts to disassociate itself from the presidential race. A recent, ill-timed statement on the subject by "Osservatore Romano", the Vatican newspaper, pointed out the inter-relationship between Catholic religious ideology and the political theories and decisions of Catholic politicians. This statement was hurriedly qualified, however, by the Vatican authorities and was declared to have no reference to American politics. Statements in official Catholic sources in this country such as the Catholic Almanac for 1960, leave no doubt that the Church hierarchy **professes** a totally hands-off policy, and the Catholic candidate also categorically denies that he could be influenced by religious authorities in his political decisions.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

On the other hand, anti-Catholic religious groups continue to argue against the support of a Catholic for president of the United States and they continue to spread the specter of an America run by the Pope. In this regard it has been truly said that "politics makes strange bedfellows"