

One Year of Roosevelt's New Deal

The Technique of Serving the Exploiters and Fooling the Masses.

The Demagogy of Roosevelt Program
On the first anniversary of the New Deal four thousand gentlemen in control of industry and finance gathered in Washington to be harangued and enjoined. "We must consider immediate cooperation to secure increase in wages and shortening of hours," said President Roosevelt. Verily, that must have been spoken entirely in defense of the forgotten man—at least so it appeared.

Before the same gathering General Johnson argued against the company union. But he made his reasons perfectly clear. "We know," he said, "something about what is toward in this country—the worst epidemic of strikes in our history... I would rather deal with Bill Green, John Lewis, Ed McGrady, Mike McDonough, George Berry, and a host of others I could name, than with any Frankenstein that you may build up under the guise of a company union."

"In fact—take it from me and a wealth of experience—your interests are your interests and under the law and in this modern day, it is the best and quickest way to economic peace."

Fear Collapse of System
That is the rub. Essentially these statements are all motivated by the fear of decay and collapse of the capitalist system. They mean to convey the idea that it is time to do some serious patching of the kind which will reinforce its basis, consolidate its most essential parts and strengthen its whole structure. This, at times, can be accomplished most effectively by means of apparent concessions, presented in the terms of glamorous demagogy. Keep the workers at a level where they can endure exploitation without too convulsive revolts. Work closely hand in hand with your agents in labor ranks, the respectable labor leaders, and discard your company unions lest you actually pave the way for new and more serious strikes and for militant unions. Such was the real character of these admonishments.

To say bluntly that these statements are motivated by fear of the decay and collapse of the capitalist system may seem entirely unsubstantiated. Are not the authors of the New Deal enjoying the confidence of the vast majority of people from all walks of life? Is not the President still extremely popular even in the humblest of working class homes? Does he not seem to represent their fears and their desperate hopes? Undoubtedly this must all be answered in the affirmative. But it does not in the least settle the question of what the New Deal is, for whose benefit it operates, and the motivation behind it.

The Ballyhoo Technique
One of its brilliant critics has said that it is suggestive of an advertisement on a rocking horse, that it is unreal, and that it does not remove the causes of "social injustice". Standing alone, that is of course not sufficient as a characterization. The New Deal is not intended to remove the causes of "social injustice". Only the successful conclusion of the class struggle can remove this. And here is the important question: What does the New Deal mean to the workers? To understand this it must be examined in its economic aspect, from the point of view of its function in social and class relationships, as well as from the point of view of its ballyhoo and demagogy, expressed both in words and action, which is intended to maintain illusions in the workers' minds. Each one of these aspects requires separate treatment. In this article we confine ourselves to the demagogic aspect, leaving the others to subsequent articles.

While the New Deal machinery creaks and groans as it is put into motion, there is a certain revolutionary flare attached to its basic philosophy. It is acclaimed by some as "a new social order", by others as "disciplined democracy". President Roosevelt calls it "an economic constitutional order". It has even elevated to a basis of respectability the method of abbreviation of names by initials, formerly considered to belong only to the Bolsheviks. We have now the NRA, the AAA, the PWA, etc. An ingenious middle-class mind has suggested the addition of a tax-payer's SOS.

Not a "Revolution"
Donald Richberg, the counsel for the New Deal, says that it is "a revolution in its purpose but in method." Such statements are intended to catch the gullible worker, disoriented with things as they are. The New Deal could, of course, not be a revolution in purpose, a revolution which does away with capitalist property rights and the power of exploitation. This is the only revolution which means something to the workers. Such a revolution is not engineered by the capitalist rulers themselves. They are its bitter opponents. Nor do revolutions come about peacefully. Those in possession of the capitalist property rights and the powers of

exploitation do not yield them without a struggle.
President Roosevelt declares that social conditions had previously been permitted which allowed vast sections of the population to exist in an un-American way, which allowed a maldistribution of wealth and of power. In his book "Looking Forward", he says: "I believe that the government, without becoming a prying bureaucracy, can act as a check or counter-balance of this oligarchy (the few hundred corporations and fewer than three dozen banks which control our economic life) so as to secure initiative, life, a chance to work, and the safety of savings to men and women, rather than the safety of exploitation to the exploiter, safety of manipulation to the manipulator, safety of unlicensed power to those who would speculate to the bitter end with the welfare and property of other people."

Wall Street Not Really Disturbed
And so we have the New Deal, supposed to check and counter-balance the oligarchy. Moreover, has not Wall Street been investigated? Was not a whole section of this crew of capitalist pirates headed by J. P. Morgan summoned to appear before a senate investigation committee and tell why they had evaded tax payments to the government? That is perfectly true. But it is one thing to investigate Wall Street and dress the investigations up in radical sounding demagogy in order to catch the uninitiated. It would be quite another thing to attempt to dislodge Wall Street from its economic power.

This, of course, is not at all intended by the investigations. On the contrary, we shall be able to prove that in every respect Wall Street has been strengthened, and its power and all it stands for has been consolidated, by the advent of the New Deal. President Roosevelt said in his anniversary address: "No one is opposed to sensible and reasonable profits." This means that profits are to be rationalized. In other words, the right of exploitation is to be stabilized on a basis which will insure it against too violent disturbances and shocks.

The Big Interests and the Codes
We are not unmindful of the fact that the big fellows, the steel trust, the automobile corporations, and others like them, resisted the industrial codes of the New Deal. But they resisted them in order to obtain the modifications they desired, to insert their company union clauses and merit system clauses, by which they could more securely maintain their power of exploitation and prevent counter-action by the workers. Even now the apparent pressure put upon them to give up their company unions presents the substitute of reliance upon their own agents in labor's ranks—the Greens, the Lewises, and the Berrys—as a more effective means of keeping the masses in subjection.

On the whole the demagogy woven around the New Deal policy has a distinct purpose. It is under its cover that the real measures to salvage the badly dislocated capitalist system of production are being put over. In the make-up of this policy and amongst its executors, including the "brain-trust", there is very likely a mixture of various currents. One of them is made up by the traditional radical liberalism which becomes so indignant at the effects of "social injustice" when they fear that this may bring retaliation from the workers, but fight might and main against the abolition of its causes. They believe in the soundness of capitalist economy, but want to save it from the few "bad" and "greedy" men who have brought it out of gear. But another, and far more important one, is the hard-headed current of aggressive capitalism, of ruthless capitalist expansion ready to crush all opposition which stands in the way of a greater capitalist empire. That is the current which, in the final analysis, determines the policies of the New Deal. In this sense its main features are of a permanent character and will count in the shaping of the future economic developments. But as the realities of life remove its demagogic smoke-screen, the working masses will become entirely disillusioned. That process began already during the first year of the New Deal.

—ARNE SWABECK.

Discussion Article

On the Resolution of the National Youth Committee

The thesis of the National Youth Committee contains the formulation: "It is essential in the education and propaganda of the Spartacus Youth Clubs and Young Spartacus, American revolutionary traditions, bourgeois and working-class, play a predominant role." It is my opinion that this formulation is confusing right from the start, and serves only as a hindrance to the education of the youth. My reference is particularly to the phrase, "bourgeois revolutionary traditions."

One encounters these days many references to these "bourgeois revolutionary traditions". Demagogues and reformists of all shades exhort the misery-stricken workers and farmers to find salvation by following the footsteps of their "revolutionary forefathers", the Madisons, Adamsses, Jeffersons and Company. They lay claim to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the American flag itself. "All this", they say, "belongs to the American people. This is what they understand." Away with the imported Marxism of the Reds. There is a rich experience of late with this sort of stuff, what with the latest "Continental Congress", and the flag waving at unemployment and trade union conferences. Because of this, it seems to me, our thesis should strive more than ever to explode, with the weapons of Marxism, this spurious Americanism for the American working class.

Liberal Phraseology
The liberal phraseology of the Jeffersons and Madisons is essentially the same as the Liberal phraseology of the Roosevelts. Just as Roosevelt, in the interests of bourgeois private property, deludes the masses with words, and tries to cover up the class struggle, so the Madisons and Jeffersons, in their time, acted in a similar manner, the difference being that at the time of the Madisons and Jeffersons, these demagogues had a progressive role to perform. The fight for independence from England was a progressive fight. But what is even more important for the proletariat of today to remember is that it was the artisan and farmer who in the main formed the fighting forces of the Revolution, and tried to make of it a social revolution. The aim of even the most extreme bourgeois revolutionists were linked up with the institution of private property, which institution, of course, it is the aim of the proletarian revolutionary to overthrow.

private property was a progressive step historically as compared with feudal private property. But when the bourgeoisie try to put the word, anis, on human history, now that their aims are realized; when the bourgeoisie calls the proletariat who try to go one step further and totally abolish private property "the coarse rabble", it is the Marxists who beg to remind these gentlemen that force has always been the midwife of history; that the bourgeoisie accomplished their aims, as had the feudal lords before them, by forcible means; and that they could not have done otherwise. And that we "reserve the same right" to accomplish our greater aims. Does that justify our including in the thesis a call to study "bourgeois revolutionary traditions"? No, that only helps to confuse the matter. For what we emphasize, above all, is that they utilized revolutionary means to accomplish their aims, with which the proletariat can have nothing in common, just as they utilized the extravagant rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence when they needed to mobilize the masses for the revolution but that once the masses accomplished the revolution, they sought to consolidate their power and foisted the adoption of the Constitution upon the masses with all the fraudulent means we now designate as Tammany and at which our "revolutionary forefathers" were masters indeed.

What we emphasize is what Marx emphasized in 1849, when the National Assembly passed the Faucher bill against the right of association, although the constitution guaranteed all Frenchmen the right to organize:

"What the constitution, first of all, was to have constituted was the rule of the bourgeoisie. Evidently, the constitution could therefore mean by the right of association only such associations as were in harmony with the rule of the bourgeoisie; i. e., with the bourgeois order. If, for reasons of rhetorical decorum, it expressed itself in general terms, was not the government and the National Assembly there to interpret it in specific cases? And the Constituent Assembly decreed that the violation of the text was the only adequate realization of its literal sense."

Lenin on the Jacobins
There are comrades who think that because Lenin said the Bolsheviks were proletarian Jacobins that justifies our calling the Mad-

isons and Jeffersons consistent revolutionaries whom we have to save from the "misinterpretation" of the bourgeois professors. Space does not permit me to go into an explanation of the Great French Revolution, its similarities and dissimilarities with the American Revolution. Suffice it here to state the following facts: there were really two revolutions within the scope of what is known as the Great French Revolution: that of 1789 led by the bourgeois Girondins and that of 1793 led by the petty-bourgeois Jacobins. Our Revolution of 1776 was not followed by a revolutionary Jacobin wave, but by reaction, for the Constitution was, broadly speaking, the document of the counter-revolution. The Jacobins, though they cleared the ground for the bourgeois order, were trying to represent the sansculotte. It was exactly this contradiction in internal make-up plus, of course, the fact that there were not the material requisites for such a transfer of power that caused the downfall of the Jacobins.

Long ago Plekhanov correctly estimated the Jacobins:
"Private property and the petty bourgeois purposes closely connected therewith, forced themselves into the programs of even the most extreme revolutionaries of that time... The Party of the Mountain failed just because of that innermost contradiction between its petty bourgeois conceptions and its endeavor to be a representative of the proletarian interests... To the present-day representatives of the working-class, these contradictions are foreign, because modern, scientific socialism is nothing but the theoretic expression of the unbridgeable antagonism of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."

Exactly. And Lenin was very careful in explaining what he interpreted Jacobinism to be; he defined it "as the transfer of power to the revolutionary oppressed class, for that is the essence of Jacobinism."

The Struggle of the Masses
Our predecessors, the artisan and poor farmer, though weak in organization and not constituting as clear-cut a class as the proletariat of today, accomplished the revolution, and tried to make of it a social revolution; it was through their pressure that even such democracy as we now have was established. They accomplished this in bitter struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is this heritage of the struggle of the masses (the people) that we accept. Once more I refer to the French Revolution and how Marxists interpreted bourgeois achievement.

Listen to Trotsky:
"In general the bourgeoisie, in the proper sense of the term, opposed the peasant revolution with all the power it had... Throughout the five years (1789-1794) the peasantry rose at every critical moment of the revolution, preventing a deal between the feudal and bourgeois property holders... The Parisian sansculotte, pouring out their blood for the republic liberated the peasant from his feudal chains."
I repeat: it is this heritage of struggle of the masses everywhere that we accept. And this heritage will find its realization when the now full-grown proletariat will sweep aside the now impotent and reactionary bourgeoisie from the historical scene. It is this message that we bring to the American working-class youth. When we Americanize Marxism, we bring to the American working class the message of Marxism, of proletarian revolutionary internationalism, not a vulgar flag-waving speech. We do not make the confusion of the youth that is trying to free itself from the bourgeois point of view foisted upon him more confounded by speaking of "American revolutionary traditions, bourgeois and proletarian". At best, this is a misleading phrase, an unfortunate wording, and ought to be stricken out from the thesis, which should be a guide to action, not confusion.

—RAE SPIEGEL.

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WHY A NEW COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL?
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Communism and the Intellectuals

2. A Program for the Intellectuals

(Ed. Note.—This is the second of two discussion articles by one of the signers of the Open Letter to the Communist Party on the Madison Square Garden affair.)

It is the credit of the Left Opposition that it sees the problem of the intellectuals who are in a state of open or suppressed rebellion against the Communist Party as a serious challenge to all working-class groups who believe they hold the keys to the revolutionary future. The article in the Militant offers the aid of the Left Opposition in rearming "in the service of the proletariat these intellectuals who... might otherwise lose contact with the militant working-class."

The Militant offers a concrete proposal which not only constitutes an excellent first article for a revolutionary program for intellectuals, but can serve as an essential basis for future activities. The Garden incident, the Militant asserts, has deeper roots and consequences than the signers of the Open Letter seem to recognize. A proper understanding of its full implications, it maintains, must lead to such revolutionary conclusions as the fundamental responsibility of the "doctrine of socialism in one country" for the disastrous "united-front from below" tactic, and the immediate necessity of building a new Party and a new International. It invites intellectuals to meet with members of its group in free discussion on this and on other topics, and it offers its columns to intellectuals for the publication of their opinions, and for mutual criticism. No doubt numbers of writers will avail themselves of the guest, or should we say fellow-traveler privileges of the Militant columns, as this writer has hastened to do.

The Militant article, with its often severe but always comradely criticism, sets the seal of a good example on the promise. (No doubt you will permit us a criticism. Perhaps we are a little shell-shocked on the subject, but we think you might indulge a little less in mere routine invective. We dislike the title of your article, "The Intellectuals Revolt against Stalinist Hoop-

liganism," and some phrases in the article will follow, and honest discussion. From them many intellectuals will emerge with a clearer, more fundamental political understanding, the essential basis for true revolutionary action.

Discussion Not Enough

But the major part of the problem still remains. Discussion is not enough. The bedrock of any program for intellectuals must be practical, concrete work with and for workers on the class-struggle front. Concurrently there must be discussion of the Marxian theory and its application: free discussion, criticism and democratic decision upon proposals and plans are an essential part of sound action. But activities for working class ends are both the core and goal of any revolutionary program.

And the fact is, though the Party suer who shouldn't, that the intellectuals want to work. The chief challenge of the intellectuals to the Left Opposition and similar groups is that they offer organizational channels for this impulse.

The Left Opposition is too intelligent to make the easy answer, "Join our group," although no doubt it looks forward to including within ranks of the new party qualified intellectual elements. To join a revolutionary party one must feel himself a full-time, professional revolutionary, and we believe that the great majority of the intellectuals would agree that they are fellow-travelers, sympathizers, intellectual allies of the revolution, not full-fledged revolutionaries. Indeed, they have never claimed to be professional revolutionaries. That some will grow in time to Party calibre we firmly believe; there is material here that time and experience could temper into useful theoreticians and cadres.

Indeed, this is an important reason for having an organized program of activities for intellectuals. The revolutionary movement needs their work above all, but secondarily it needs them, the best of them. And no other training and testing

ground has been discovered than concrete activities within class-struggle organizations.
Does that mean that we must organize intellectuals into private, separate intellectual organizations? A thousand times no! No sincere revolutionary party will repeat the completely impermissible practice of the Party in organizing intellectuals' committees, leagues, etc., as permanent political bodies. These critics of the revolutionary demimonde have served only to infect intellectuals with a host of diseases: snobbish condescension; political sophistry, cynicism, and ignorance; isolation from workers; self-distrust; "juvenile Machiavellianism"; toadyism. This does not mean that intellectuals should not be encouraged to join economic struggle organizations in their separate professions. Unions for teachers, writers, etc., yes. But no more intellectuals' clubs.

Mass Organizations a Necessity
The only healthy solution of the problem is the building of sound mass organizations. Here the intellectual can work with workers. This would be the fulfillment of the need and desire that attracted him to the revolutionary movement in the first place, the desire to escape the frustration of the merely intellectual life; the hope of finding, in alliance with the only vital, productive class, the proletariat, roots in substantial soil and a renewed creativeness.

In a mass organization, the intellectual no doubt will find political guidance and education, not in abstract, theoretical form, but on the job, in the struggle. He will find there revolutionaries not only wise and experienced, which he is not, but willing to lead him and teach him not by terrorism or mechanically or by faith, but by patient, comradely discussion and criticism, permitting him, also a full vote in making decisions. In the process, he will become not only an increasing useful member of his mass organization, but he will be developed so that in many cases he may consider and be qualified to take a further political step.

But more important than the need of the intellectual and his political future is the crying need of the working-class itself for such mass organizations. There are tremendous immediate problems facing the working-class; the defense of class-war victims, relief to strikers and their dependents, the fight against war and Fascism. Only mass organizations built on the sound basis of union of all elements willing to fight on a common limited program of activities can enlist the forces necessary for militant and successful broad struggles. Today the working-class movement is hamstrung because no such organizations exist.

THE BRITISH HUNGER MARCH

On Saturday, February 24th, 2,000 hunger marchers from all over the country moved into London and at the same time 1,400 delegates from trade unions, political parties, cooperatives, etc., assembled in Bermondsey for the Congress of Action. From North, South, East, and West, the unemployed marchers brought greetings from their fellow-victims of capitalism and despite a bitter yellow press campaign, the local trade unionists and cooperatives had rallied to the aid of the marchers all along the road.

"Congress of Action"
On the same day, the Congress of Action passed a resolution calling for work or maintenance and the delegates pledged themselves to use every means in their power, including strike action, to smash the new unemployed insurance bill. The marchers stayed in London for a week and a deputation headed by Maxton, MacGovern, and Hanington called at 10 Downing Street in order to interview the Prime Minister. But Ramesy MacDonald was enjoying himself at the British Industries Fair and so the unemployed were denied the opportunity of seeing the Premier.

The I. L. P. representatives then raised the question in the House of Commons and they obtained the support of the Labour Party and a section of the Liberal Party. They desired the approval of the members of Parliament for a deputation of the hunger-marchers to address the House and also that the Prime Minister shall receive the marchers in Downing Street. Both proposals were turned down by the Tory majority and when Buchanan, Maxton, and MacGovern taunted MacDonald with episodes from his past career as the alleged champion of the underdog he replied by pointing to the Labor Party Conference and Trade Union Congress—those two bodies had also refused to allow deputations from the unemployed, and Ramsay finished his speech by loudly denouncing the hunger-marchers as dupes of the Communist Party.

Having tried constitutional methods without result, the leaders of the marchers now attacked the ruling class with vague threats of "other and more militant tactics" but all that happened was a demonstration in front of Buckingham Palace and a further spout of oratory at Hyde Park, after which the members went home by train.

A Peaceful Demonstration
In contrast to previous hunger-marches this latest venture was a most peaceful demonstration awakening a considerable amount of sympathy for the hard lot of the unemployed but leaving them just where they were before the march started. The parliamentary leaders of the I. L. P. were the real victors of the march, for not only did they

confine the main activities of the marchers to the vicinity of Parliament but they also obtained the full flood-light of the press for themselves, a very necessary thing for Maxton and company.

So far as the Bermondsey Congress is concerned, it is hard to conceive of anything substantial coming from so loose a body of representatives who merely represent the fringe of the movement, the real machinery being safely left in the hands of the bureaucracy of the Labour Party and Trade Unions. The Congress declared for strike action but before this line could be successful it would have to be carried out upon a national scale combining political with industrial action in the form of a political general strike. This requires not only a thorough permeation of the trade unions but also a powerful political party capable of leading the masses in a direct struggle for power. But in Britain there is neither a party or a communist-permeated trade union movement, and unfortunately Bermondsey was a poor substitute.

Comintern Reply to I. L. P.
At the Congress the I. L. P. and the C. P. endeavored to keep on good terms but the arrival of the Comintern reply to the I. L. P. letter has opened up hostilities again. Signed by Kuusinen, this latest epistle from Moscow contains nothing new. To become a sympathizing member of the Communist International, the I. L. P. need not accept the 21 conditions as formulated by Lenin but must prove in practice that it is assisting the work of the C. I. and it must carry on a fight "against the Second International and the reformist leaders of the trade unions and come out decisively against all attempts to create new internationalism."

The leaders of the I. L. P. are accused of being anti-Soviet and to actually "reflect the foreign policy of the British Government". They are also accused of holding back the rank and file of the I. L. P. from joining the Third International.

I. L. P. Conferences

Meanwhile, the divisional area conferences of the I. L. P. have been held in London, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Lyndside. All these conferences rejected affiliation to the Third International while the proposal to form a Fourth International was also turned down. The present middle-course position of the party found favour everywhere but in Lancashire a resolution calling for a return to the Second International was carried by 21 votes to 16. The leaders of the I. L. P. have not yet revealed their attitude but the Easter Conference of the party may follow the divisional conferences in favour of a waiting policy.

Intellectuals are ready, we believe, to join with all political working-class groups who will join with them in a sound mass organization. Intellectuals do not ask for leadership in such an organization; they will take their places in the rank-and-file, and if and when they can responsible posts they will be proud to fill them. They are not altogether unexperienced; they have fought at Harlan, at Washington, and at Scottsboro. They have useful gifts: they can write publicity and pamphlets; they can raise money; some of them can do minor organizational jobs. And they are willing to learn.

Many of these intellectuals would prefer to work in a mass organization whose purpose is defense. Their interests and their experience happens to lie in the struggle for class-war prisoners, and against Fascism. They would be interested to know if the I. L. O. and other militant political groups think this is the most fruitful field in which to begin.

In any case, we urge on the I. L. O. that it consider this problem as urgent and immediate. We should like to hear whether it is willing to join with other political groups, and with the intellectuals, on an agreed program for defense (or some other important need) in a non-partisan, united-front mass organization, based on militant class-struggle principles, democratically carried on and controlled?

Comrades, we await your answer. And your concrete proposals.

—A SIGNER OF THE

T. C.