

NEW MASSES

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Roosevelt's Progress

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S second inaugural address in large measure was identical in tone and phrasing with the unfortunate keynote set by his predecessor in office. What made Herbert Hoover's public pronouncements a by-word for treacherous optimism was that they were based on the notion that prosperity is a magic word, the mere utterance of which could take the place of deeds.

"We are moving toward an era of good feeling," in the mouth of Roosevelt is a reversion to the Hoover era. This "era of good feeling," in Roosevelt's case as in Hoover's, is based entirely on stock-market calculations and corporate profits. When business is good or getting better for the business men, politicians sit tight and do nothing to "disturb" the "upward swing." That is what Hoover professed to do in an era to which Americans now look back with horror. That is what President Roosevelt is beginning to do.

This "era of good feeling" leaves the organized workers, the unemployed, and the peace movement out of account. The peace movement was betrayed by the Roosevelt-endorsed embargo against Spanish democracy. The unemployed were betrayed by the executive order to slash W.P.A. one-fifth. And the trade-union movement has been let down with indecent cynicism.

Questioned by the press about his stand on the General Motors strike, the President declined to say more than that "in the interest of peace, there come moments when statements, conversation, and headlines are not in order." That, of course, made headlines. But not in the union's interest.

And then, hard on the heels of the inaugural address, came the announcement by W.P.A. chief Harry Hopkins that the administration intends to fire 600,000 more project workers by June. This alarmed even such a staunch administration paper as the *New York Post* into exclaiming: "How many synonyms are there for the word 'shocking'? We've run out of adjectives for the administration's W.P.A. program."

It is significant that the Hearst press and the Liberty League press in general greeted the inaugural address with emotional fervor ranging from sighs of relief to exclamations of ecstasy. The vague expressions of humanitarian sentiments about the third of our people who are "ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished" did not disturb them, for, as the *New York Times* put it, this was "a message of hope and healing."

Whether the workers are to get "hope" and the economic royalists "healing" depends upon the united front of work-

ers, farmers, and middle class, following the path of the unemployed, who marched to Washington to press their demands, and the automobile strikers, whose ranks are still militant and solid.

Socialists and Trotskyism

TO THOSE members of the Socialist Party who abhor, as much as we do, continued rancor and rivalry within the labor movement, we address ourselves in the hope that the unpleasant situation created by ugly attacks against the NEW MASSES in the *Socialist Call* will cease.

The problem of the "Debs Column" has arisen, we believe, because the Socialist Party has cut itself off from the whole labor movement in the campaign to help the Spanish people, as well as in most other things, in favor of isolation and sectarianism. While every genuine united-front measure in favor of Spain has been shabbily boycotted or sabotaged, the Socialist Party has given exclusive ballyhoo to a project which it can call its own only because everybody else considers it unfruitful. It will interest our readers to know that both the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, which last week carried the Debs Column ad which we rejected, themselves rejected it this week. The *New Republic* makes no editorial statement, but the *Nation* says its rejection was based partly on "strategic" grounds.

From different approaches, the contributions of Jawaharlal Nehru and Vicente Lombardo Toledano in this issue have much in common and much to teach American Socialists. The Socialist Nehru, grappling with the problem of a realistic program for India, has come to the conclusion that Socialists do not have to choose the people's front or socialism. It was nine months ago, at the previous Lucknow Congress, that the slogans unity and socialism were launched by Nehru; today, under the aegis of the people's front, he has integrated unity and socialism in terms of the concrete needs and practical possibilities in India today.

The anti-people's front tendency in the American Socialist Party is a result of Trotskyist infiltration. Is it not cause for a reëxamination of the whole question that only the enemies of socialism, of the Mexican labor movement, and even of the Cárdenas government, have given thanks for Trotsky's presence in Mexico? And is not Radek's confession (which, coming after the Zinoviev and Kamenev executions, blasts any trace of credibility that might attach to the notion that it was bought by promises of leniency) the crowning proof of the defeatism and megalomania that are the twin geniuses of Trotskyism?

In France and Spain, the people's front was born, after great difficulty, only when fascism became an immediate threat. In Great Britain, as the Baldwin government emerges more and more as international broker for the fascist states, the beginnings of a people's front was recently laid with the achievement of an agreement for joint work between the Socialist League, led by Sir Stafford Cripps, the Independent Labor Party, and the Communist Party.

And now Jawaharlal Nehru! Are the Socialists America bent on self-destruction, isolation from all that is moving ahead? We refuse to believe that this Trotskyist corrosion is a permanent prospect before us. Rather, we believe that Socialists and Communists can speedily isolate this menace and build a united front for peace, freedom, and socialism.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

An Englishman looks at Spain—History, unconscious and harmonic—Tolstoy and Chekhov

FEW people are so well equipped to write a book on the Spanish civil war as John Langdon-Davies. He knows the country; the people, the language, both Spanish and Catalan. He is a student of Spanish history and has written of its people before. He was in Spain just before the war, and during it, as the special correspondent for the *News-Chronicle*, an English newspaper.

The key to an understanding of the kind of book* he has written is contained in two sentences on page 218. "There are those, of course, who would say that the present continuing tragedy of the streets makes talk about a picture a waste of time. I do not think so, for El Greco has caught in his masterpiece something which explains that very tragedy and quickens our understanding of it." It is not merely in this chapter on Toledo that the author has seen fit to discourse on pictures; all through the book there are vivid sketches not only of pictures, but also of cathedrals, streets, cafés, parades, manners, and many other things which could easily have become annoyingly irrelevant, but in the author's skillful hands help to "quicken our understanding" of the tragedy. Mr. Langdon-Davies knows that his readers will better understand what happened if at the same time they understand the people who made it happen. And because his picture of the character of the Spanish people has been etched so sharply in incident after incident, we can see justification for his belief that "so long as one village remains with its barricades intact, Spain will not be fascist."

On the jacket there is a blurb by a reviewer who writes, seemingly in praise, "... it is a disinterested book." This is not true. Do not be misled. Mr. Langdon-Davies is not disinterested. He is passionately interested. He is fighting mad. He is openly and honestly on the side of the people of Spain against their fascist oppressors. What the reviewer who called the book "disinterested" should have said, is what Mr. Langdon-Davies says himself, "I have not troubled to attempt propaganda because to me the truth is so clear that propaganda is not necessary." The truth and nothing but the truth should be enough to make observers of the tragedy of Spain sad and angry and militant and on their guard.

What are the author's truths about Spain? First, there are the familiar facts which we have already learned from other sources: that the uprising on July 18 was a minority rebellion of army officers and fascists against the legally elected democratic government of Spain; that in violation of international law, Germany, Italy, and Portugal have been aiding the rebels with arms and men; that without this illegal aid, Franco's followers would

be defeated in short order; that any aid which Russia has furnished to the Spanish government is perfectly legal and according to previous international custom.

In addition, Mr. Langdon-Davies informs us of other facts less well known, e.g., that the loyalist government, which has been charged with "making war on the Catholic religion," has in its ranks the Basque country which is, "except for Navarre, the most truly Catholic region in Spain"; that the atrocity stories attributed to the government are in every case either wildly exaggerated or absolutely untrue—if anything, their opposite has been typical—the loyalists have been much too circumspect in their treatment of the enemy; that the aid of the fascist international of Germany, Italy, and Portugal was promised to Franco before the revolt took place; that German and Italian airplanes were helping the Spanish fascists almost immediately after the revolt took place—without this aid the revolt was obviously doomed to failure from the very beginning; that among the German citizens "evacuated" by German ships were refugees who had fled Germany and were being transported back against their will to be thrown into concentration camps.

Mr. Langdon-Davies is righteously indignant at the pro-fascist role played by the government of his own country, Great Britain. He emphasizes the danger to both England and France of a fascist victory. He is forthright in his denunciation of "the greatest crime against humanity that our generation has seen, the murder of the Spanish people."

And he sounds a warning: we must learn and act quickly on the truth plain "to every peasant and worker in the south of France" from the very beginning, "that democracy was winning or losing a decisive battle, that it was not Spain's affair, but our own that was being settled one way or another."

LEO HUBERMAN.

More Freudian Than Freud

POLITICS: WHO GETS WHAT, WHEN, HOW,
by Harold D. Lasswell. McGraw-Hill
Book Co. \$2.50.

PROFESSOR LASSWELL continues his psychoanalytic thrillers. In this latest chapter of Freudian blood and thunder, we discover that fascism and communism are twin spawn of the petty-bourgeois revolution—both represent the coming to power of the petty bourgeoisie! We are kept in horrible suspense by the intimation that the next great revolutionary upheaval will come from the workers.

For the benefit of those who have not begun the Lasswellian serial, a brief synopsis of preceding chapters is in order. *Psychopathology and Politics* tells how we who fight capitalism are goaded on by an anti-father complex. *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* psychoanalyzes Marxism: we listen breathlessly as we hear that Marxism releases a terrific sense of guilt by projecting it upon the environment, that Marxism induces regression into the quiet and bliss of the womb by means of its dreams of the classless social heaven, that Marxism's scientific predilections trace



Workers' Rhythm

Painting by Rufino Tamayo (Julien Levy Gallery)

* *BEHIND THE SPANISH BARRICADES*, by John Langdon-Davies. Robert McBride & Co. \$2.75.