



"Maybe you'd better NOT tell me."

NM SPOTLIGHT

FDR Explodes Some Myths

Because of the Columbus Day holiday this issue of NEW MASSES went to press too early to permit comment on Governor Dewey's October 7 speech in reply to President Roosevelt. — The Editors.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT's calm and lucid broadcast on October 5 gave the coup de grace to the two principal myths by which Governor Dewey and his backers are attempting the mass seduction of the American electorate. The President demolished the charge that the administration is planning to keep the soldiers in the Army indefinitely after the war, and he riddled the Red bugaboo propaganda of the Republican campaign. Concerning the first myth he cited not only the War Department's published plan for speedy demobilization, but the legislation already passed by Congress and approved months ago by the administration, which forbids the War and Navy Departments to "retain persons in the armed forces for the purpose of preventing unemployment or awaiting opportunities for employment." Mr. Roosevelt, without mentioning names, branded the Dewey-GOP propaganda on this question as "reckless words, based on unauthoritative sources," which are being used to "mislead and to weaken the morale of our men on the fighting fronts and the members of their families here at home."

The President dealt with the second of these disreputable myths in an offensive spirit. The cry of "Communism," he said, was being used by "labor baiters, bigots, and some politicians" to attack "every progressive social measure" and "the views of every foreign-born citizen with whom they disagree." Mr. Roosevelt cited the over three million copies of a Red-baiting document sent free through the mails by one Senator and twelve Representatives, all Republicans, and characterized this type of activity in words which deserve to be inscribed in the memories of all Americans:

"This type of fear propaganda is not new among rabble-rousers and fomenters of class hatred, who seek to destroy democracy itself. It was used by Musso-

lini's Black Shirts and by Hitler's Brown Shirts. It's been used before in this country by the Silver Shirts and others on the lunatic fringe. But the sound and democratic instincts of the American people rebel against its use, particularly by their own Congressmen and at the taxpayers' expense."

The President followed this with a brief statement which the press headlines played up, even though it was subordinate to his attack on Red-baiting and the GOP strategy of attempting to make Communism an issue in the elections. This was the passage in which Mr. Roosevelt "disavowed" Communist support. Evidently he had been under considerable pressure, not only from the reactionaries, but from some of his own supporters to include such a statement. When one considers how frequently certain of those liberals who find fault with the President for not being "advanced" enough demonstrate their own "advancement" by resorting to Red-baiting, it is not surprising that he accepted the kind of advice he did on this point. We don't think it was sound advice, but his words should not be confused with the evil against which he struck his principal blows. It is, of course, just as inevitable that the Communists, in common with all other democratic groups, should support FDR's reelection as that the fascists and reactionaries should oppose it. For the Communists, far from seeking to "undermine the American system of government or the American system of free competitive enterprise and private property," are devoting their blood and energy and ideas to defending our system of government and are basing their post-war program on measures that would enable the free enterprise system to function more effectively in the interests of our people and of world peace.

At the beginning of his address the President made a non-partisan appeal for a large registration and a large vote which, we hope, will help bring to the polls millions of those who might normally be tempted to stay at home. This is not according to Republican plan, but it is the way democracy works. And Mr. Roosevelt demonstrated the kind of po-

litical courage which his opponent so conspicuously lacks when, in criticizing restrictions on the right to vote, he called for the elimination of the poll tax. The speech as a whole was something more than a campaign document: it gives leadership to the people on the issues before them and on the whole future course of our country.

Rogues' Gallery

THERE is a distinctly stop-thief note in much of the anti-Communist hysterics of the GOP smearbund. The House Campaign Expenditures Committee has been so unkind as to place on exhibit some of the less fascinating characters who are this year finding the answer to their prayers in the Albany strong boy. For instance, there is Dr. Edward A. Rumely, executive secretary of the Committee for Constitutional Government. During World War I Rumely was convicted and served a jail term as an agent of Imperial Germany. Though his paymaster today is publisher Frank E. Gannett, politically Rumely still seems to be working the same side of the street. Some years ago he was executive secretary of the Committee for the Nation, which backed Charles E. Coughlin in his flamboyant vendetta against the stability of our monetary system. For the past seven years Rumely has chaperoned Gannett's Committee for Constitutional Government in activities which have won it the affection and cooperation of fascist and anti-Semitic groups throughout the country.

This outfit is now spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to defeat President Roosevelt. It had been trying to pass itself off as an "educational" organization until the House Campaign Expenditures Committee called its bluff by demanding a list of its contributors of \$100 or more. Rumely balked and he has been indicted by a District of Columbia grand jury and faces a possible fine and imprisonment.

Another witness who followed Rumely's cue in defying the House committee is the well known fascist operator, Joseph P. Kamp, head of the Constitutional Educational League and associate of Lawrence Dennis and others of the seditionists now on trial in Washington.