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LABOR AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

John W. Stewart

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State University of Montana

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Approved:

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Chairman of Examining Committee

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Chairman of Graduate Committee
LABOR AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

OUTLINE

1. General statement.

2. The effects of individualistic and laissez-faire official political philosophy as derived from the American Constitution.

3. The powers of the United States courts as a legislative agency and the influence of the attitude and decisions of the United States courts as a retarding factor in labor activities and social legislation.


5. Short historical summary of the labor movement as a political force up to 1920.

6. Political, economic and social factors which have retarded the political growth of the labor movement or why an independent labor party has been slow in forming in the United States and why it has been so futile as a unified political force.

7. Political parties, 1920-32 - their programs and attitudes in relation to the labor movement and an interpretation of the 1932 election.

8. The Third Party question - its need, its difficulties and its problems.
9. Fundamental issues and problems of the wage earning classes.

10. "New Deal" policies so far enacted and their relation to the fundamental needs of labor.

11. The outlook.
GENERAL STATEMENT

Every modern industrial country has a labor movement, that is, an organized and continuous effort on the part of wage earners to improve their standards of living and general welfare. The effectiveness of the movement, the degree in which it becomes a real political force, the degree in which its hopes are realized, the degree in which it includes skilled and non-skilled labor, the farmer, and the "white-collar" salaried class, are dependent upon many factors. The outward and visible signs of this movement are unions, national federations, strikes, boycotts, lockouts, labor leaders, labor conferences and programs, court injunctions, legal battles, prosecutions, co-operative societies, labor and socialist parties, a labor press and propaganda, labor lobbies in legislatures, and active participation of labor in partisan politics. Considered as a state of mind, the labor movement is marked by a growing sympathy among all trades and classes of workers, a growing realization of the fact that the wage earning class, as a class, is steadily increasing in number, and an increasing belief that the only solution, or help, is for them to unite in direct legislative or political action for the betterment of their social welfare.

The American labor movement has had a distinct charac-
ter on account of the peculiar political, economic and social conditions prevailing in this country, which are vastly different from the conditions in England where labor has been a powerful political force for many years. In spite of national peculiarities and hindrances, the labor movement in the United States has grown and strengthened year by year but it has not yet become a unified force.

The significance of the wide-spread labor movement was until recently almost ignored by everyone except those directly affected by it. Occasions have arisen which have brought sharply to the attention of the public in recent years the growth and importance of this movement. The World War showed the public that it could not ignore the attitude of organized labor. The prosecution of the war rested upon the cooperation of the operations of labor in mines, mills, factories and transportation. Organized labor holds the key to the fighting power of modern states. It influences by its policies the millions enrolled in its ranks, and in time of war it is watched with great concern as a mighty power. It is a factor in civil life when it breaks out in demonstrations such as strikes or riots, which make trouble for con-

sumers, employers, the government, and the general public. These disturbances are sometimes intensified by the violence of industrial and commercial panics which have periodically deranged American business, spreading ruin and bankruptcy and resulting in unemployment, misery and starvation in the wage earning class.

Labor arouses public interest when it unites to demand certain laws and policies from the government or breaks into politics on its own account. From the time of Andrew Jackson to the present, labor has been periodically in politics. From time to time it has forced favorable legislation from state and national legislatures. It has often elected members of state and national legislatures and has prevented judicial appointments, but many of its gains have been but temporary and at no time in our history has labor been a constant, distinct, united, political force.

In a democracy, or republic, where the people are organized under principles of political equality there may soon arise the necessity for a substantial equality in social and economic conditions. History shows that the attainment of political equality leads inevitably to the demand for social and economic equality, for it does not take long for the lower classes to discover that equality in political rights is of small value if they are not thereby able to better their material condition to at least a comparative degree of
equality with that of other members of society. Equality in political rights, along with great inequalities in social conditions, has brought forth the great "social question". The social question is no longer concealed, as it formerly was, behind the struggle for equality before the law and for equality in political rights.

Thus, with the abolition of artificial distinctions, such as those based upon birth, official rank, and property, there disappears the justification for inequality in economic burdens. Nothing will more quickly force a group to desperation and incite them to violent revolution than class legislation based upon property. If at the same time the economic inequality is daily resulting in not only a greater degree of inequality but also in an increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of the few while the mass of those at the poverty line increases, and if the realization comes to the mass of the people that their equality of political rights has been made use of by an economic ruling class to make the rich fewer, but richer, and the poor more numerous, then we may expect the lower classes to put away their faith in ordinary political methods and to take over the government for their own purposes.

The friends of labor claim that our present system is a protection of excessive profits for the benefit of the few with a bare existence and no security for the many, who will
not continue to suffer for the benefit of the rich or the smugly comfortable. By what right, they ask do the rich profit at the expense of the poor except through unequal economic opportunity? Modern political states have as their basis and purpose of existence a regulation of human relations for the common welfare. The control of the state's administrative, legislative and judicial powers by the economic ruling class, and the subversion of the principles of democracy to the benefit of a ruling aristocracy of wealth have resulted in the obstruction of real social justice and equality of opportunity.

Severe economic depressions, if of short duration, break down the spirit and resistance of the wage earning class. Short depressions breed slaves. Severe economic depressions, if of long duration, incite the masses to rebel against economic injustice. They bring home to the "exploited masses" the sense of their plight, the realization of the unnecessaryness of their condition, the realization that no permanent economic justice will ever prevail unless they rise and compel social legislation instead of class legislation.

Never before have economic and social problems become so much a part of political discussion. The present depression, world wide in scope, and probably the severest in

history, has brought untold misery and want to all classes of workers, both wage earner and salaried man. Out of the welter of woe and bitterness arising from this great depression comes the conviction that political regulation must be used in some preventive manner to provide escape from the present situation and to make such a state of affairs less likely in the future. The methods taken and the measures adopted will depend largely upon whether there will be a cooperative and effective demand of all classes of labor.

Severe depressions have occurred in the past and they will probably come again. Even in normal times, even in periods of great prosperity, there are millions unemployed or at the bare poverty line. The dire effects of depressions fall most heavily upon the wage earners.

The whole question is, why has labor been so futile in the past and why so helpless in its present plight.
The prevailing official political and social philosophy in America has been, and still is, that of individualism and laissez-faire. The American laborer has found his way continually blocked by this obstacle. Unhappily for American labor, the Constitution of the United States was written and adopted during the period when individualism was dominant and it reflects the prevailing philosophy. Even more significant has been the interpretation of the Constitution by the courts, particularly of the Fourteenth Amendment during the past few decades. Hence, in no small part, the American labor movement has had to struggle to free the workers from the bondage laid upon them by the Constitution as interpreted by the courts. 1

The United States seems to be at the foot of the class among industrial countries in the taking of positive legislative measures toward economic and social betterment, but at the head of the class when it comes to bias and obstruction against such legislation. Labor has found it extremely dif-  

C. A. Beard, The Supreme Court and the Constitution (New York, 1912), pp. 74-100.
difficult to get such legislation enacted, and when it has been
enacted has had a large amount of it declared unconstitu-
tional by the courts.\(^2\) This naturally raises questions as
to why the United States is so backward in social legisla-
tion, why labor has not been more of a political force to
initiate such legislation and why such legislation has so
difficult a task to be effective once enacted.

Our form of government, with its written constitution
composed 150 years ago and its system of checks and balances,
makes innovation very difficult. Not only has our industrial
system changed beyond recognition during the past hundred
years, but it is still changing. The passing of the frontier,
the exhaustion of free land, and the mechanization of in-
dustry have contributed to this condition. One of the
effects has been to put the employer in a more and more advan-
tageous position for bargaining purposes and to hold the whip
hand over labor. Therefore, if the government merely kept
hands off, the employer would be in a still stronger posi-
tion. It is significant to remember in this connection that
the constitution was written by men who, with few exceptions,
had large property interests which they desired to protect.
Inflexibility not only results from the constitution being

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\(^2\) J. R. Commons, *History of Labor in the United States
(New York, 1918), pp. 45-70.
written, but the character of its contents and the manner in which they have been interpreted, particularly the Fourteenth Amendment, by men drawn from the propertied class, trained in conservatism, make the constitution a mighty obstacle against economic and social legislation.

According to C. A. Beard, "The movement for the Constitution of the United States was originated and carried through principally by four groups of personality interests which had been adversely affected under the Articles of Confederation: money, public securities, manufactures, trade and shipping. The first firm steps toward the formation of the Constitution were taken by a small and active group of men immediately interested through their personal possessions in the outcome of their labors.

"No popular vote was taken...on the proposition to call the Convention which drafted the Constitution. The propertyless masses under the prevailing suffrage qualifications were excluded...from participation (through representation) in the work of framing the Constitution.

"The members of the Convention...were with few exceptions immediately, directly, and personally interested in, and derived economic advantages from, the establishment of the new system.

"The Constitution was essentially an economic document based upon the concept that the fundamental private rights of
property are anterior to government and morally beyond the reach of popular majorities.

"The leaders who supported the Constitution in the ratifying Conventions represented the same economic groups as the members of the Philadelphia Convention; and in large number of instances were directly and personally interested in the outcome of their efforts.

"In the ratification it became manifest that the line of cleavage for and against the Constitution was between substantial personality interest on one hand and the small farming and debtor interests on the other."\(^5\)

Thus our constitution was framed by an economic ruling class interested in the protection of property rights and in practically unlimited exercise of those rights. The philosophy growing out of its wording, and the interpretation of its meaning, have been a constant protection to an economic ruling class and a serious obstacle in the path of labor. Individualism and laissez-faire are of great benefit to those that have; most certainly these doctrines are of no help to those that have not. We shall see in the following chapters how these doctrines became the official policy of courts and congresses and how they affected the labor movement and social legislation.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATTITUDES AND DECISIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES COURTS

Judicial interpretation during the past fifty years has followed our prevailing philosophy of individualism and laissez-faire. When a court declares certain legislation unconstitutional, and declares that various acts interfere with freedom of contract and individual bargaining, it is carrying out the letter and spirit of the Constitution. This does not remove the fact that it is partial to the maintenance of the present economic and social system, that it is an obstacle to progress, and that its interpretation and power is the result of out-of-date doctrines. 1

It will be seen that the government, through the courts, has done much to retard not only the growth of unionism but also the development of social legislation. There is great justification in the view taken by organized labor that on the whole the courts have been more favorable to the employer than to the laborer; that organized labor believes the spirit of the courts, as manifested in their interpretations, has been and is a serious social menace. The important thing is that labor thinks the courts have been unfair,

that they have been entirely too diligent in protecting property rights at the expense of personal rights. Labor has allowed this feeling to rise into open resentment against the courts and an undiscerned contempt for their judgment. This feeling is not confined to the radical elements but has penetrated to the most conservative unions. The justification of this sentiment grows out of the decisions of the courts as to unions and their methods, the use of injunctions in labor disputes and the declaring of much social legislation unconstitutional.

Labor has learned by bitter experience that its destinies are practically in the hands of the judges. In such a situation the social and political philosophy of the judges is of great importance. It may be assumed that most judges are honest; it is their point of view that counts. Learned and distinguished jurists may arrive at opposite conclusions due entirely to a difference in point of view. On the same bench for several years sat Chief Justice Taft and Associate Justice Holmes, both ranked as outstanding jurists. Yet confronted with the same situation, the same evidence, the same law, they frequently arrived at opposite conclusions—that an act in question was or was not constitutional. A case in point is that of Truax vs. Corrigan, Taft declaring an Arizona statute unconstitutional. In his opinion Taft said: "The Constitution was intended, its very purpose was, to pre-
vent experimentation with the fundamental rights of the individual." Mr. Holmes dissenting said: "There is nothing I more deprecate than the use of the 14th Amendment, beyond the mere compulsion of its words, to prevent the making of social experiments that an important part of the community desires, in the isolated chambers afforded by the several states, even though the experiments may seem futile or even noxious to me and to those whose judgment I respect."

A judicial bias is usually based upon the environment in which the judge has been reared and the legal training he has had. What, in general, is the judge's mental outfit apt to be? It is upon this point that organized labor has centered its attack. Most of our lawyers and judges have been drawn from the upper or middle classes and have remained in closest touch with these classes. Hence they tend to reflect their point of view and their wishes, and thus, in a sense, to represent them. Their social philosophy tends to be the philosophy of men who have prospered under the present economic system—a philosophy of extreme conservatism. The training of the lawyer has not been such as to modify the ideas he has absorbed from his environment. The law student is taught to revere the sacredness of precedent and technicalities rather than the evolutionary nature of society; he

comes to regard the legal aspects of society as static. Only recently have a few of our larger law schools begun to realize the need for economic and social training in addition to legal training.

A most significant matter then, from the standpoint of organized labor and social legislation, is the makeup of the courts, especially the United States Supreme Court. Our political system is so constituted that the courts have a tremendous amount of power. The Constitution largely becomes what the judges make it, and in consequence of their high degree of control over social legislation, through their sweeping interpretative powers, it can be accurately said that they hold the balance of power in such legislation.

Many cases are on record where judges have gone out of their way to express open hostility to the cause of labor and social legislation. This is true in such cases as follows: Judge Wilkinson in the Railroad Strike of 1922, Judge Anderson in the Coal Strike of 1919, Judge Parker in the "Yellow Dog" Case—Hitchman Coal Company, 1917, and statements of Justice Van Siclen of New York Supreme Court in

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6. 245 U.S. 229.
1921. Justice Harlan of the United States Supreme Court in Adair vs. United States (208 U.S. 161) among other things states that "the employer and employee have equality of right, and any legislation that disturbs that equality is an arbitrary interference with the liberty of contract, which no government can legally justify in a free land". Justice Sutherland in Adkins vs. Children's Hospital (261 U.S. 525) (1925)—District of Columbia Minimum Wage Law, declared it "an unconstitutional interference with the freedom of contract included within the guarantees of the due process clause of the 5th Amendment. The right to contract......protected by this clause is settled by the decisions of this court, and is no longer open to question."

As further evidence of how our courts have taken restrictive powers unto themselves, the use of the injunction is one of the most notable and one of the most abused. It is the deadliest weapon organized labor has to fight at the present time. Though based upon English procedure, the injunction has never been employed to any great extent in English labor disputes. Only two injunctions have ever been granted in the whole history of English labor disputes and both of these were overthrown. On the other hand, the

recent history of labor in the United States is filled with injunctions. It has been used as an effective weapon against the demands and methods of labor, and several prominent labor leaders have been sentenced to jail for contempt of court in violating injunctions--Debs in 1894,9 Campers, Mitchell and Morrison in 1911.10

The injunction is a proceeding in equity. It has been generally established that acts may be enjoined only when the damage to be done must be irreparable, a property right must be involved, and there must be no adequate remedy at law, if an injunction is to be granted. A court of equity issues a decree requiring the defendant to perform or refrain from performing certain acts. In cases of this kind the court must be to a great extent its own guide. It has legal precedent to go by and certain basic principles that have become fixed, but, on the whole, the judge possessed wide discretion in the use of the injunction.

The significant thing about this decree is that it is a direct command by the court. Furthermore, the prevailing practice is not to have two courts but to have a single, and the same, judge handle both law and equity cases. The distinction between the two courts is thus not removed and organ-

10. 221 U.S. 418, Campers vs. Buck Stove and Range Co.
ized labor's great objection to the injunction arises at this point. When an injunction is violated, the act is treated as contempt of court because it was committed in defiance of an order of the court. Usually, therefore, the fine or imprisonment is imposed by the very judge who issued the injunction, without a jury trial and in the absence of the usual rules of evidence in criminal procedure. The Clayton Act, 1914, gave some relief by stipulating that a jury trial may be granted where the act constituting the contempt is also a criminal offense.\(^\text{11}\)

For many years labor has fought to obtain legislative relief from the use of the injunction but has made little progress. The Clayton Act promised to give some relief in directly restricting the injunction but subsequent court decisions practically nullified this act as far as its labor provisions were concerned.\(^\text{12}\) Labor has prepared and presented to Congress for adoption new legislation which would ease the burden of restrictions under which it has to struggle on account of the injunction. In 1931 Wisconsin and Pennsylvania passed anti-injunction bills of essentially the same character, including the changing of procedure in contempt cases. No real test of this legislation has yet been made. However,

\(^{11}\) Congressional Record, Vol. 51, pt. 10, p. 9611.
there is serious doubt whether any fundamental legislation dealing with the injunction can get by the Supreme Court.

In view of the peculiar form of constitutional government existing in the United States, of the great power exercised by the courts in the domain of legislation, and of our written Constitution, labor's best chance of relief seems to be in developing strong public opinion against the present use of the injunction in labor disputes. This would reflect in the type of judges appointed and even in the social philosophy of judges already on the bench. In the meantime, the use of injunctions in labor disputes is greatly embittering the relations between capital and labor and is increasing the antagonism and lack of respect toward the law, particularly toward the courts, which has long been gathering in the heart of organized labor.

Labor feels that the injunction is being made the vehicle for unjust discrimination. The use of the injunction has unjustly hampered and restricted the activities of labor in bargaining with the employer. Its use has violated specific guarantees of free speech and free press. The injunction court has violated the constitutional right of trial by jury. Another joker in the Clayton Act is the clause which states that the jury, if there is one, may only decide whether the defendant disobeyed the court's order, not whether the order
was warranted. 13

If we seem to be spending too much time on the attitude of the courts toward labor in the United States it will be only to prove that this factor, plus the power of the courts as a legislative agency, is one of the most serious in retarding the attempt of the laborer to improve his economic status and a factor which should force the labor movement to take a more positive part in American politics in order to make some progress in social legislation.

There are hundreds of cases bearing on the use of the injunction, of which some of the most significant are the following: The Red Jacket Coal and Coke Case of North Carolina which resulted in such a storm of protest that Judge Parker, who presided in the case, was later refused a seat on the Supreme Court over President Hoover's appointment; 14 the Buck Stove and Range Case in 1911, which ended in the sentencing of Compers; the famous Danbury Hatter's Case in 1908; the injunction in the coal strike of 1918-19; the injunction in the Railroad Shopmen's strike of 1922; the Bedford Cut Stone Case in 1927. These injunctions were particularly severe in their applications and have been used as precedents in later court decisions.

An illustration of the obnoxious use of the injunction is clearly seen in the order issued by Judge Wilkinson in the Railroad Shopmen's strike of 1922 and in the Red Jacket Coal Case by Judge Parker. These orders, essentially the same, prohibited officers of the American Federation of Labor, union officials, members of affiliated unions, friends, sympathizers, and counsel to refer directly or indirectly by printed word, written or spoken words, to the allegedly unfair practices of the company or even refer to the fact that an industrial dispute existed. Union officials were forbidden to issue instructions, to urge cessation from work, or to interfere in any manner whatsoever with the companies' activities. They were forbidden to loiter about the premises, to induce or attempt to induce, in any manner whatsoever, by entreaties, arguments, persuasion, rewards, any person to abandon the employment of the companies or to refrain from entering into their employment. They were enjoined from declaring or aiding any boycott against the companies and from publishing or otherwise circulating, in writing or orally, any statement or notice of any kind or character whatsoever calling attention of the complainant's customers, dealers or tradesmen, or of the general public, to any boycott against the complainant. Campers pointed out that if all the provisions of these injunctions were carried out they could not publish or give out copies of the American
Federation of Labor convention proceedings of that year and would not even be allowed to make a report on this subject to the American Federation of Labor convention.15

The above cases are not extreme or extraordinary. They are but significant of the many and powerful uses of the injunction. Thus have the attitude and decisions of the United States Courts acted as an ever retarding element in the growth and strength of the labor movement. With the bargaining weapons of organized labor restricted so as to be almost ineffective, the laboring man's faith in the accomplishments of unionism is losing ground and the ranks of organized labor are decreasing. Labor as a whole is just beginning to realize that it must become an effective unified political force on its own account if it is to gain its major objectives.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE STATUS OF PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL
AND LABOR LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Both organized and unorganized labor have advocated and
sponsored numerous bills for social and economic betterment.
The failure to get these bills enacted and to get those that
were enacted to be effective, has been due, first, to our
political philosophy of individualism and laissez-faire and,
second, to the ineffectiveness of labor as a dominating or
unified political force.

It has been stated before that the United States is far
behind other great industrial nations in the matter of social
and economic legislation. It is not intended here to
enumerate more than the most needed examples in which this
country is backward. They are as follows:

The lack of a national board, operating through district
boards, as a means of impartial investigation, mediation and
conciliation in industrial disputes.

The lack of national and comprehensive legislation on
worker's hours, especially for women and children; no national
or effective minimum wage laws; no comprehensive legislation
on safety and health regulations or adequate inspection; only
a few states have effective measures for worker's compensation

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   Cummins, op. cit., Ch. 18-19.
and health insurance; there is almost no old age insurance or pensions; unemployment insurance is totally lacking and there has not yet been prepared a forward looking plan, national in scope, to help prevent and care for great periods of depression and unemployment.  

It is not the purpose of this paper to argue the province and propriety of such legislation. The fact is that all other great industrial nations have seen the need of and have enacted such bills. It is also not the purpose of this paper to argue the question of whether such legislation could not better be left to the several states. The fact remains that in the countries where such measures have been adopted they are national in scope and are so because that has been the only way to make them effective. In this country we have a great amount of decentralized government but modern industry and commerce know no state lines. Furthermore, our Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional many such measures enacted by the States and has also turned about and declared as unconstitutional some federal measures as properly belonging to the States, as, for example, the Child Labor Law (1916, 1919). In 1924 Congress submitted to the States an amendment on child labor legislation. It has not yet been adopted.

Legislation protecting women is fairly common in the States but lacks the comprehensiveness which characterizes this type of measure in Germany and England. The same can be said of safety and health regulations applying to workers in general. The minimum wage has been applied to a very slight extent, any compulsory feature having been declared unconstitutional. Practically nothing has been done in the field of social insurance. Even workmen's compensation is in such a state today that only drastic revision and renovation will enable it to meet the needs of the situation and be effective. The common law Doctrine of Responsibility—the Fellow Servant Rule—has been so interpreted by the courts and so manipulated by clever lawyers that the workman has had great difficulty in getting a just settlement in case of accident or ruined health. Badly needed national legislation on the sweat-shop, and its abuses has made no progress. 3

England and Germany have had workable and national comprehensive legislation on all of the above measures since before 1910. The United States has as yet no national measures on any of them.

SHORT HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

AS A POLITICAL FORCE UP TO 1920.

Let us now consider what the labor movement has accomplished as a unified political force in the past history of the United States. The political program of organized labor is somewhat distinct from the economic one until one considers the ends which are sought and there they become the same. In general, the two programs may be regarded as two different paths to the same goal, though the political program may be considered as necessary to make the economic one more effective, or even to enable some parts of it to exist at all. There has been, and is, no clear-cut, unified, permanent program that can be regarded as the political program of the labor movement or of organized labor, nor has the American Federation of Labor had any such program. There has been always, both in and without organized labor, a great difference of ideas and opinions constantly rising and falling and changing direction.

Some familiarity with the past history of labor's political activities is necessary if one is to understand its past failures and its present attitude toward politics in the United States. From the beginning legislation has been looked upon by some as the one great hope of the working classes, but too often it has proved a delusion. Usually when
the workers have striven for political reforms they have failed. At times when, after great effort, they have thought themselves victorious they have usually discovered later that what they have obtained was an empty husk, a form without substance.

The period before the Civil War was a vexatious one for the struggling labor movement in the United States. Organization rose and fell rhythmically upon the succession of prosperity and depression. In periods of prosperity organized labor strengthened its ranks and relied upon its own efforts. In periods of panic and depression the labor movement became unorganized and usually turned to various utopian movements that had as their aim some comprehensive political reform. This situation has been a common one in the whole history of the labor movement.¹

The earliest example of labor as a political force was that of the Mechanics Union of Trade Associations in Philadelphia in 1827. It became a political organization and initiated political movements of which the main issues were demands for equal citizenship and free public education. The years 1828-30 were notable for the formation of political labor movements and labor parties. These movements placed

before the people such important demands as free education, the mechanics' lien law, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and the efforts of labor were largely responsible for the passage of these measures.  

Also important, later, was the agrarian movement, inaugurated by George Henry Evans, which called for free homesteads, homestead exemption, and land limitation. Evans and his followers did not support a regular labor party but urged upon labor the political policy of "reward your friends and defeat your enemies". This policy has been in recent times the main political program of the American Federation of Labor. Evans and his followers gained only a partial victory but their experiences taught labor a lesson, which was soon forgotten, that too great reliance cannot be placed upon vague promises of politicians and regular political parties.  

The sixties brought political activity of a very general character. The National Labor Union, organized in 1866, concentrated on an eight hour law for federal employees and later made an unsuccessful attempt to organize an independent labor party. A small amount of hour legislation was obtained but there was no serious attempt to enforce it. After much hard work, labor finally succeeded in getting a ten hour law

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3. Ibid.
for women enacted in Massachusetts in 1874. As one failure followed another in labor's political attempts, the workers turned aside to the regular economic activities of trade unions, leaving the political stage to the Greenbackers who, in spite of several years of zealous effort, never got far with their cause.

The Knights of Labor, an organization which rose to its heights in the seventies and eighties, was an attempt to organize all types of labor, skilled and unskilled, and the farmer, into a great national union which would accomplish its aims through political activities. Shortly after its formation the Knights of Labor began to work for a national labor party and in its program of 1870 declared that the very existence of its organization depended upon political action. Its political issues were: public lands to homesteaders, legal recognition of unions, safety for workmen, indemnity for injuries, graduated income tax, money issued by the government instead of banks, postal savings bank, government ownership of telegraphs, telephones and railroads, no exemption from taxation for bonia, no loss of franchise except for felony. Very popular for a short period because of its rosy promises and aims, it undertook many political

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ventures and failed in most of them.

The organization of the Knights of Labor grew out of the panic of 1873, one of the worst in our history and one that was disastrous in its effects upon organized labor.\(^5\) The craft unions became exhausted in their fight against conditions and most of the national organizations were destroyed, only eight out of thirty-two surviving. Violence became common in bitter and losing strikes and reached its zenith in the havoc wrought by the Molly Maguires in the coal fields. As usual, the time produced a movement in the form of the Knights of Labor which was to "improve and benefit the whole working class". The Knights program was highly idealistic. The main planks in their program were a national union of all wage-earners, working as a unit, and producers-cooperatives. The Knights were ahead of their time and failed to realize the economic and individual forces at work. The skilled laborers were not interested in plans for the uplift of the unskilled.\(^6\)

The Knights declined rapidly after 1890, after having at one time nearly five million members or sympathizers. Its decline was due to its faulty structure and its idealistic philosophy that the interests of all wage-earners are

\(^{5}\) Commons, History of Labor in the United States, op. cit., Chs. I-13, Part VI.

\(^{6}\) Ibid.
identical. The disastrous and losing strike policy entered into by the Knights also contributed to its collapse. The final blow to the Knights was in its inability to resist the rising tide of the organized labor movement under the leadership of the American Federation of Labor and Samuel Gompers.

Building upon a program of opportunism and the organization by crafts on a national scale, the American Federation of Labor left idealism alone and appealed to the individualistic spirit of the American worker. Believing that the Knights of Labor and most other labor movements had failed because of trust in politics and political methods to gain their ends, the American Federation of Labor embarked on a policy which has lasted until the present—that of a non-political, non-partisan program in favor of a purely economic policy. It has been indicated to some extent in earlier sections of this paper that certain forces were continually at work to retard this movement. We shall see later on just how successful the American Federation of Labor and the Railroad Brotherhoods have been in attaining their ends and in what measure they have failed.

There were various other social and political movements more or less associated with the labor movement in the period 1830-1895. After 1895 most of these movements became concentrated either in the American Federation of Labor or in the
Socialist Party. In the period of 1830-1895 are the following factions and parties: Owenism, founded by Robert Owen, 1830-45; the Brook Farm experiment by George Ripley in 1840. Horace Greeley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Horace Mann, Edward Everett were prominent backers of these movements. Next is Henry George and his Single Tax party and issues between 1880 and 1900; Edward Bellamy and Nationalism which reached a climax in 1890, a socialistic scheme to change our whole social and political systems. Then there were the Greenback Party and the Union Labor Party which finally united in 1891 to form the Populist or People's Party and carried the further name of the Farmers' and Laborers' Union of America. In 1892 the Socialist Labor Party was founded and in 1900 became the Social Democratic with Debs as leader. The Granger movement also was founded in this period, and was primarily a political organization of the farmers.\(^7\)

During the whole of this period, 1830-1895, there were repeated attempts to unite the farmer and labor elements with the Populist Party making the biggest claim as the party which had all interests at heart. The Populist movement in 1892, with General Neaver as leader, showed considerable strength in the middle west. It did not, however, get much support from organized labor due to the new policy of the American

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Federation of Labor and the gaining strength of the Socialist Party. After 1896 the American Federation of Labor and the Socialists gave principal expression of the two methods of labor political action. After 1896 most of the Populists went over to the Democrats influenced by Bryan's leadership, his advocating of free silver and his "Cross of Gold" speech. 8

Between 1900 and 1912 we have the rise of the new Progressive movement, originating among Republican leaders. This progressive movement was a conflict within the party finally resulting in an open split in 1912 led by Theodore Roosevelt. It was a conflict between political leaders and parties on the issues of the public interest and social and economic legislation as against the control of government and legislation by "big business". 9 This progressive movement was in sympathy with the labor issues of the time but did not get the united support of either organized or unorganized labor. Miss Jane Addams in her speech seconding the nomination of Roosevelt said that this new party was the exponent of a movement toward juster social conditions in which America has lagged far behind other great nations in political action. The distinctive feature of the party's platform was a program of

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9. Ibid.
social and industrial justice, including measures for industrial health and accidents, child labor, wage standards, women's labor, hours and days of labor, convict labor, industrial education and industrial research. 10 Due to the split in the Republican party the Democrats won. The combined Taft-Roosevelt vote would have made a majority of nearly a million and a half against Wilson. Almost a million votes went to Debs, the Socialist candidate. Organized labor pursued its non-partisan policy, thus helping defeat some of the measures for which it stood.

In a later section we will take up the labor movement as a political force since the World War and the attitude of the two major parties in present times toward this movement. Let us now conclude this section with the attitude of the American Federation of Labor toward direct political action from the time of its formation in the early eighties up to the end of the World War.

With few exceptions, the official policy of the American Federation of Labor has always been one of non-partisan political activity. In fact, the organization was founded on that very principle. The purpose of the American Federation of Labor has been purely economic; it has preferred to attempt to gain its ends by collective bargaining and by its own

weapons rather than by political action. The Federation built its structure upon the realization of the fundamental selfishness in human nature and planned accordingly. Its organization took in only the skilled workers in each craft and the efforts of the organization were for the benefit of each union within its folds. The Federation was not interested in general welfare as such. It was a caste organization and conducted as such. Naturally, the skilled workers deserted the Knights and other like organizations and flocked to the American Federation of Labor.

In 1906 the Federation formally adopted the policy which has been its official political attitude ever since, the policy of rewarding friends and defeating enemies within each party. The convention of that year further stated that the Federation most firmly and unequivocally favors the independent use of the ballot by the trade unionists, regardless of party, and that they strive to elect men from their own ranks to office.¹¹ The political results of this policy were practically nil.

In 1908 the Federation presented a bill of grievances and demands to the Republican convention but was ignored. The Democrats, however, adopted it and again adopted it in 1912. However, the American Federation of Labor did not

officially endorse the party. Labor received a very small amount of legislation out of the Democratic promises. The favorable legislation received between 1914 and 1918 was due largely to the important position labor occupied during the World War. A sharp reaction followed the war. Industry returned to a peace time basis, production slowed down, prices and wages fell and labor was again with its back to the wall. The American Federation of Labor, in conjunction with the Railroad Brotherhoods and certain farmers' organizations, drew up another bill of grievances and presented it. Again in 1920 the Republican convention ignored them. Bidding for labor's vote, the Democrats adopted some sections of the labor demands. The crushing defeat suffered by the Democratic Party in the 1920 election, due to popular reaction and protest against "Wilsonism", made this gesture of the Democrats of small use to labor. 12 In 1924, against the wishes of some of the strongest unions, the Federation endorsed the LaFollette-Wheeler Farmer-Labor ticket and then later took back its endorsement. The American Federation of Labor in its 1925 convention announced that it still adhered to its non-partisan policy. Since that time, until 1932, the Republicans, never very friendly to labor, have been in power and labor has made little headway against them.

In considering the legislative policy of organized labor, particular attention is given to the American Federation of Labor. This is done because the Federation is generally accepted as the spokesman for all organized labor in America. Although two great organized groups, the Railroad Brotherhoods and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, are not affiliated with the Federation, their philosophy, policies and tactics are very similar to those of the American Federation of Labor. It should also be kept in mind that organized labor as a whole constitutes a small per cent of the total number of workmen in the United States and does not include agricultural workers at all. However, this great mass of unorganized and unskilled laborers has no means of expressing itself except as organized labor may speak for it.

Not only has the American Federation of Labor refused to become allied with any political movement as such, it has also looked with disfavor upon political action in its three most important matters—wages, hours and working conditions. The Federation has preferred to get improvements in this direction by its own methods of collective bargaining. Their reasons are, that they felt they could get better bargains by their own methods than by legislation and that conditions fixed by statute tend to become static, while they are after continual improvements. The Federation has not been concerned that this sort of reasoning and policy is entirely selfish.
and that it would naturally react only to the benefit of the strongest and most highly organized unions of skilled labor. The Federation also loses sight of the historical fact that it takes a period of prosperity, a seller's market, to be able to effectively use their chosen weapons of bargaining and that organized labor suffers almost as much as other labor in periods of long depression.

A further reason for the Federation's attitude toward legislation has come from its experience, as noted before, with the courts, and also its distrust in legislation even when enacted, claiming that it is one thing to get a law enacted and quite another to get it enforced. Labor has often found itself practically helpless when powerful corporations, while managing to stay within the letter of the law, and sometimes not even doing that, have clearly violated the spirit of the law. The Federation believes that "the united demand of organized labor, supported by a firmly established and determined organization would be far more effective than a thousand laws whose execution depends on the good will of aspiring politicians or sycophantic department officials."15 Again we see that this is a wholly selfish policy.

A final significant thing in regard to organized labor's

policy has been its reluctance to support various measures for the general welfare of all workers, such as safety and health protection, health insurance, old-age insurance, pensions and unemployment insurance. The argument is that organized labor can take care of itself in such matters if given a free hand in bargaining to compel higher wages and that their own benefit plans will take better care of their members. In regard to employers' efforts toward welfare in the form of profit-sharing, stock ownership by employees, and employee representation, organized labor looks upon these measures as a planned effort on the part of employers to lessen loyalty to the union and to give the employer a further control over the rights of labor to bargain. Organized labor has not to any extent initiated the various humanitarian measures for the benefit of the workers. These have usually been started and promoted by outside humanitarians and humanitarian agencies, among which the most prominent has been the American Association for Labor Legislation.

The records of the Proceedings of the American Federation of Labor and the records of the speeches of the labor leaders, such as Gompers, Green, Mitchell, Woll, etc., reveal over and over again the non-partisan policy of organized labor, their re-affirmation of their fixed principles and their belief in unrestricted methods of bargaining as the best policy to attain labor's ends. The Federation changed its tune some-
what, due to popular demand, in its 1932 convention. This will be discussed later in the section on present day tendencies.

The Federation's policy has been attacked with violent scorn by the socialists, both within and without the organization. They claim it has made no material progress in securing its legislative aims. They scornfully point at the Clayton Act, once hailed as the "Magna Charta" of labor, and at other laws which have been nullified by interpretation of the courts. They give credit for such social improvement as has been accomplished to such groups as the American Association for Labor Legislation. They further truthfully point out that the Federation has done nothing about such vital matters as unemployment and the development of labor exchanges; that their policy has been altogether selfish and has done nothing for the great mass of wage-earners; that their policy has been altogether selfish and has done nothing for the great mass of wage-earners; that their policy has not even reacted to the benefit of the members of the Federation itself except in periods of high prosperity, and has left them helpless in periods of depression.

A significant thing, which is discussed again in another section, is the drop in the ranks of organized labor. In its peak year, 1920, there were over five million members in various unions. In 1930 this had dropped to about three
The 1953 figures, if available, would probably show a further decrease. Factors in this alarming decrease are: dissatisfaction within the ranks of unionism itself over its policies and its failure to get results; the efforts of a powerful employers' association in combating union membership by their own company unions and other methods; the non-union policies of the steel, textile, chemical, and automobile industries which have never submitted to unionism; the shift of great industries to the southern states where organized labor has never been strong; and probably the greatest factor of all, the present long and severe economic depression. Anyone with the least knowledge of conditions of today will admit that organized labor is facing the most serious crisis of its life and that its very existence is threatened. Most certainly, regardless of a hoped for return to prosperity, organized labor has shown itself helpless in the present crisis, and if it expects to regain any of its former prestige it will have to make a radical change in its attitude and policies.

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS WHICH HAVE RETARDED

THE POLITICAL GROWTH OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT, OR WHY A

DISTINCT LABOR PARTY HAS BEEN SLOW IN FORMING IN

THE UNITED STATES AND WHY IT HAS BEEN SO FUTILE

AS A UNIFIED POLITICAL FORCE

There are many and varied reasons why the labor movement in the United States has been slow to develop into a unified and effective political force. In addition to the retarding factors already mentioned there are those perhaps more important, such as our individualistic philosophy in politics, the nature of our politics, the nature of our economic life, and the social forces at work. The labor movement in the United States has been decidedly American, a product of our native philosophy; it has been intolerant of Utopian schemes of reform, but is now beginning to undertake cooperative work with the employer. Provided it was certain of securing adequate wages and satisfactory hours it would probably be content to leave more radical programs to the liberals who are interested in social movements but are without much power.

The usual view of third or minor parties in the United States has ignored their real significance. An individualistic political philosophy has led most people to think of them simply in relation to the great parties. The chief contrasts have been those of size and unity. The Republican
and Democratic parties have been national in their organization, touching every detail of American political life, while our third parties have not usually been national in character and most certainly not in appeal--neither have they usually been factors in local or community political life. Then the "Utopian" character of their demands have been made to appear as such to the average practical American. Again, a press controlled by one or the other of the dominant parties has made third party programs a source of humor or a source of fear. A third party is made to appear as one made up of cranks, reformers, radicals and discredited leaders of the old parties. A further reason for the failure of such movements has been the innate political conservatism of the bulk of the American people who eye innovations in political life with suspicion and reforms as radical. For these and other reasons the significance of third party movements has been overlooked by the general public.¹

Third parties have brought new issues before the people; they have forced new policies upon the old parties; they have been instruments of political and social reform but, due to lack of organization and unity, they have usually passed away after a short period. Then the older parties have seized upon certain of these issues and proclaimed them as their

own. The older parties ride along for years upon party loyalty and the claims of past services but sooner or later they are forced to seek new issues as a basis for party support. By partially adopting, or vaguely promising, measures advocated by progressive elements they continue the strangle hold upon third party movements.²

Turning now to specific factors in the retarding of labor's political growth, there is:

1. The significance of the frontier and the abundance of free land. Until practically the beginning of the present century America was still a land with a frontier. The existence of this frontier and the settlement and development of it have occupied to a large degree the thoughts and activities of our people. Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these things into life and shape them to meet conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves over and over again to the changes of an expanding people, to the winning of a wilderness, to the development of each stage of this progress from a wilderness to a complete civilization. American social development has thus been beginning over and over again on the frontier and until lately had reached no

state of stability. This continual re-birth, this continuous expansion with its new opportunities, its continuous retouching with the simplicity of primitive and rural society, furnished powerful forces dominating American character. Even the slavery question occupied its important place in American history largely because of its relation to westward expansion. Each area has had its influence upon our economic and political history, the evolution of each into a different industrial stage has worked political changes. Just as the frontier conditions prevalent in our early colonies were important factors in the American Revolution and in the framing of our Constitution, so were our successive stages of the frontier important factors in our later political and economic life. Individual liberty was often confused with the absence of all effective government. The frontiersman passed on to his descendants a tradition of individualistic democracy which was intolerant of governmental interference or regulation of what he regarded as private affairs. From this came a great indifference to social or political organization. That the political and social philosophy developed from this frontier and its people has been slow to change, that this individualistic philosophy is ill-suited to a nation that has changed so radically in the past thirty years from rural to a preponderance of urban and industrial conditions, that in this manner
the American frontier was a significant factor in the labor movement cannot be over-emphasized. 3

2. Closely related to the frontier was our great abundance of free land and great natural resources. Land was plentiful, land was cheap. Any man dissatisfied with his lot could move on to better and freer fields. With small or no resources he could carve a home and living for himself and family out of the wilderness. Then came the homestead law with its promise of free land to all who were willing to come. The land was also rich in minerals and timber. With small capital, organizing ability and good luck, men were able to amass great fortunes out of an abundant nature. These conditions contributed for a time to intense individualism, but the philosophy arising out of these conditions had the most serious effects. 4

Out of our frontier, out of our abundance of land and natural resources, arose the philosophy that America was the land of unlimited opportunity; that any man could better his lot by his own labors; that any man might rise from the lowest wage earner to the head of a great corporation; that any man was a potential capitalist; that hard work, energy

3. Commons and Andrews, op. cit., Chs. I and II.
4. Ibid.
and ambition were the only essentials to success; and that the poor, the jobless and the depressed were so because of some inherent fault in character. It does not matter that this doctrine of success has never been quite true in America. Glaring examples have been held up before us of the few men who have risen from wage earner to bank president, or from country school teacher to the presidency of the United States. With the coming of the modern machine age, with the rapid industrialization of America in the past thirty years, the land of "equal opportunity" has ceased to exist. Only in rare cases do men now rise by their own efforts much above the bare subsistence level. However, this "American philosophy" still persists; it is taught in the schools; it is preached in the pulpits; it furnishes copy for such magazines as the AMERICAN MAGAZINE; it furnishes the incentive for hardworking farmers, industrial workers, and "white-collar" wage earners to deny themselves and save a pittance so that they may send their sons and daughters to college in order that they may all the sooner rise to the heights in this "land of opportunity".

It is merely a truism to state that this philosophy of individual opportunity has been seized upon by both the capitalist and politicians of the two dominant parties who are financed and kept in power by the capitalists. This doctrine has been made a religion by them to keep themselves
in power and it has been handed out to the common man as such. The middle class swallowed it completely, and the lower classes, until lately, have given support to it. It has taken the great mass of wage earners in America a long time to realize that there were other causes for lack of success, for unemployment and for poverty than incompetency, laziness, or moral weakness. As usual, the realization of their plight comes only with great depressions such as the present one. The actual workings of this false doctrine might be translated into the "doctrine of exploitation", for its actual political and economic results have been that of the exploitation of the masses by the economic ruling class. By adopting and adapting this philosophy of individualism and opportunity to their own devices and by the support of the press, the schools and the pulpit, the economic ruling class has controlled politics, legislation and political philosophy in the United States to such an extent that any progressive measures for social reform have had to stand against the charge of being "radical" or "socialistic". It has been almost "un-American" to advocate social legislation, and third parties who have such programs or progressive leaders who speak for extensive social reform are branded as "radical".

The significance of this "doctrine of opportunity" is that it became an article of faith; that "self-love and
social are the same"; that if every man were left to his
own devices, to pursue his interest in the way he thought
best, the interests of all men would be secured. "But", in
the words of Sidney Webb, "this was before the industrial
revolution had transformed three-fourths of the people into
property-less wage earners and before it had given to a
small minority of capitalists what amounts to an economic
dictatorship. Today it seems only a mockery to assume that
the Constitution of the United States, or of Great Britain,
secures to every man equal rights to life, liberty, and the
pursuit of happiness." .......... "We shall understand this
paradoxical claim better if we recall the nature of the
compulsion and coercion against which the mass of the
citizens of every great industrial state are now seeking
protection. What is it that condemns the great majority
of all the inhabitants of great nations to grow up in
penury, and many of them in chronic want; what makes the
incomes of the mass of wage earners actually insufficient
for healthy maintenance and full training of their
families; what forces those who do the most laborious work
to live in the most unhealthy surroundings, under the most
unsanitary conditions, with an excessive sickness and death
rate, which we know to be unnecessary; what exposes most
of them to periodic involuntary unemployment and famine and
dooms many in old age to pauperism? Our grandfathers might
have said original sin. Our fathers complacently ascribed all these ills, even when they were seen to be social diseases, to the personal shortcomings of the poor."\(^5\) We may add to this that our pulpits, echoing the voice of their masters, have used religion as an opiate of the poor; that if one does not attain his measure of good things in this world he will have salvation in that future life of which they paint such a rosy picture.

Thus, the doctrine of individualistic opportunity has been not only a retarding influence in an organized labor movement and in social legislation, but has also reacted as a doctrine of exploitation.

3. Judicial interpretation during the past fifty years has given a prominent place to economic individualism. When a judge declares that the employer and the employee have an equal right to bargain and that therefore nothing should stand in the way of their bargaining, he is simply carrying out what he believes to be the individualism of the Constitution.\(^6\) That this interpretation is true only in theory and not true in fact does not alter his decisions. It is theoretically true that the mill worker, with a large family, with only his bare hands as an assistant, and with

\(^6\) Beard, The Supreme Court and the Constitution, op. cit., pp. 74-100.
no guarantee of security in employment, has an equal right to bargain with the President or board of directors of the steel trust. Actually, this right does not exist, because it is meaningless.

4. The strategic position of the highly skilled laborer has been a retarding factor in the general labor movement in America. The skilled laborer has in many respects been almost as capitalistic in his attitude as the employer himself. He has, through membership in the American Federation of Labor or other strong organizations, obtained good wages and hours and working conditions. He has gotten this to a large extent without the aid of legislation—by the use of collective bargaining—and consequently has been prone to scorn legislation as a means of improving his status. We have already spoken of the attitude of the American Federation of Labor in this connection. This situation has been aggravated by the great influx of foreign unskilled labor. The American skilled laborer has never been sympathetic or particularly concerned about the unskilled laborer anyway, but when that unskilled laborer happens also to be a foreigner, even a naturalized alien, the aristocratic bricklayer or locomotive engineer is still more inclined to pass by on the other side. It is natural to expect no unity of economic and political purpose when there is no unity or sympathy of purpose even among the
workers themselves. Since the machine is gradually forcing
the great mass of skilled workers into the unskilled class,
the chances of a common outlook are far greater.

5. The huge total of immigration in this country,
amounting to approximately 35,000,000, almost half of which
came in during the past twenty-five years, has played an
important part in the labor movement. The largest per cent
of our immigration in the past twenty-five years came from
the most backward countries of Europe and western Asia. The
presence of this great mass of foreign born, of alien
habits, alien races, low standards of living, little or no
education, and with alien political ideas—a heterogeneous
mass, unskilled, largely unassimilated, unorganized and
practically unorganizable, separated from one another by
racial and religious prejudices, and congregating in compact
nationality groups in our great cities, has been a serious
handicap in many ways to American labor.

The immigration problem is not the problem of what might
have been, but the problem of the situation we now face as
a result of more than a century of practically unrestricted
influx of alien elements. Nothing effective was done in
immigration restriction until the numerical quota acts of
1921 and 1924, and the national origins act of 1927—which
did not go into effect until 1929. But the damage had al-
ready been done before these restrictive acts went into
effect. Having allowed the drugs of Europe and western Asia to enter by the millions during the period of 1900-1920, we now have them on our hands. 7

This great alien mass within our midst created other problems than those affecting the labor movement. It has created a menace to both our political and social institutions. Their distribution has been poor. They have congested either in the slums of great cities or in colonies. Their assimilation has not been accomplished. According to the 1930 census but 52.3% of our population was native white of parents born in this country. The bulk of our immigrants of the past twenty years did not come here to found homes—they came only in search of a job. They have not become Americanized except in dress. Their birth rate is far in excess of the native American, reproducing in kind a rapidly increasing number. It is well known that the second generation of these people at present constitute a fertile field for the gangster and racketeer. Failing to understand our political ideals, they confuse liberty with license. They not only contribute the most radical elements, but also add to the field of political graft and corruption. They have not discarded the loyalties and social values of their own group. We make an effort to change their children, but so

long as this is done only during school hours, their home and neighborhood traditions continue to germinate. Living in squalor and filth in our great industrial slums, living under conditions which alone produce an un-American spirit, living in distinctly Jewish quarters, Italian quarters, Slavic quarters, they persist as focal areas of their own cultures and the spread of them. They retain their native languages, customs, traditions, and in many cases operate their own schools and churches in their own tongue.

We did not realize that these people were becoming an integral part of our national life, that they set the standards for large sections of the country, that they often were used to control elections, that they were tools in a capitalistic system to beat down the power of organized labor. We have welcomed the abundant cheap labor they represented, but deplored their low standards of living, their lack of ideals, and their teeming undernourished families. They have greatly increased our problems of crime, poverty, dependency, and care of the insane and feeble-minded—thus increasing not only our social problems but also the tax burden upon an already overtaxed citizenship. 8

There are few major industries in the United States which are not manned to a large extent by immigrants or by children

of immigrants. For example, the Immigration Commission found in 1910 that over 60% of silk operatives and over 46% in the woolen industry were foreign born, and that another 30% were of foreign parentage. The coal and steel industries also showed a great majority of employees who were foreign born or born of foreign parents. It may be added here that the foreigner's attitude toward the labor of his own children—in many cases living entirely off the labors of his own children—has added to the problem of child labor in the United States.

Undoubtedly, this great mass of unskilled, low class labor has had a great effect upon the labor movement in the United States. In England where the labor party has great strength, even at some times constituting the controlling element in the government, the labor class is homogeneous and has class consciousness. It is vastly different than the heterogeneous mass which makes up the American labor group. It is, of course, impossible to weld into a permanent political party any but a rather homogeneous group. The American wage earning classes, with their vast numbers, their dissimilar elements, scattered over a large country, representing so many different viewpoints, backgrounds, races, and languages, are obviously poor material out of which to build a labor party or any concerted cooperative movement.

6. In the negro, we have had a further serious obstacle
in the labor movement. According to the 1930 census there were 11,891,143 negroes in our population. Almost three million of these had moved into northern states. They were actually shipped into great industrial sections at various times to help break strikes. Approximately one-third of the negro population now lives in cities. As a rule, they receive the lowest wages, and are housed in the poorest quarters. Aside from the self-evident racial, social, and moral problems which the negro represents in America—about which volumes have been written—the very nature and character of the negro makes him a problem to organized labor and the labor movement. Regarded as an inferior race, he can hardly be expected to join the white man in a movement in which the negro would share very little, or not at all. He has only to look at the exercise of the suffrage, granted him by the Constitution but denied to him in most states of the south, to realize his position. Where the negro is allowed to vote he is often shamelessly managed to the advantage of the white office-seeker and the negro politician has been generally the mere tool for corrupt politics. Nevertheless, he forms a large and docile labor element which has been almost useless to the labor movement and a serious obstacle to unity.

Summing up the effects of immigration and the negro problem in America, it can be seen that these elements constitute
a large per cent of our labor class, that they have been used as opponents to organized labor and that they therefore have not contributed to a consciousness of kind, a community of interest, a commonness of purpose—all of which are essential to the growth and effectiveness of a labor party.

7. In examining the history of political parties and legislation in the United States, one is struck by the position taken by the farmer in our political life. He has been of increasing importance as a class, and the various parties have usually made a bid for his favor. Only through the Non-Partisan League, which functioned as a real force only in the wheat belt, has the farmer made any effort to strike out as an independent party. But even in this effort the appeal was practically limited to one class of farmer. Being conservative by nature, and individualistic to the highest degree, the farmers have not even been able to agree among themselves. Furthermore, being like everybody else in America, chiefly concerned with only his own economic interests, the farmer has not been enthusiastic for legislation devised for the benefit of any other section of the population but his own. He has had a natural antagonism to the program and demands of organized labor and has had no sympathy with it. Part of this antagonism is from the natural rural prejudice against all things urban, and part of it comes from his class selfishness. Except in his own individual narrow
field he has always been non-cooperative. Along with this has been the hired hand, or agricultural worker, who has been almost impossible to organize. The very nature of his work and living conditions have put him into a distinct class by himself. Regardless of the fact that he is largely propertyless, and at the mercy of his employer in regard to hours and wages, he has absorbed part of the farmer's individualism. The very conditions of his life and work make him non-cooperative.

Some form of constructive farm relief has been one of the main political questions before Congress for the past twelve years. It is admitted on all sides that something drastic must be done to put the whole agricultural class upon a solvent basis, but we do not even now find the wheat section, the cotton section, the corn section, the dairy interests, or the tobacco section, in one united plan, or in one united force. They are suspicious of each other, and they are more than suspicious of the industrial worker's demands.

3. We have next the "fat and contented" middle class in America who have at all times allied themselves with the capitalist class. They have been the bulwark of the conservative old parties; they have been antagonistic to a large degree toward the laboring class, and particularly against organized labor; they regard themselves as superior to the wage earner; they are stand-pat, conservative, and interested
mainly in preserving their status quo. They are born into their political beliefs. Family tradition, not reason and common sense, has been their guiding star. Blinded by tradition, by prejudice, and by economic well-being, they are only lately awaking to their real position. The rapid changes taking place in American economic life during the past ten years is at last giving a rude shock to the complacency of the middle class. Giant corporations, trusts, mergers, consolidations, chain banks, chain stores, the elimination of the small business man through cut-throat competition and price-cutting, the increasing use of machines and the consequent load of capital needed to run a successful competitive business—all these factors are rapidly putting the middle class in the position of wage earners in fact as well as in theory. They no longer have security even of employment. With the mergers and consolidations taking place for the main purpose of reducing overhead costs, it is the high salaried man who gets eliminated first. This case is easily proven by viewing what has taken place during the present depression in our great industrial plants. Consequently, we may now expect the old middle class antagonism to the labor movement to recede upon their realization that their position is in fact

10. Ibid.
that of a wage earner.

9. Hovering on the fringe of the middle class, and allying themselves with it, has been the great mass of "white-collar" wage earners. As a class they are more to be indicted than any other group, for their feeling of superiority, their attitude, their actions, are hard to understand except in the light of the ridiculous. Among these people are the thousands of salesmen, clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers, delivery boys, messengers, household servants, secretaries, agents, etc. They wear "white collars", not overalls; they have clean hands; their clothes are usually pressed; therefore, they are not, in their own minds, wage earners. They would be insulted by the term of laborer. By the magic of a white collar they are superior to and not a part of the wage earning class. They would be firm supporters of a caste system if we had one. They are not as well off financially as the master bricklayer or master plumber; they are most certainly not as secure of employment, and they do not dare assert any spirit of independence. However, that does not alter their self-esteem. They ape those above them, look down on those supposedly beneath them, and have a consuming fear of not being able to "keep up with the Joneses". They are servile, dependent, and insecure in their economic life. By any amount of reasoning they should be

actively allied with the labor movement, but their peculiar state of mind has prevented it.

This class is being continually increased by our system of universal, free, non-selective education. Thousands upon thousands of college graduates are turned out every year. Thousands of them had no business in college in the first place. With no definite training, with no definite aim, they are yearly dumped upon a world already overloaded with their type. Since many of them have gone to college with a more or less vague idea of becoming something superior, many of them only to please their parents, many of them for merely athletics or a good time, they are educated, as they themselves think, above the laboring class, while at the same time they are unfitted and untrained for anything in particular. They enter the "white collar" class just mentioned, or become bitter and aloof antagonists of an unappreciative world.

In some degree the ordinary school teacher, even the college professor, may be indicted as a member of the great white collar class. Considered as "highbrows" by the wage earner, and considering themselves as a distinct class and feeling that certain things are due them as a class, they have done very little to improve or make secure their economic position. In spite of the fact that the community expects and demands certain standards of the teacher, the teacher's position and his salary are both at the mercy of factions in
the community. He has little security of either job or salary. In some communities he is allowed neither freedom of thought or speech; he may not teach what he knows to be true for fear of offending the power trust, the copper trust, or some political gang. Considering what is expected of the teacher in ability, intelligence, training and morals, and the nature of his work, no class should have a greater guarantee of security and advancement. Scarcely any other group is more at the mercy of elements beyond its control. They have been more disorganized than most of the other white collar groups. It needs hardly to be said that the teaching profession must ally itself definitely with the general labor movement as the only possible means of procuring and enforcing their needs through legislation. We say through legislation because it would be difficult to get the teaching profession to be a party to the methods of collective bargaining.

10. Another important item in the list of influences affecting the American labor movement is the early date in our history at which the American common man and wage earner obtained universal suffrage, equality before the law, and free public education. These privileges, dear to the heart of political revolutionists, were all obtained within the first fifty years of our history. The continued lack of them, as the country became more settled, would have done
wonders to unite labor as a class, as it did in England.
Our workers had practically universal suffrage before the
workers in other countries had the same right. The labor
vote, although not united, has been a significant factor in
all American political struggles almost from the beginning
of the republic. If universal suffrage, equality before the
law, and free education had not been obtained until late in
the nineteenth century, the American wage earner would have
been class conscious—fighting as a unit for both political
and social reform—and would not have divided his allegiance
among the parties that suited his fancy.

11. It is a well known fact that the presence of a large
industrial class of wage earners is an essential item for the
formation of a labor party within a country. This class did
not amount to a significant factor in the United States until
late in our history. On account of our abundant natural
resources and abundant land, capital at first found more
profitable investment in the extractive industries than in
manufacturing. Not until late in the nineteenth century did
manufacturing begin to rival agriculture in economic importance
in the United States. The complete industrialization of the
United States has come only within the past twenty years. Only
within the past twelve years has the United States changed
from a debtor nation in foreign trade to a creditor nation.12

This slow growth from an agricultural nation to a predominant industrial nation has profoundly retarded the labor movement in America. Industrialization of a country brings with it an increase in urban areas, another factor in the labor movement. For when a country is mostly rural and "small town" it is by nature individualistic. The United States has changed only within the past fifteen years to a predominant urban population.

12. The impotency of organized labor itself in the United States, due to many of the causes mentioned before—the political policy of the American Federation of Labor; the selfishness of the craft unions; the failure to do anything at all for the great mass of unskilled labor; the new methods used to combat it by employers' associations; its almost complete breakdown during the great depression—has been, and is, a very retarding factor in a unified labor effort. According to Leo Wolman, organized labor is as weak or weaker now than before the World War. 13 The United Mine Workers, formerly a strong organization, is in a state of almost complete demoralization. Nearly all metal trades unions have declined. No progress has been made in the organization of railroad workers outside of the "Big Four" Brotherhod;

The textile industry, steel industry, food industry, automobile,
oil, and chemical industries all remain practically untouched by unionism. Since labor as a whole has been accustomed to look to organized labor as its spokesman, this general breakdown in the ranks of organized labor has had a demoralizing effect upon the labor movement. But, as we shall attempt to point out later, this very breakdown, this past impotency of labor, may be the means of bringing about a new, unified, effective force.

One of the causes of the decline in organized labor is the renewed vigor with which the heads of trusts and giant corporations are fighting the demands of labor. Within the past few years the employers have formed associations for the direct purpose of combating unionism. With the immense political and financial power these corporations are able to bring to bear against both the wage earner and social legislation, aided now by a long period of depression, labor faces an uphill battle even to survive. Witness the statement of the late Judge Gary, formerly head of United States Steel: "There is at present no necessity for labor unions, and no benefits or advantages through them that will accrue to anyone except the union leaders." More violent is the statement of John Kirby, Jr., former president of the National Association of

Manufacturers, who said, "My denunciation is of a defiant labor trust machine, every page of whose history is black with the foulest deeds of inhumanity and injustice ....... To temporize with or yield one jot or tittle to the demands of organized labor is to share in the responsibility for the criminal conspiracies in which such organizations are engaged." There is also the delay, and possible defeat, of the child labor amendment, which was submitted to the states back in 1924, due to clever propagandas by the textile manufacturers. By use of blacklists, company spies, company towns and stores, "yellow dog contracts", company unions, and various methods of profit sharing and stock ownership, the employers' associations have been steadily and determinedly undermining the labor movement. Also add to this the very definite encouragement given to big business by the late President Coolidge, and his oft repeated statement that the "business of America is business", and his philosophy that the commonweal would benefit only through giving a free hand and aid to big business as such.

13. We have also the factor of social work which has influenced the labor movement in a peculiar manner. The United States stands out among all nations in the amount and character of its social work and charitable organizations. Prac-

tically every community has had its organized charities or community cheat organizations. Unquestionably, they have done great good and helped prevent untold misery; they most certainly are necessary under our present system; but they are measures of relief, not measures of prevention. Under a better organized society the greater amount of this community relief would be unnecessary. Most certainly many of the millions poured into organized charity is done with the hope of thereby attoning for past sins and of winning some sure salvation in the next world. This has been what President Hoover, until lately, spoke of and praised as part of the "American" plan—each community look after its own, and in some way we will come out all right in the end. It does not need repeating here that local charities are breaking down under the burden of the great depression; also, that the people upon whom both taxes and charity fall doubly hard are asking for some saner method—a method of prevention rather than of relief. 17

Granted all this, how has social work and organized charity affected the labor movement? First, by accepting the load of relief without joining in a united effort to prevent the causes that make relief necessary. Second, by accepting this burden they have come to the aid of state and national

governments thereby letting them out of the responsibility and expense. Third, by so doing they have aided state and national governments in evading social legislation which would act as preventives. Fourth, most of our social and relief work is done by non-political organizations, and as such they do not have much power to prevent the ills which they attempt to cure. Fifth, such relief activities, even in their best form, are still charity and this is degrading to many that receive it. It is also a breeder of a permanent "dole" class.

If our people were not so generous, if they had long ago demanded legislation or a reorganization of our society which would have been a means of prevention, the issue would have been forced upon the political parties. The party that would have accepted and have put through such plans would have been in fact a labor party. As it is, our great social work has operated as an opiate on the labor movement and its demands.

14. Finally, we have had an entire lack of class consciousness as a most serious factor in the futility of labor as a political force. Most of the factors just mentioned in this chapter on the economic, political, and social elements have contributed to disunity and lack of commonness of purpose, but there has been another and more fundamental lack of class consciousness in that the wage earner in America has refused to regard himself as belonging to a definite class.
There is no caste system of birth or title in America. In theory, at least, one man is as good as another. In England, and in most European nations, a man's social and economic status are practically fixed by accident of birth. For the majority of these people it is exceedingly difficult to scale the barriers in the social and economic ladder. They admit, in these countries, that they are of the laboring class and work on that basis.

The economic situation can make or mar a labor party. Essential to a successful labor party is a well developed class consciousness, a feeling of unity—even if there is not entire unity of purpose—among the wage earners. Now if it is possible, or what is more important, if the laborer himself thinks it is, to climb to higher and higher economic levels, as long as he has this constant possibility, no difference how improbable, he will not unite himself firmly and definitely with the members of his present class to wage political warfare against the ruling economic classes. The American dreams of becoming a small capitalist, at least, sometime himself. It is only when men resign themselves to the fact that the great majority of themselves are fixed for life in a definite class that they are able to feel class consciousness.

Our former economic system, and abundance of free land and bountiful natural resources, have already been described
as perfect soil for the growth and perpetuation of an
individualistic philosophy. Individualism has not only
dominated the mind of the wage earner, but has dominated the
organized group as well. As long as the individual, or the
group, had economic well-being, as long as they were self-
sufficient, as long as the heights were possible for any man,
they did not look to the state for aid. This being true, they
were not greatly concerned about cooperating in a political
organization for general welfare. As stated before, the
absolute essentials of a united labor movement are: a consci-
ciousness of kind, a feeling of unity, a commonness of pur-
pose, and a will to cooperate.

Labor politics has thus far been wholly palliative. Only
at the end of a series of great strikes aimed to keep wages
abreast of rising prices, or to gain relief from intolerable
conditions, has labor gone into politics. The masses have not
gone into politics until depressions forced it upon them, and
they have gone out of it as soon as time brought relief. Under
such conditions labor parties can not thrive. Each disavowal
of politics makes the next avowal that much harder. Even
after it has been solemnly resolved that labor must organize
on the political side as well as on the economic side it has
been exceedingly difficult to put the resolution into action.
There has been no real political organization; there was no history of past accomplishments; there have been no inspiring leaders, spell-binders, ward-heelers, and all the necessary clap-trap of a political organization. Factional groups have split conventions as soon as met. The past labor political conventions have been a babel of tongues. The more conservative elements would withdraw; the others remained to fight. The old standard parties reaped the benefit of labor convention disagreements. The socialists have been the only ones that have presented organization and leadership to American labor, but the very name of socialist has made the American wage earner shy of such an organization. Schooled for generations in fear or ridicule of the socialist, his antagonism sharpened by the intense wave against everything "radical" during the World War, the American laboring element might have accepted the socialist's program under any other name.

The American wage earner has largely himself to blame, of course, for the above condition of affairs, but we must keep in mind all the various factors that have made him the sort of political animal that he is.
The World War brought about many changes in American thought and life. The labor movement entered a new period, a period with new color, greater magnitude and more intensity. Labor had made great gains during the war years. Many legal restrictions had been removed or overlooked, wages were high and the general standard of living had attained a new high level. The need for greater production and greater cooperation on the part of labor as a vital element in the war had made both government and employer willing to grant concessions. The Wilson administration had followed up the Rooseveltian gospel of a "square deal" to workers and consumers. The American worker was also becoming greatly interested in the political success of the British labor movement and European socialist doctrines were gaining a new interest among all our wage earners. Furthermore, the United States had come of age as a great industrial nation during and immediately after the war. This last change was a particularly significant factor in the new phase of labor and politics.

Following the War there came a great popular uprising in the United States against "Wilsonism" and everything Demo-
ocratic and in 1920 the Old Guard Republicans returned to power and, under President Harding, gave the country one of the most inefficient and corrupt national administrations in our history. An industrial reaction had set in soon after the war and with political reactionaries in power labor received a great set-back. Also, the rise of Bolshevism and Communism in Russia and the unfavorable publicity it received in this country created a fanatical wave of public opinion against any measure or action that smacked of "radicalism". Third Parties were branded as "Red" and un-American. Militant labor leaders were regarded as a social menace. Efforts and activities of labor unions to protect themselves by strikes or boycotts were published far and wide as the work of communists who were plotting to overthrow our cherished American institutions. Such was the situation facing the labor movement in 1920.

Naturally, there must come a period of let-down and readjustment from the high geared action of war, but there was no real necessity for industry and government to make labor share the major burden of reconstruction. Our war profiteers could well afford to reorganize at some less profit to themselves—but that would have been an unheard of thing in a country whose system permits and exalts excess profits as an altar upon which labor is the first and only sacrifice.
Profits must be maintained at the expense of humanity.¹

Therefore, in 1919-20, wages were cut, hours were in many cases lengthened, concessions granted during the war were disregarded. Employment was cut to a figure that would still insure good profits and unemployment rose to a new high figure of nearly 5,000,000 in 1921. The return of over a million men to civilian life added greatly to unemployment.² Thousands of these men returned to find that they no longer had jobs, that employers who had grown rich and fat on war profits would not give back jobs to men who had risked their lives to make the "world safe for Democracy".

Realizing that labor was likely to lose all and more than had been gained, Mr. Gompers and other leaders of the American Federation of Labor drew up a Reconstruction Program which was presented to both major political party conventions and which was vigorously backed by the American Federation of Labor and welfare organizations throughout the country. The country had more or less "run wild" during 1919. Profiteering continued and for a time became worse. There was a general uproar over the high cost of living, for the purchasing power of the dollar of 1914 was only forty-eight cents in 1920.

² Thomas, op. cit., pp. 32-38.
The class that suffered most from these circumstances was the salaried group whose income was more or less fixed. The truce which the government had imposed on capital and labor during the war having come to an end, the energies of the opposing forces broke loose. The year of 1919 saw almost 3,400 major strikes of which the most serious was the strike of nearly 600,000 coal miners. Attorney-General Palmer proved to be the real nemesis of labor, using all the powers of the Federal Government to break strikes, putting new restrictions on the bargaining powers of organized labor, deporting hundreds of radical aliens, outlawing radical organizations and managing to make even the staidest citizens afraid of the "Red Terror".

The Reconstruction Program of organized labor advocated the following main provisions aimed at the above conditions and in protection of the rights of labor: legislation to prevent child labor exploitation, federal and state regulation of capital stocks and bonded indebtedness of corporations, prevention of interference by employers of the right of labor to organize, no employment agencies to be operated by private concerns for profit, right of free speech and assembly (in labor matters), public utilities to be owned and operated by

4. Commons and Andrews, op. cit., Ch. 3.
the government in the interest of the public welfare, government supervision and aid for home building, immediate effective restriction of immigration, legislation enabling Congress to declare statutes valid over a Supreme Court verdict of unconstitutionality, employment and land allotment for veterans, state insurance instead of employers' liability insurance—which has been operating at a profit, equal pay for equal work, federal ownership of water power, and the acknowledgment of the wage question as the fundamental economic and social question. 5

The Federation tried to get the Republicans, then the Democrats, to embody the main parts of their reconstruction program in the party platforms. Neither party gave labor much attention or satisfaction, although the Democrats implied that they would do much more for labor than the Republicans. At the same time advocates of independent political action started a new party, the Farmer-Labor Party. Their demands were somewhat more radical than the program of the Federation. Parley Christensen of Utah and Max Hayes of Ohio were named to head the Farmer-Labor ticket. This new party was a combination of three groups, the Committee of Forty-Eight (middle class intellectuals), the Non-Partisan League, and the National Labor Party which was composed of radical

members of the American Federation of Labor. It was an attempt to get a union of all classes of wage earners into a distinct labor party.

The Socialists held themselves aloof from this new party, demanding that such movements should join the ranks of the Socialist party. Eugene Debs was nominated for the fifth time to head the party.

The campaign waged between the two major parties was fought out mainly on the question of the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles, the revolt against "Wilsonism" and various charges and counter-charges in regard to the high cost of living and the economic disorder following the war. Social and economic programs were overlooked and overshadowed by international questions and the national internal political reaction.

Thus in 1920, we have the following situation: the Republicans and Democrats practically ignored measures or programs needed and demanded by labor. The Socialist party, the Farmer-Labor party and the American Federation of Labor were all working for much the same program but their efforts were divided. The leaders of the American Federation of Labor, continuing their policy of no separate political action and believing that the Democratic party held out the most hope for relief, threw their unofficial support to Cox and his party. However, the individual voters of the American Federa-
tion of Labor joined the popular reaction against Wilson and the Democrats and gave their support to the Republicans. Harding was elected by a great majority, but less than half the eligible voters went to the polls. Harding's popular vote was 15,152,000, Cox's was 9,152,000, Deb's was 919,800, and Christensen's 265,400. Harding carried every state except the Solid South. The Congressional election was an equally impressive victory for the Republicans. If the American Federation of Labor had joined forces and given all its support to one of the independent parties the individual members might have followed suit and some real advance would have been made in the political program desired by labor. New parties were branded as "Reds" thus losing popular appeal. Also, failure of labor to follow the American Federation of Labor's backing of the Democrats, combined with the great defeat of this party, discouraged the Federation leaders and influenced them in the continuing of the old non-partisan policy.

Harding's administration did nothing for the cause of labor. The great coal strike continued in 1922, and to this was added the strike of the great railway brotherhoods involving 300,000 employees. Attorney-General Harry Daugherty secured a drastic injunction against the railway workers which practically forbade all activities of trade
union officials. The public was not sympathetic in the disorders and trials of labor because it was educated by our press and public officials to believe that any protests against the existing system was "Red" radicalism.

Added to industrial troubles was the new and serious economic plight of the farmers. In 1919 the farm crop of the United States was valued at $16,000,000,000 as compared with $6,000,000,000 before the war. Then the prices of wheat, corn, cotton and cattle declined in the business slump of 1920-21 the farmers found themselves in a desperate situation. Most of them had over expanded and borrowed heavily--encouraged by the war government--and they now found themselves burdened by mortgage debts. Wheat fell from a price of $2.14 in 1919 to $.93 in 1923. Other staples fell in proportion. However, freight rates continued to be excessively high and local tax rates remained at a level three times higher than pre-war days. Expenses were higher than ever, interest payments had to be met or mortgages would be foreclosed, but the income of the farmer had touched bottom.

Thus the stage was all set for what might result in an independent united action of farmer-labor as an only source of relief in the campaign of 1924. With thousands of strikes

of the industrial workers, involving over a million and a half wage earners, with unemployment at a new high figure during 1921-22, with the farmer class facing foreclosure and ruin, with the government and the courts restricting the powers essential to the collective bargaining of trade unionism, the way was paved for a new phase of political action on the part of labor.

Several groups, among whom were the powerful and conservative railroad brotherhoods, joined with the Socialists in the organization of the Conference for Progressive Political Action. Here was a labor movement that held out a promise of political success; it had the promise of support of organized labor, was right wing in tendencies and did not seem to be involved in the usual factional disputes which have always disrupted labor parties. The Conference for Progressive Political Action met for organization in February, 1922. At a second meeting it refused to enroll communist members or programs, and at a third meeting the decision was made to enter the political campaign as a distinct Third party. On July 4, 1924, Senator LaFollette was offered, and accepted, the nomination on his own platform.

Early in 1924 the Conference had issued an appeal to labor unions, farm organizations and progressive political groups to send delegates to a national convention at Cleveland, on July 4th to adopt a platform and select a national ticket
and when the day arrived delegates poured into the convention from all over the country. In addition to the various labor elements there were many insurgents from the two old parties. The nomination of Coolidge and Dawes by the Republican National Convention led to open revolt by the progressive independent group who had formed the farm bloc in the Senate. The Democratic Convention had been embroiled in a bitter fight for nearly three weeks between the opposing factions of Smith and McAdoo. This fight was between the wet anti- Klan forces of Smith and the dry, Wilson policy forces of McAdoo. An impossible gulf separated the two Democratic factions and a compromise was at last reached on the nomination of John J. Davis, legal advisor to the Morgan interests, and Governor Charles Bryan of Nebraska. This battle and resulting compromises embittered many Democrats, many of whom rallied to the new Third Party.

The national convention for Progressive Political Action adopted the name of the Progressive Farmer-Labor Party and unanimously nominated LaFollette and Sheeler— one a radical Republican and the other a radical Democrat. A platform, written by LaFollette was adopted which endorsed the demands of organized labor on the injunction and living standards. It took the side of the railroad brotherhoods in their dispute with the owners and with the Railroad Labor Board. It denounced the control of industrial life by trusts and
monopolies and advocated the public ownership of all public utilities. It went on to condemn official corruption and thoroughly blasted the Harding administration. The Supreme Court was attacked as an upholder of the status quo and the platform advocated instant abolition of the right of the Supreme Court to nullify acts of Congress. Other important measures endorsed were the child labor amendment, downward revision of tariffs, prohibition of gambling in agricultural futures, adequate laws to guarantee the farmers and industrial workers the right to organize and bargain collectively, the creation of a governmental agricultural marketing corporation, an anti-injunction law, direct nomination and election of the President, a popular referendum on a declaration of war, farm loans to be liberalized, and adjusted compensation for veterans.8

This Farmer-Labor Progressive Party of 1924 and its platform and candidates received the endorsement of the various former Farmer-Labor groups and the hearty approval of the Socialists who saw in it the promise at last of a real Labor party. The American Federation of Labor, for the first time in its history, endorsed a Presidential candidate and a third party. This, then, was the first Presidential

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campaign in which organized labor would formally take part and in which socialists, middle-class intellectuals, farmers, and organized workers of all classes were to unite in a common political cause. LaFollette conducted a whirlwind and effective personal campaign. In some states he spoke under the Socialist banner, in others he used the name of the Farmer-Labor party, in still others he spoke as the leader of the Progressive or Independent ticket—all in an effort to awaken a unified interest in a common cause. However, he received no organized support and had no state organizations of any value outside of Wisconsin, North Dakota and Minnesota. Republican leaders woke up to the fact that LaFollette might be dangerous and they directed their chief fire against him. His Third Party was made to appear as one made up of red radicals and the cry of "Bolshevism" was raised as a threat to American institutions.

In spite of the attacks of the "controlled" press and in spite of the lack of organization and united interest, LaFollette might well have been the first Labor President if it had not been for the action of the American Federation of Labor in the last weeks of the campaign. There is still a widespread belief that the American Federation of Labor gave the Progressive Party of 1924 its backing and endorsement throughout the campaign. The truth is quite the contrary. In August, 1924, the Executive Committee of the Federation
met at Atlantic City and adopted the following report:

The Executive Committee presented labor's demands to the Republican Convention but received a very brief and curt hearing. The Republican platform ignores the injunction issue, sustains the Railroad Labor Board and its governmental coercion of wage earners and fails to recommend a suitable child labor amendment. Also the Republican candidates are unacceptable to organized labor.

The Committee also submitted labor's demands to the Democratic convention. The A. F. of L. is against the Democrat's proposal to regulate all hours and conditions of labor. The Democratic candidates are not acceptable to labor. The Democratic platform is silent on the injunction issue, the Railroad Labor Board and child labor.

The LaFollette-Wheeler party offers a platform, and candidates, as near to labor's desires as could be hoped for in a political party. Both candidates are independent, progressive and throughout their careers have defended the rights and interests of wage earner and farmer.

Both the Republican and Democratic parties are in a state of manipulated control and moral bankruptcy and constitute a menace to our country under the hands of machine politicians.

Cooperation with the new independent progressive LaFollette party is urged, but not as a pledge of identification with, nor can it be construed as support of, an independent Third party.

This cooperation is voluntary on the part of our individual members. It does not imply the Federation's support, acceptance, or indorsement of party of candidates. Organized labor owes no allegiance to any political party.

Leadership must lie with the only organization having the right to speak for the entire labor movement. In this the A. F. of L. yields to no one, but will maintain its own leadership and guidance.

It is the duty of all trade unionists to follow the traditional non-partisan policy of the American Federa-
ination of Labor—that of electing our friends and de-
feating our enemies, regardless of party affiliations.

The National American Federation of Labor Convention,
at El Paso in September, 1924, adopted the report of its
Executive Committee. It voted against two resolutions which
would have committed its membership to support the new
political party, voting to adhere as usual to a strictly
non-partisan policy. The Convention readopted and reaffirmed
the statement of Compere, "That party politics, whether they
be Republican, Democrat, Socialist, Populist, or any other,
shall have no place in the conventions of the American Fed-
eration of Labor; that political programs launched by labor
groups are ephemeral, extravagant and unwise expenditures of
strength; that political movements of such nature are short-
lived and accomplish no lasting good; that the existence of
the trade union movement cannot be gambled in the political
arena." Vice-President Woll of the Federation said, "Our
resolution intends that organized labor shall use all parties
and be used by none." 10

This action on the part of the leaders of the American
Federation of Labor amounted to a last minute betrayal of the
cause of labor. After indorsing the LaFollette Third party
and platform at the time of the July convention of the Con-

10. Ibid.
ference for Progressive Political Action and after giving hope that for once the American Federation of Labor would join forces with a united labor-farmer party, the Federation backed down on its promise and withdrew its support at the most critical time in the campaign. One reads with amazement their committee's report in which they complain of their dismissal at the hands of the Republican and Democratic conventions, their entire approval of LaFollette's ticket and platform, and then their refusal to back the very party that meets with their approval. One cannot know the real motives behind such action but it leaves a strong suspicion of action based upon the selfish interest of American Federation of Labor leaders in keeping themselves in high positions (exceedingly well paid) and the fear of losing leadership through engaging in politics. The more outspoken members of the Progressive Party, in disgust and disappointment, accused the leaders of the American Federation of Labor of being in collusion with, or subject to, the machine bosses of the two old parties. At least, the leaders of the American Federation of Labor held fast to their outworn and selfish policy at the expense of the cause of the general labor movement and withdrew from an opportunity to throw their great influence and resources into the fight for the interests of all wage earners.

Again the American people showed their peculiar lack of
effective interest in politics as only 51% of the eligible voters went to the polls. The results of the election were as follows: Coolidge's popular vote was 15,725,000; Davis 8,386,500; LaFollette 4,822,000. The electoral vote showed 382 for Coolidge, 136 for Davis and 13 for LaFollette. The industrial middle and eastern states gave Coolidge a great majority, showing the possible influence of the action of the American Federation of Labor. The 69th Congress also showed a large Republican majority.

The leaders of the new Progressive Party had expected a much greater popular vote and had hopes that, regardless of the election returns, the foundation would be completed for a united labor party for the future. They were bitterly disappointed in the general apathy of the wage earners, their refusal to desert their old party allegiances, and the stand-off policy of the American Federation of Labor. Their nearly 5,000,000 votes, which was really a fine beginning, appeared to them to be woefully small and they went into mourning. The insurgent senators and congressmen made their peace with the old party machines and were received back into the fold. The Conference for Progressive Action did not live much longer. The railroad brotherhoods withdrew. The American Federation of Labor publicly regretted their former support and pointed to the election results as a proof of the wisdom of their non-belief in Third parties. The Socialists also went back
to their own distinct organization, and in February, 1925, the Conference for Progressive Political Action completely dissolved. The former national Farmer-Labor group became weak and inactive. In fact, the Socialists were the only group that held its ranks intact.

Labor did not figure as much of a political force in the campaign of 1928. This was the height of the era of the "golden twenties" and the campaign was waged in the midst of unparalleled prosperity. Business men, economists and working men by the thousands were hypnotized by that prosperity. Delegations came from all over the world to investigate the cause of American well-being. The common impression was that we had entered upon a period of permanent prosperity. The curve of the business cycle was being ironed out. Business was becoming stabilized. Americans were beginning to realize how great and apparently inexhaustible were the resources of the country and were evaluating their securities at their "true value". The new capitalism was bringing a degree of security and comfort to the masses of wage earners such as was formerly thought to be attainable only by the few. This at least was the message of the Republican party.

Herbert Hoover declared that "the slogan of progress is changing from the full dinner pail to the full garage. Our people are better fed, better clothed and have better homes than any people in the world. A job to every man and
woman has been made more secure. We have, since 1921, decreased the fear of poverty, the fear of unemployment, the fear of dependent old age, a continuation of the policies of the Republican party is fundamentally necessary to this progress and to the further building up of this prosperity.\textsuperscript{11}

Al Smith, Democratic candidate, pointed out several discrepancies in Hoover's statement, but John J. Raskob--financial backer of the Democratic party--and other leading Democratic figures were themselves gathering in huge profits in market manipulations and to them 'Republican prosperity' did not seem an altogether mythical thing.\textsuperscript{12}

Norman Thomas was nominated by the Socialist party. He pointed out that, despite all claims to the contrary, insecurity has been increasing; that from 1920 to 1927 there were anywhere from 1,500,000 to 4,000,000 out of work in the United States; that such vital industries as agriculture, textiles and mining were in the doldrums; that the productivity of the workers was increasing at a far greater rate than were their wages; that the so-called good times were based largely upon false values and paper profits, and were kept up by temporary expedients, including high pressure

\textsuperscript{11} Campaign Speech, Des Moines, Iowa.
salesmanship and installment buying, and that a day of reckoning would soon arrive.

However, the average man, caught up in the great wave of seeming prosperity, listened to the "Great Engineer" or the "Happy Warrior" and let it go at that. Norman Thomas, the Socialist, and the most outstanding man in character and intellect ever to head his party, received scant attention from the general public. Thomas had broadened the Socialist program in an effort to reenlist the Progressive groups of 1924 but his effort was a dismal failure.

The political stage had been cleared somewhat by 1926 through the deaths of several great leaders. In 1924 both Wilson and Lodge died. LaFollette and S. J. Bryan died in 1925 and in 1926 Eugene Debs, Samuel Gompers and "Uncle Joe" Cannon passed away. Death had removed familiar political figures, both conservative and radical, from the ranks of all parties and had opened the way to a new type of leader—Hoover the engineer, hard-headed and practical administrator; Smith the "Happy Warrior", a product of the streets of New York; Thomas a Princeton graduate, an intellectual Socialist and a former minister of the gospel.

The Republican platform of 1928 gave little satisfaction to the demands of welfare organizations and the American Federation of Labor received only vague pledges. The platform was not so much a statement of future policies as it was a
praise and summary of past Republican legislation. It was declared a principle of the Republican party that the Federal Government should not move into the field of state activities or in the field of private enterprise. This is a significant statement as it was in direct conflict with the demands of wage earners.

The Democratic platform differed very little from the Republican except that it voiced a vigorous denial of Republican claims, and argued for tariff reductions and reform in banking laws. It contained no specific labor plank.

As usual, both parties promised broad and general measures with no definite provisions. The Republican party was hailed as the guardian of prosperity and even as the originator of it. The gospel of "perpetual" prosperity was preached on all sides. In contrast with this the Democrats had little to offer in program or appeal and their candidate was hindered by religious antipathy and also by his open espousal of the repeal of prohibition.

The campaign was unusually exciting and attracted a surprisingly large vote. The extensive use of the radio for the first time and the presence of religious and prohibition issues roused millions from their normal political apathy. Hoover's popular vote was 21,429,000, Smith's a little over 15,000,000, while Thomas received only 287,835. Hoover's electoral vote was 447 to 87 for Smith. Congress was Repub-
lisan by a large majority.

Under all the above named conditions it is not difficult to see that any attempts to form a distinct labor vote, or Third party, were hopeless tasks. The election figures show the great popularity of the Republican leaders and the popular belief in Republican policies. Labor itself joined in the great "prosperity parade".

Hoover's administration started out under most auspicious political and economic conditions, but all this was soon to change. The great stock market crash occurred in October, 1929, and with it was ushered in the great depression, economic chaos and misery, a change in the Congressional line-up in the 1930 elections, political insurgency within the Republican ranks and bitter conflicts between President and Congress. A great popular political upheaval began to take place throughout America and Hoover's administration received more than its share of blame for not only its record during the depression but even was accused of being partly responsible for the depression. 13

Before taking up the 1932 campaign and its surprising results it is necessary to get a clear picture of the record of Hoover's administration and to see whether the facts justify the popular reaction against him and his party. Facts

and issues became so clouded in the campaign that the average man wanted only to vote against Hoover. How this affected the political fortunes of labor will be discussed later. There is no question but that the general misunderstanding of just what did happen during the Hoover period greatly affected labor's attitude in the 1932 campaign and helps explain the popular shift to the Democratic party rather than to a Third party or the Socialist party.\footnote{White, op. cit., Saturday Evening Post.}

There were four major problems confronting the Hoover administration in its early period, namely, farm relief, the tariff, naval disarmament and prohibition. To these a fifth was added, that of unemployment on an unprecedented scale, beginning with 1930.

The main features of Hoover's record are as follows:

1. Withdrew all public lands from exploitation by oil producers.

2. Tried to cleanse Republican politics in the South and stopped the scandal of office-broking.

3. Did not make an effective protest against the Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930, the highest on record. He yielded to the pressure of political groups in spite of the protests and figures submitted by one thousand economists and against the protests of liberal leaders like Capper and White. This tariff injured the American farmer, American investors abroad, our exporting industries and increased unemployment. It increased international friction and set in motion retaliatory tariffs in Europe and South America.
4. He vetoed the McHenry-Haugan farm relief bill and the debenture plan. Regardless of the criticism of these bills they were much more defensible than the new tariff bill.

5. Instead of the above farm relief plans, Hoover put through the establishment of the Federal Farm Board equipped with a revolving fund of $500,000,000. Its purposes were to foresee and prevent over-production, to encourage organizations of cooperative societies, to form stabilization corporations for the staple crops—cooperatively owned—and to buy and sell temporary surpluses in these crops. Hoover more or less assured the country that this plan would react greatly to the benefit of the farmer. The facts are now well known that the scheme did not help the farmer and even aroused bitter resentment in the agricultural states. It turned out to be an expensive and dismal failure. However, there are many who claim that the fault was not in the bill but in the men chosen to administer the plan.

Overproduction was not stopped. The stabilization corporation bought and held one surplus after another and held them off the market. Prices remained low, and the existence of the board's surpluses helped depress prices still further. Loans were not repaid to any extent and the revolving fund did not revolve. The board gave away millions of bushels of wheat to the Red Cross and sold the rest at a great loss.

6. In view of the difficulties of prohibition enforcement and its connection with the increasing crime wave, Hoover appointed a fact-finding commission, headed by George W. Wickersham, known as the Prohibition Law Enforcement Commission. After about a year of investigation and study this commission, composed of very able and generally impartial men, submitted the results of their findings in three general conclusions: (1) that prohibition was working very badly, (2) that it was best to give it further trial, but with a reorganization of the machinery of administration, (3) that only a change in the national temper and attitude could contribute to the real success of prohibition, and that if it continued to fail there must soon be submitted a national referendum on the question.

For some reason the findings of the commission were
known to be quite distasteful to Hoover and a
large amount of the report was suppressed. The
press was given a summary which distorted its real
contents, representing the report as a justification
of prohibition when in fact a majority of the com-
mmission believed in either revising or repealing the
18th Amendment.

President Hoover sent the report to Congress with a
message which still further misrepresented its con-
tenits. The impression was gained that Hoover was
disgruntled by the candor with which the report
pictured the failure and breakdown of prohibition
and that he tried to tone down the adverse report of
his own commission so as not to offend the strong
dry element who looked to Hoover as a staunch sup-
porter of the 18th Amendment. Hoover thus came in
for a great amount of criticism for practically re-
fusing to accept the scientific findings of a com-
mmission he himself had appointed. Various members
of the commission hurled charges right and left in
the press and the public never did get a clear idea
of just what they had gained from an appropriation
of a quarter of a million dollars.16

7. Hoover's foreign policies received general praise
and his record on this phase is conceded to be quite
good. He sent a strong delegation to the naval con-
ference in London in 1930 which brought about a five
power agreement for reduction in naval armaments
and a naval holiday to 1936. He is credited with
earnest and persistent efforts to interest all
powers at Geneva in peace plans and general disarma-
ment. He published a memorandum on the Monroe
Doctrine which helped to allay the fears and sus-
picions of South American countries, he kept on
friendly terms with Mexico and made concessions to
Mexico's land and oil legislation, and promised to
get the marines out of Nicaragua by 1932—which was
duly carried out.

8. Good work was done in the drought emergency of 1930.

9. The tariff commission was reorganized in 1931 and
given a much better complexion.

10. The Federal Power Commission was reorganized and given more scope.

11. A committee of eminent historians, economists and sociologists was appointed in 1930 to make an exhaustive research on social and economic life in the United States and the results of their findings have just recently been published in two large volumes entitled "Recent Social Trends".

12. His action in declaring a moratorium on war debt payments is generally conceded to have saved Germany from complete collapse although the action was somewhat nullified by France's delay in accepting. Hoover had a hard time convincing the American people of the value of the moratorium.

13. The Hoover acts of omission and commission in regard to the great depression and unemployment are the things for which he has been most severely criticized.

He publicly insisted that our troubles were only temporary and did not accept the real facts of the domestic collapse until early in 1932.

In 1930, due to a loud public demand, an Unemployment Census Commission was created. The findings of this commission were not recognized. Dr. Persons, Chairman, resigned because of "political meddling with and distortion of the facts".

Nothing was done to check the rapidly mounting national debt, although some reorganization and savings were suggested after 1931 but these were very inadequate. Hoover cannot be blamed entirely on this score because a hostile Congress refused to consider any attempts to reduce expenses. He had to compromise with Congress on all tax legislation and little was accomplished in this line.

In 1932 Hoover put through measures to help check

deflation, increase credit facilities, and help lighten distress and unemployment. Specific acts of this nature were the creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Glass-Steagall bill to insure the gold standard, and the Federal Home Loan Banks. The two billion dollar R. F. C. was for loans to public and private enterprises, loans to the states, and for new public works. The Home Loan Banks were to encourage and allow home building and ownership on easy long time credits. The Glass-Steagall Bill amended the Federal Reserve Act so as to permit the use of certain government bonds as coverage for the issue of federal notes thus releasing a portion of the banks' gold stock for business purposes. Groups of member banks who had exhausted their collateral eligible for discount by Federal Reserve Banks, and who were yet solvent, were permitted to borrow from the Federal Reserve System on joint promissory notes.

Hoover also made a personal appeal to the leaders of industry all over the country to maintain the wage scale and to keep intact their regular employees—a thing obviously impossible.

There is no doubt that these measures helped conditions for a short while but their effect was soon smothered in the tide of the depression which soon broke all bounds of reason or expectancy, becoming world wide in its scope. Furthermore, there was a great popular outcry against the way the R. F. C. funds were allocated, the common man seeing no direct benefit to himself and strongly suspicious of the motives which allowed a great amount of these emergency funds to be given to big eastern banks and trust companies.

14. Hoover was actively against any additional war veterans bonus bills and in 1932 made a personal appeal before the veterans' convention at Detroit to give up their demand for a cash payment of bonus certificates.

Then came the march on Washington by unemployed war veterans from every section of the United States demanding that Congress provide for the immediate cash redemption in full of all bonus certificates. It is estimated that over 100,000 men took part in this crusade. Hoover and Congress refused their de-
mands on the ground that the payment of so great an amount would place too great a strain on the already weakened financial system of the country and that the government had already exceeded its budget by two billion dollars. Thousands of the veterans camped on the Capitol grounds and the majority threatened to remain in Washington until their demands were met. Thousands of these men were without food, clothing, money or shelter and the conditions in their "shanty" town were a menace to the city. The government finally used troops to clear the city, offering trucks and a limited amount of money as an inducement for the bonus army to disperse. Trouble developed, bayonets, sabres and gas were used, and two of the veterans were killed in ensuing riots. Government officials, as usual, tried to excuse their acts by saying that the rioting was the work of "communists." Public opinion condemned the tactics used and Hoover came in for increased bitter feeling.

Such, in general, were the credits and debits of the Hoover regime. To what extent his administration is responsible for the sins of omission and commission, generally charged against it, can not be fairly judged at this time. The facts are not yet known and public opinion is at present much too biased. We are still in the lowest depths of the great depression and political judgment is warped by that fact.

Some things, however, are clear. Beginning with 1930 Hoover had to face a hostile Congress determined to block him on every side possible. Hoover was not a "politician" and soon fell out with the leaders of his own party in Congress. These insurgent Republicans joined in with the Democrats to make a large working majority against him. As conditions steadily grew worse public opinion seemed to confirm Congress
in its stand against Hoover thus making matters still worse. 18 The present Roosevelt regime shows how essential it is for an administration to have the full cooperation both of Congress and of public opinion.

We cannot judge at this time to what extent the Hoover administration was powerless to act, to what extent it was bound to party and campaign pledges—a curse of our present political system, to what extent it wished to act wisely but knew the futility of attempting measures doomed to failure. It is known that certain acts which the Roosevelt administration immediately put through were advocated by Hoover but were impossible to obtain under his leadership.

One thing is certain—Hoover’s regime was not responsible for the depression nor for its continuance or increasing intensity. This would appear to be a trite expression were it not for the fact that the “men in the street” came to feel that Hoover and his party were really the authors of the depression, and that Hoover could have stopped the economic chaos in its downward flight. The fundamental nature of our political and economic system contains the causes of our present misery. Individuals, handicapped under this system, can do little without a fundamental change in the

system. This phase and its relation to the labor move-
ment will be treated in a later chapter.

But the individualistic American citizen has not been
prone to attack the established system. He takes his
politics as a personal matter and, when blame is due, he
censures individuals, not systems. These facts explain in
great measure the political upheaval of the 1932 campaign.

In the midst of this atmosphere, in the midst of the
longest and most severe panic in our history, the 1932 cam-
paign was staged. The Republican Convention half-heartedly
renominated Hoover and Curtis on the first ballot. The
Democrats, after a spirited contest between the supporters of
Al Smith and Governor Roosevelt, both of New York, nominated
Roosevelt and Garner. The Socialist party again nominated
Norman Thomas.

The platforms of the two old parties contained as usual
few differences. The amazing thing about both Republican
and Democratic delegates was their immense concern over the
best way to legalize booze or repeal the 18th Amendment.
This issue took precedence over any serious concern as to the
economic chaos existing in the country. It is a clear
example of how the old parties pay so little attention to the
fundamental needs and issues at stake.

March 18 and April 8, 1931.
On the all-important economic and social questions confronting the country the Democratic platform was vague and the Republican platform more so. The sharpest division was on a tariff policy. The Democrats condemned the high Hawley-Smoot tariff, urged a "competitive tariff for revenue", asked for reciprocal agreements with other nations and an international conference to help restore world trade. There was no direct promise to lower tariffs as a whole.

The Republicans said nothing about war debt payments while the Democrats opposed cancellation but made no mention of a reduction or a moratorium. The platforms were quite similar on monetary questions. The Democrats did favor a "sound currency to be preserved at all hazards" but did not indicate what they considered a sound currency. Both parties asked for an international conference to consider monetary questions, including the position of silver.

Both platforms favored entrance into the World Court, both gave vague support to armament reduction, both wished the farmer "well" and favored cooperation. All the Republicans had to specifically offer the farmer was more tariff protection while the Democrats urged control of crop surpluses in some vague manner. Both parties favored economy in government though the Democrats were more specific in asking for a 25% cut in costs.

The Democrats showed concern for the regulation of hold-
ing companies, federal control of utilities and the correction of stock market abuses, while the Republicans were silent on these subjects. The Democrats placed themselves on record as favoring "unemployment and old-age insurance under state laws"—a very progressive sounding statement meant to appeal to the wage earner, but of no practical value on account of being left to the individual 48 states.

Let us keep in mind that while the Republican and Democratic conventions were in session and platforms being drawn up that America was in the depths of the severest economic crisis in history which was already more than two years old, a period described by Dean Bonham of the Harvard School of Business as marking a "major breakdown of capitalism". A great many thinkers and writers were declaring that such periods could be avoided only by a fundamental change in our system, a redistribution of wealth and income and a degree of social planning utterly incompatible with the system of production for private profit. Many declared that the question was no longer whether this or that form of capitalism is better adapted to social needs but whether capitalism must give way to a socialistic order as a result of a violent upheaval, or of comparatively peaceful political and economic action. 20

In spite of the fact that new words and new thoughts were seriously interesting the mass of a disillusioned and rebellious people, the clashing philosophies in the country were not represented in the platforms of the two major parties. There was no essential disagreement between these parties regarding the maintenance of the present order. Both stood for practically uncontrolled private ownership of all industry. The Republican party was admittedly in the hands of the large industrialists and financiers of the North, while the Democratic party was conceded to be controlled by the corrupt Tammany machine of New York and by the conservative industrialists of the South.

The 1932 platforms of the two old parties are indicative of similarity of purposes, but it is true that there was a great difference in the length of their statements. The Republicans take 9,000 words to say little or nothing while the Democrats take only 1,400 words. There is a difference on the absorbing question of how best to legalize beer, the Democrats being just a little more frank and daring in their statement. The Democratic platform goes out of its way to hark back to the individualistic doctrines of Thomas Jefferson, in its demand for "the removal of government from all fields

of private enterprise except where necessary to develop
public works and natural resources in the common interest". (It will be interesting to keep this declaration in mind when we later consider the acts of the present administration.) The rather vague planks in both parties' platforms on agriculture, banking, armaments, conservation, economy, Latin America, work and wages, and a dozen other subjects are so similar that scarcely one person out of a hundred could have told which were Republican and which Democratic. It became the popular belief that the two old parties were merely engaged in "shadow-boxing" with each other and that neither party wished, or dared, come to grips with such fundamental problems as a planned economy, insecurity, unemployment, anarchy in the competitive system, wealth control, social control, or any of the fundamental faults in our political and economic order. 22

In consequence, it was thought that the mass of the people would turn to the Socialist party under the leadership of the intelligent and capable Norman Thomas, especially so since he had the approval of the League for Independent Political Action led by such men as John Dewey and Paul Douglas.

The type of political alignment which the Socialist party sought to bring about was indicated by their proposal in the preamble of the party platform "to transfer the principle industries of the country from private ownership and autocratic, cruelly inefficient management to social ownership and democratic control. Only by these means will it be possible to organize our industrial life on a basis of planned and steady operation without periodic breakdowns and disastrous crises."

More concretely, as transitional measures, the party urged public ownership of key industries, with adequate representation on boards of management of the consumer, the technician and the worker; social insurance against sickness, accident, and unemployment; old age pensions, a complete planned program of public works, a prominent feature of which was the proposal to clear slum areas and to erect healthful homes for the workers; the socialization of our banking and credit systems and the establishment of a unified banking system, beginning with the governmental acquisition of the Federal Reserve Banks and the extension of the services of the Postal Savings Banks to cover all departments of the banking business; a program of farm relief and reconstruction; measures for the protection of citizens in the exercise of their civil rights, for greater taxation of incomes and inheritances in the higher brackets and for constitutional
changes tending to make the government more responsible to the will of the people.

These changes were to include proportional representation, direct election of the President, the initiative and referendum, an amendment to the Constitution to make constitutional amendments less cumbersome and the abolition of the power of the Supreme Court to nullify legislation passed by Congress.

The platform likewise favored, as a prominent plank in its program, a "Workers' Rights Amendment" to the Constitution empowering Congress to establish national systems of social insurance, to abolish child labor, to establish and take over various business enterprises to be owned and operated by the government, and generally to pass legislation for insuring the social and economic welfare of the workers of the United States.

Finally, the platform contained a program for better international relations. It demanded the recognition of Russia; the conditional entrance of the United States into the League of Nations; a drastic reduction in armaments; the creation of international economic organizations to deal with problems of raw material, investments, money, credits, tariffs, living standards, and an end to all imperialist ventures.

The Prohibition question was discussed in a much differ-
ent manner than by the two old parties. It was stated that the liquor question was of little importance compared to the questions arising out of our great depression and that the Socialist Convention should denounce the attempts of the other parties to divert the attention of the American people from the struggle for bread to the struggle for beer. The platform urged outright repeal of the 18th Amendment and the taking over of the liquor industry under government ownership and control, with the right of local option for each state.

The Socialist platform was definite in its program; it was certainly aimed at the ills which beset the country; it did not ask for a revolutionary overthrow of our institutions; it certainly was not "communistic"; it most certainly should have attracted the masses. It did win the attention, for a while, of intellectuals, salaried workers and wage earners. Before discussing the failure of its appeal to command votes we will complete the campaign and its election results.23

Public interest during the campaign centered not so much on issues as it did on the personalities of the candidates. Hoover by nature cold, reserved and dignified, had little personal popular appeal. It was not in him to make demagogic speeches or to promise a speedy return to normalcy.

Roosevelt was a good public speaker, a popular campaigner, his personality made his play for popularity easier, and he promised the country a "New Deal".

The Republican party conducted a half-hearted campaign, in fact Hoover had to work almost alone. The solitary figure of Hoover making a gallant fight for his party and reelection became almost pathetic toward the end of the campaign. Great Republican leaders and orators like Borah, Hiram Johnson and others had turned against Hoover. Many of the insurgent Republicans openly campaigned for Roosevelt. The Democratic party had seen their great opportunity coming and had made extensive preparations for a winning fight. The Democrats flooded the country with propagandas blaming Hoover and his party for the depression and censuring the Republicans for their failure to enact measures to alleviate economic distress. Quick action was promised on relief, on getting rid of the depression and on governmental economy—all summed up in a promise of a "glorious New Deal".

Only the Socialists, under Norman Thomas, attacked the economic and political issues from a definite and fundamental standpoint. The campaign of 1932 is marked as the first time that the Socialist party rose to a position of prominence and respectability in the heat of a campaign. Norman Thomas, the intellectual equal, if not more, of Hoover or Roosevelt, and a respected and high minded man, personally carried the
Socialist message to all parts of the country. He was received by unusually large audiences and was given considerable attention by the press. He was admitted to several university auditoriums during his tour and seemingly converted great numbers of both faculty and students. His efforts and program, combined with universal economic misery and political bitterness, seemed likely to bring the greatest vote ever given to a Third party or a Socialist candidate. The small vote given Thomas and his party—less than 800,000—did not seem possible under the circumstances.

The contest between the two old parties resulted in a great landslide for the Democrats. Roosevelt had an immense popular majority over Hoover, and the overwhelming electoral majority of 472 to 59. The Democrats obtained a commanding majority in both houses of Congress. In state elections the Democratic victory tide swept all the way down the line from state officials to the humblest village office.

Various interpretations have been made of the 1932 election results. Considering the party platforms, the two year old depression, the real issues at stake and all the other factors we have discussed, the election figures do not appear to make sense. Leaders of both old parties point to the results as a final and conclusive proof that the American people, especially the wage earners, do not believe in Third parties and will put no faith in them. The hopes and efforts
of the Socialists and Communists to make an impressive showing in the 1932 campaign are still being held up to scorn and ridicule by old party spokesmen and the conservative press. Conditions were never more favorable for a revolt against the record and promises of both Republicans and Democrats yet the combined Socialist and Communist vote was less than the Socialist vote for Debs in 1920. Even our most sincere Third party leaders were discouraged and many seem to have almost given up hope of ever winning a place for an influential labor party in the United States. Most certainly the believers in a labor party for America have a difficult task rebutting the gibes of the two major parties and a satisfactory interpretation is hard to give.

However, certain things are well enough known to be regarded as explanatory facts in relation to the 1932 campaign. The battle between the two major parties clouded over all other issues. People, who in the main agreed with Norman Thomas, were not yet ready to turn socialist. When it came right down to the question of party allegiance the name of "socialist" was still distasteful to a great majority of the American people. The American Federation of Labor, as usual, publicly supported no particular party although there was a wide-spread resentment in the ranks of labor against Mr. Doak, Hoover's Secretary of Labor. Industrial labor leaders did throw their support to the Democratic party. There was,
as in the past, no unity of sentiment or action on the
part of the industrial worker, farmer, or low salaried class.
The millions of Republicans who deserted their party did
so mostly out of a feeling of resentment and they switched
to the Democrats as the next best thing. It is generally
acknowledged that the mass of the people "voted against
Hoover, not for Roosevelt". It was an anti-Hoover stampede.
In our typical American manner we became involved in per-
sonalities, not parties or issues. Then we have the ingrained
allegiance to the two party system, the feeling that Third
party votes, while perhaps desirable, are merely wasted, and
also the social and economic background that has given the
American voter a hostile and individualistic attitude toward
Third party innovations.

Pre-election straw votes, particularly that of the
Literary Digest, promised the greatest vote in our history
for the Socialists. Just what happened to these votes at the
regular polls? It is generally believed—and the writer
has personal knowledge of the fact in this community—that
many of those who voted Socialist in the straw ballot switched
at the last moment and voted Democrat in a panic lest Hoover
might win. Such shortsighted panic is not a peculiarity of

Norman Thomas, "The Failure of the Socialists" in
The Nation, Dec. 15, 1932.
manual workers alone, it is a general American political phenomenon, rather disquieting for that reason to those who want to make political action useful in times when some sort of revolutionary change is demanded. The American electorate has proved in the last two elections that it is capable of ignoring traditional party allegiance, only to change from one major party to another, but its main motive in doing this so far has been only to express its fears or hates. It is incredible that an intelligent electorate with any real faith in the positive values of political action should act in so negative a manner. This deep-seated malady among our people could hardly be reached by a mere change in the name of the Socialist party. Something more fundamental will be needed.

Look again at the facts. Here was, and is, the worst depression in American history. Fear, discontent and misery were universal among the industrial workers, farmers, and extending even to the salaried classes. Almost as widespread as this economic discontent was the cynical disbelief in both old parties and in politicians generally. The amount of talk among all classes of the probable necessity for violent action in some vague future would have amazed the observer who judges America wholly by election returns.

In the midst of such a revolutionary situation we find no unity of purpose or action. The Communists bitterly
attacked the Socialists. There were all sorts of groups of American radicals and progressives who carefully avoided the words socialist and socialism. They had programs or panaceas ranging all the way from the League for Independent Political Action's intellectualized version of a "watered-down" socialism to "Coin" Harvey's latest financial panacea. The times seemed ripe for them. Neither Socialists or Communists had the strength to unite these various political groups or to keep them out of the picture. Yet not one of these groups made any impression on the electorate except wasted effort and disunity. Father Cox, who began by saying the man who voted either old party ticket in 1932 "deserved sympathy neither from God nor man", ended by delivering whatever influence he had to Governor Roosevelt shortly before election day. The League for Independent Political Action finally indorsed the Socialist ticket "for the duration of the campaign" but this indorsement had little practical effect except in Columbus, Ohio, where there was an active and politically useful group supporting it. The League, headed by college professors such as John Dewey and Paul Douglas, was still too new to have many adherents and was considered as "high-brow" by the mass of workers. 25

Did this collapse of minor parties mean that, as in

1896, their ideas had captured one of the major parties? By no means. Never in a time of depression and political discontent did the candidate of the "outs" offer so little as did Governor Roosevelt and his party platform. Nevertheless he won. Progressives came very cheap in America. Apparently all that the people wanted to know was that Governor Roosevelt was not another Hoover. His record and his program were overlooked or vaguely considered. He was able with impunity to spend the last three weeks of his campaign in a satisfactory demonstration to Wall Street that he was entirely "safe". Witness his support by Vincent Astor, Owen D. Young, John J. Raskob, Bernard Baruch and hundreds of men of this type all over the country. Contrast that with the Bryan record in 1896 to see how far Americans have retrogressed in their political demands in time of crisis.

Against this situation it is frequently argued that Socialist measures are always winning anyway because the party, the time, or popular demand manage to force, sooner or later, one or both of the old parties to accept the more popular Socialist measures. There is much truth in this argument, as the acts of the present administration will bear

27. Ibid.
out, but the indirect gains of socialist or labor parties are achieved too partially and usually too late to be of great service to a people swept on toward the evident downfall of a social order.

The moral of the story of the election is certainly more than merely the failure of the Socialist party to make a real appeal to the American people, especially to the great body of wage earners. While the American people were not yet quite ready to cast off old political habits and philosophies when it came to the final test, there is widespread evidence to prove the statement that socialism, as representing the labor movement in 1932, commanded new and general interest and aroused little of the old antagonism. The evidence of this popular interest is manifested in the universal demand that the present administration shall produce action instead of promises, in the favorable attitude with which the people are hailing and accepting measures that not long ago would have been regarded as socialistic and revolutionary, and in the watchful and questioning attitude with which the electorate is regarding the work of the Democratic party and its willingness to meet the demands of the present crisis. (How far the new measures are actually meeting the fundamental faults in our economic and political order will be discussed later.) The failure of the workers of America to unite under the banner of socialism does not mean that something less
frank and drastic will solve their troubles or save them in the case of a downfall of the present capitalistic era. It is their tragedy that at a time when the march of events demanded something more than the old La Follette or Norris progressivism, the mass of voters stampeded to something much less.

Those who decry the imposing failure of socialism to capture the loyalty of labor in the last campaign magnify and distort this failure without considering the political and economic background of the American worker and the many factors that have shaped his political philosophy and habits. They do not realize that the fundamental nature of American life has only recently changed, that time will be needed to shake off old habits and beliefs and that probably nothing but a complete breakup of our present order will be drastic enough to jar the American worker loose from old political associations. Nothing great has ever been done in history until the demands latent in economic and social development have found interpretation in a loyalty, a vision, a philosophy to stir and unite the hearts of men. Without the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence the thirteen quarreling colonies could never have become a nation. An adequate philosophy, and belief in it, were what was needed above all else to unite labor in the 1932 campaign. Socialism in 1932, under the intelligent leadership of Norman Thomas,
offered a positive philosophy and a program designed to meet the fundamental need of the labor movement. Socialism said definitely that "we can only master the machine age by collective ownership of all natural resources and of the principal agencies of production and distribution and their operation for use and common welfare and not for profit. We further seek a world-wide federation of cooperative commonwealths on account of the new world-wide interdependent economy. 28 It is at once a source of encouragement and discouragement to remember that the Socialists went further and stated a definite, concrete program which many ignored but no one seriously challenged on the intellectual side during the whole campaign. It remains to be seen whether the mass of workers will continue, as they did in 1932, to ignore the Socialist program and party or to refuse to unite under any Third party. The present administration has enacted many new and startling measures but an examination of these acts shows small consideration for the fundamental needs and demands of labor. The American Federation of Labor and the Railway Brotherhoods have already issued violent protests against the proposed workings of several of the new laws and the farmers of the middle west continue to take the law into their own hands and by open rebellion have prevented injus-

All of which brings us to the next chapter—the necessity of a distinct labor-farmer party to compel and protect social justice for the wage earners of America. It is possible that a new wave of "prosperity" may return before the next election and again blind the eyes of labor to the fundamental issues at stake. However, it does not at present seem possible for labor to escape the inevitable conclusion that human welfare, not profits, can be guaranteed only by unity of political action separate from either of the old major parties. If our present social order, doctored and glossed over by only palliative measures, continues much longer the supreme necessity for those who would escape the dictatorship of communism or the dictatorship of fascism, is a new birth of intelligent political thought and action.

For many years American labor has hoped for an ultimate realignment of the major political parties, but one election after another has yielded a small amount of nourishment for this hope and an examination of the two major parties discloses little that can be interpreted as assurance of any fundamental relief from either quarter. 1 Today we find in American political life an alignment that is largely meaningless. There is no essential difference between the economic and social creeds of the Republican and Democratic parties. 2 Both stand essentially for the interest of the few opposed to the many. 3 Both are usually ruled by corrupt political machines. 4 Neither has any adequate solution for the fundamental questions of insecurity, of gross and unjust inequality, of industrial and commercial autocracy, competitive anarchy in production, of excess profits, of sickness and old age insurance, and of unemployment. 5 Neither has any sense of the direction in which our economic system should move because all their plans are clouded over with the desire to maintain

1. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 82-98.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. 26-50.
the present profit system. Attempts of reformers, or progressives, to purge the old parties of their reactionary elements have proved futile. 6 It is significant to note that most of the new measures enacted are supposed to be for the duration of the depression, with the hope or intention of returning to "normal" measures as soon as a new prosperity era lessens the popular demand. Certainly labor can not expect much from the Republican party whose campaign funds are contributed by the big interests, and not much more can be definitely assured from the Democratic party whose main background in normal years is the reactionary south and whose party machinery is normally controlled by Tammany Hall. 7 If labor sincerely desires that there shall be a political group representing the hope and ambition to substitute the human aspirations and personal welfare of all our people as the controlling influence in our government affairs, then that group must be of labor's own making. A new and powerful political party controlled and directed by the plain people of the farms, of our factories and of our commercial life is needed to start our country on its way to comfort and security for the masses, to peace and real democracy. The difficulties are many and those which are inherent in our

7. Ibid., pp. 139-172.
Thomas, op. cit., pp. 113-140.
political system are almost insuperable. It would be difficult for labor acting alone to alter our system so as to remove the difficulties, but help seems to be already on the way from the commercial classes and the intellectuals.\(^8\)

An increasing number in the United States are becoming tired of the existing political line-up and its social results. They are tired of local, state and national governments that do nothing to bring security to the masses while at the same time the people are burdened with increasing taxes. They are tired of the growing concentration and inadequately regulated power of private monopoly, of the special privileges which overburden the many and bring untold riches to the few, of the lack of any fundamental constructive program for our sick industries, such as agriculture, textiles, mining and railroads, of the constant use of the courts and other governmental forces to repress free speech, free assembly and freedom of peaceful action in collective bargaining. They are tired and suspicious of an economic, military and diplomatic policy that carries in it the germs of another great war. It is very doubtful, in case of our being led into another war, that our people will stand for the conscription of lives while wealth and big business goes unconscripted and waxes fat on the sufferings of humanity.\(^9\)

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9. Ibid.
In recent years our thinking people (of which there have been all too few) stirred by a desire to make politics count for the common good, have been interested in the growth of the British Labor party and its present influence and power. They realize that its present strength is due largely to the maintenance of an independent organization through years in which there was no prospect of political success. There were many in England who thought it folly for Hardie and his followers to set up an independent labor party in the nineties, and that labor should instead pin its faith upon either the social-reform sympathies of Chamberlain or the liberalism of Morley and Campbell-Bannerman. But Hardie and his followers knew that labor's alignment with existing groups would gain at best only a temporary success, and had the courage and foresight to build slowly for the future. It was the Independent Labor party which later formed the nucleus upon which the trade unions could build a strong political organization. The negative experience of America and the positive experience of England demonstrate that, if a strong labor party is desired, the way to secure it is to build patiently through the years an independent, consistent and aggressive political party, and not to swing constantly from one old party to the

10. Tawney, op. cit.
other for short-run gains that are usually only temporary, and not give up what is gained—as in 1924—because of the American habit of expecting immediate results. Of course, a growing solidarity of interest and of class combined with a tenacity of purpose has built up the British Labor party to its present high position—factors entirely absent so far in America.

Our political institutions have been as important as our economic peculiarities in determining the political policy of labor in America. Though these have largely an English ancestry, they have become very different from English political institutions. A significant difference appears in the functioning of the judiciary. Any law passed by Congress or a state legislature can be challenged and the case taken to the courts and finally to the Supreme Court. This court has two functions to perform. It has to determine the meaning of the law and whether the law as so interpreted accords with the written constitution of the United States. If the court decides the law is unconstitutional, the law then becomes invalid. Therefore, unless the constitution can be amended to permit such a law, Congress is henceforth barred from passing laws which in manner and substance are akin to this measure.

The English procedure is much different. If Parliament passes a law and it is then challenged, the highest court may
only determine the meaning of said law and whether a defendant has violated the law as interpreted. The court does not have the right to veto. The latest enactment of Parliament is final and supersedes all previous enactments.

This difference is significant as affecting labor's policy in America. It means that legislation in this country, particularly social legislation, is an uncertain method of benefitting labor and the corollary to this is that an independent political party has been considered of doubtful value. Law making in the United States is a difficult business, particularly when concerned with the economic field. As mentioned before, the Constitution of the United States was written at a time when laissez-faire and individualism held sway and it is saturated with this philosophy. It was the handiwork of propertied men who were interested in the protection of property rights over and above personal rights. Add to this the well-known conservative bias of American judges against permitting legislatures to invade or restrict the field of economic freedom, even at the expense of essential personal rights, and you can see why social and economic legislation is difficult and why organized labor in America has put small faith in political action. Organized labor reasoned that, if legislation is so difficult, why waste the amount of energy and resources required to form a party for legislative purposes.
Unconstitutionality is not the only stumbling block making for differences in America. When the English Parliament enacts a law, that law becomes the law of the land, and consequently English labor can bring its whole fighting force to bear on one front. On the other hand, in the United States not only does Congress legislate but so do also the forty-eight states, and to these various state legislatures properly fall most of the matters dealing with labor. The difficulty of fighting along so many fronts is aggravated by the element of competition. As soon as a state enacts a law dealing with hours or wages the employers of that state are placed at a disadvantage with employers manufacturing the same product in states that have no such restrictions. Employers are therefore going to resist such legislation or, if possible, move out of a restrictive territory. The evasion of the New York sweat shop law during the present depression is well known.

Also in each of the forty-nine legislative units power is divided between the executive and the two houses of the legislature. This division of powers with its checks and balances is a good arrangement for those who wish to maintain the status quo but it is a disadvantage for those who desire a change. In England the executive is practically chosen by

Parliament and is largely dependent upon Parliament for continuance in office, while in the United States the executive is elected by the whole people and is not subject to control by Congress. This is unsatisfactory to a minority party because by the nature of our system the executive is bound to represent only the majority party.

The English cabinet system permits different shades of opinion to be represented in the executive branch of the government. In fact the party in office often remains there only with the support of a strong minority group, which can often demand the passage of measures in return for its support.

Hence, in England, minority groups wield a power out of proportion to their number and are thus encouraged to organize and develop. The only thing of like nature in Congress has been "Farm Blocs" or "independents" whose work has been negative rather than constructive, and whose identity is effectively restrained by the nature of the system. Groups must work within the major parties, as the Farm Bloc has done, their allegiance is not constant and their work is usually of a filibustering nature.

The lack of proportional representation is another factor discouraging to the development of minor parties in America. It is possible for a third party to get as many as a million votes, as the socialists have done, without getting a single voice in the government. It is a grotesque peculiarity of
our system that a presidential candidate may secure the votes of more than a third of our people and yet, because he is defeated, have no more voice in the government than any private citizen. In England, as official leader of the opposition, he would be a powerful figure in public affairs. It is therefore easy to see why organized labor in America has seen no possibilities in store for the representative of a third party, why labor has usually refrained from "throwing its vote away" on a third party man if for no other reason than this would operate to elect the more objectionable of the two leading candidates. The American Federation of Labor policy of "elect our friends and defeat our enemies" within major parties, becomes much clearer.

Political tradition is another factor in the way of a third party. Our major parties arose before there was any serious question of capital versus labor and before our country became largely an industrial nation. Old-party leaders are aware of the fact that Americans prefer to believe that there are no classes in this country and consequently have not emphasized class interests. Such attempts were considered as un-American and all "hundred-per-centers" have protested against any move that would incite class feeling or prejudice. Hence neither Republicans nor Democrats have made outright bids for the labor vote but have consistently bid for the votes of all classes.

Loyalty to a party has long since taken on the character
of a religion. Parties, it is asserted, should represent principles. The Republican party has championed the high protective tariff, preaching the doctrine that it would benefit all classes and that it was essential to American prosperity. Millions of farmers and industrial workers have regularly cast their votes as evidence of faith in this doctrine. In like manner thousands of southerners religiously felt bound to the Democratic party, and the Democrats of the north were bound to the clan of Tammany Hall. This unreasoning devotion to existing parties makes the path of a new party extremely hard, and labor's past faint-hearted efforts in politics, joined with failures, have been very discouraging.

American political structure also operates against third parties from the fact that our parties are national but most legislation that vitally affects the worker is a matter of separate state legislation. In the United States a large national vote and the election of a number of representatives to the national congress is no assurance that legislation beneficial to the worker will result. It is from the states that the workers must at present look primarily for relief, and to state politics that they must first address themselves. This preoccupation with state affairs operates against the formation of a national party and causes the adoption of varying political banners. Thus in 1920 the labor
element in North Dakota supported the Republicans, in Montana the Democrats, while in Washington it supported the Farmer-Labor party. From a national standpoint the effect of this variety of tactics was that men with the same political ideas neutralized and cancelled each other.

The direct primary has been another obstacle to the creation of a united labor party for it makes it possible for labor to actively enter politics without the creation of its own party. Labor can invade the primaries of the old parties and, if it is strong enough, can nominate its own men under Republican or Democratic labels. This is the policy advocated by the American Federation of Labor and is also one of the most important reasons why labor has not seriously felt the need of a third party. It is doubtful if the leaders of the American Federation of Labor could have maintained their non-partisan policy if there had been no direct primary in this country. Labor's growing cynical realization that elected nominees may be more bound by party pledges and party systems than by pre-election promises is destroying the belief in the old method.

The financial aspects of a party campaign are at present an almost unsurmountable obstacle to a third party. The Republicans and Democrats collect and spend millions in organization, campaign expenses, propaganda, and in influencing the press. Conservative, or interested, big business
contributes heavily to these two parties. The same interests control the majority of the press and periodicals. They are thus able to practically dictate the policies of parties and the selection of candidates because they have placed both parties and candidates under obligation to them. Some interests are known to make a large contribution to both major parties so as to play safe regardless of election results. It is almost impossible for a labor party to get impartial publicity from the American press. It would be an exceedingly difficult job for a third party to wage a successful campaign in the face of such difficulties, to successfully spread its doctrines, to combat the opposition's propaganda, without a universal conviction in the hearts, and pocketbooks, of the whole wage earning class. Since the campaign contributions would have to come from the individual workers, the task for the first several years would be very difficult, and during a depression almost impossible. Unless there is a general uprising of the mass of workers, inspired by a common cause, it will be almost hopeless for a third party ever to successfully combat the forces behind the two major parties.

A large part of the difficulties of finances and organization of a third party would be well taken care of if it

could secure the active backing of the American Federation of Labor and the Railway Brotherhoods. These organizations are rich in resources and have powerful and well organized memberships. It seems clear that organized labor cannot avoid entering the field of politics in the near future. It must engage in some political activity if it is to continue its policy of collective bargaining. The state has interfered with that policy and, under the pressure of powerful employers' associations, will probably continue to interfere, particularly with the coercive weapons of collective bargaining, the strike and the boycott. Organized labor is also coming more and more to realize that there are certain vital measures, such as workmen's compensation and insurance, that can be dealt with effectively only by political action.

There is the growing realization in the Federation that while its non-partisan policy may have been sound in the past, conditions have so changed as to demand a change of policy. Significant in this connection is the increasing control government is exercising in economic life. Proposals for government ownership and operation of railways, water power and coal mines are no longer dismissed as socialistic but are being seriously considered as policies worthy of adoption. With the government coming more and more into the economic life--witness the acts of the present administration--organized labor is forced to deal more and more directly with
the government. Consequently, it may decide that labor's interest can be best served by a political party definitely committed to the cause of labor.

The complexion of industry has altered so much during the past twelve to fifteen years that many of the factors no longer operate that tended to develop strong, compact groups of laborers at the top. It is no longer possible, except theoretically, for wage earners to move out of their class on any large scale. Willingly or not, most of them are destined to remain in a definite wage earning class. The machine is rapidly breaking down the barriers which have separated skilled and unskilled labor. In fact the machine has almost obliterated the craft unions of skilled labor except in the building trades. ¹³ For this reason the Federation must soon change its membership basis from that of crafts to that of industrial unions. That policy would enroll millions of members not now eligible for membership in the American Federation of Labor and would make for a new and greater solidarity of interest among wage earners. The widening of the gulf between the working class and the employer class and the breaking down of the barriers within the wage earning classes, are forces which will act more

powerfully as time goes on to produce that class consciousness which is the very foundation of successful political action.

The American Federation of Labor has not been blind to the march of the times. Even as far back as 1913 the convention declared, "After the more complete organization of labor there will be safer and greater opportunities for the creation and formation of a labor party." The 1924 convention declared, "No one will deny the inevitable change of political parties made imperative by the ever progressive enlightenment of the masses and changes in the economic, social and industrial order of the people." The leaders of the American Federation of Labor have so far stood consistently in the way of the Federation's changing words and declarations into positive action. But there are signs that the individual unions will soon compel either a change of policy or a change of leadership. The 1932 convention practically revolted against the conservative strangle-hold of President Green and his henchmen, and forced a change in policy on several measures.

The question arises, just when, if ever, will organized labor decide to break completely with its non-partisan policy

15. Proceedings, American Federation of Labor, 1924.
and assist in the building of a powerful labor party? There are many individual unions in the labor movement ready for such a step. The Wisconsin Federation of Labor has supported the Socialist party for many years. The Minnesota Federation of Labor is committed to the Farmer-Labor party. Organized labor of St. Paul and Minneapolis recently assisted materially in electing Mayors Mahoney and Anderson of those cities. The Montana Federation of Labor is now led by President Graham, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party, and several state federations in the northwest are becoming dissatisfied under the old party leadership. Some of our international unions—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Ladies Garment Workers—have long supported the Socialist and Labor parties. All over the country local unions and city centrals are becoming ardent advocates of a labor party. Their numbers are still small as compared with those who would still stand by the old political machines but their numbers are steadily increasing. In the event of a Socialist-Labor-Farmer combination, a considerable amount of labor from city, state and international unions would very likely support such a movement before the American Federation as such took the plunge. Third party movements in the past have always gained considerable support from certain sections of the farm population. The great depression has so affected our entire agricultural class that
for once there appears to be some unity appearing in this direction. 16

The most successful of third party groups in any one state has been the Farmer-Labor party of Minnesota, but thus far the Minnesota group has refused to join with national parties. Its leaders have taken the position that it would be ready for such national alliances only when Farmer-Labor or Socialist parties had made like headway in a number of other states.

During the past few years the Socialist party has concentrated on the building up of its own party organization. It does not favor an alliance with loosely organized groups of free lance intellectuals, or an alliance with scattered separate state groups, as in Minnesota and North Dakota, in a progressive party movement. Should masses of workers in the labor movement and among the farmers desire to join with the Socialists in the formation of a Labor party, the Socialist leaders have signified that their party would gladly cooperate.

The League for Independent Political Action is steadily working on plans for the union of Socialists, Farmer-Laborites and other political groups under a single unified organization of a Farmer-Labor party. It appears at this time that

such a powerful political organization is bound to make its appearance sooner or later in the United States. Much depends upon the drift of economic events during this year and next. One thing is certain: if the present administration does not meet the fundamental issues at stake, the American people will either soon put in control a party genuinely committed to a program of security, a measure of plenty and freedom for the masses, or else they must be prepared to face increasing social and economic disaster. We cannot much longer maintain a Twentieth Century technological plant and keep intact social policies based on the primitive individualism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. ¹⁷

In spite of the general belief in the hopeless character of the two major parties many progressives have urged that much could be accomplished by launching a mass movement to capture one of the old parties through going into their primaries. This policy has resulted in a considerable cancelling of votes, during presidential elections, by voters who think along similar lines, but who, for local reasons, are affiliated in different states with different parties. Local and state conditions largely determine which party the labor and progressive forces will attempt to control and at

Thomas, op. cit., pp. 1-23.
the time of national elections these groups find themselves in different camps in different districts. Patronage and the spoils system have a great influence in keeping the old party organizations intact and this influence operates all the way down through national, state, and local politics.

Certain advocates of capturing the old parties have professed to believe that labor was more organized than the other groups and could thus hold the balance of power. This shows an ignorance of facts because capital and employers' associations are now more closely and powerfully organized than the mass of wage earners. The business interests are able to wield more influence and are better able to control leaders and policies than groups of laborers. Furthermore, business interests are more non-partisan than the workers. Big business's main interests are control and protection, regardless of party.

Progressives and labor have also found that the effect of getting their men elected within the ranks of either old parties is of doubtful value because of the usual tendency of backsliding among those most interested in keeping in the good graces of the party organization rather than running the risk of disfavor by battling for progressive principles. The labor representative, elected within the old party, is surrounded by party politicians, exposed to the blandishments...

of the social lobby of the wealthy and is subject to so many insidious temptations that he tends to become a compromiser and betrays the group that elected him.

The policy of trading with the major parties in order to get the support of a legislative program has frequently put labor, particularly organized labor, in the position of supporting a party or a candidate who is entirely unworthy but who promises labor its support. Cases illustrative of this are so well known that they hardly need mention. Organized labor's support of the notorious Len Small and his henchmen in Illinois and the support given to Tammany Hall in New York are examples of the foolishness and futility of this policy which puts its faith in false promises. In New York Tammany judges and Tammany police have consistently enforced injunctions against the weapons of collective bargaining, and the rights of labor in Illinois have been usually ignored.

Finally, progressives have discovered that the attempt to "bore from within" the two old parties has deprived labor of a continuous and permanent political organization both of which are essential to fundamental changes in our economic and political organization. This continual shifting of alliances, this annual grasping at straws, militates

against third party influence, third party allegiance and third party unity of the various labor groups. It is a "defeatist" policy, the real nature of which the American wage earner must sooner or later become convinced.

To successfully organize and compete against the forces of the Republican and Democratic parties a third party must base its program upon the needs and aspirations of the whole farmer and wage earning class in America. This, of course, would be quite useless unless the mass of labor breaks away from old political habits and awakens to a unity of interest and unity of action. A program of general appeal would protect the workers against the great risks of industry—accident, illness, old age and unemployment; would restore a greater share of the wealth created by society to the state for social purposes through higher taxes on the higher levels of incomes and inheritances; would put into government ownership or control the public utilities and the strategic industries; would free labor from unfair restrictions placed upon the activities of collective bargaining; would give a program of farm relief which would reduce the great disparity between farm prices and the prices of manufactured goods—which is the real basis of the farmer's condition; would reorganize the judicial system of the country in order to secure justice more speedily and at less expense, and to insure the impartial administration of justice. The program must depend
upon a better and more complete organization of both skilled and unskilled labor. The American Federation of Labor must change its policy of craft organization to industrial organization or lose its place as the spokesman for labor in America. A real working alliance must be developed between the farmer and the industrial worker. The lower strata of the middle class and professional groups must be made to realize their real position and their identity of interest with the wage earning class. A new and living gospel of social justice and reorganization could be preached in our churches, thereby reverting to a real and practical Christianity rather than the continuance of the dry rot of dogma.

What form the new third party political alignment must take—Socialist, Labor or Farmer-Labor—is not so important as is the joining together of the many progressive political groups in America and their cooperation in action. We have a great number of distinct political groups, most of whom are more or less interested in and working toward the same goal, but at present separated by petty antagonisms and mutual jealousies and suspicions. These political organizations are as follows:

1. Prohibition Party, organized in 1867. In addition to its opposition to the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages the party stands for civil service reform, international arbitration, uniform marriage and divorce laws, a non-partisan tariff commission,
abolition of child labor and public ownership of public utilities. Its headquarters are at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

2. Socialist Labor Party, organized in 1877, succeeding the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party of North America. This is the older of the two parties claiming to represent Socialism in America. The party claims that all the instruments of production must be owned collectively by the whole people—that is, by a "Cooperative Commonwealth". The Proletariat must constitute itself into a political party of its own class. The headquarters are in New York City.

3. The Socialist Party, organized in 1901 as a secession movement from the Socialist Labor Party. The party is the generally recognized leader of the Socialist movement in America and is the party of which Norman Thomas is the leader. Economic and political power should be taken away from the capitalist class and all class divisions and class rule abolished. Cooperative and publicly owned warehouses, markets and credits should be established to promote direct dealing between farmers and city consumers at the cost of service. All industry should be socialized. Workers must unite in a political party and use it to enact measures that will immediately benefit the workers and raise their standard of living. The shift from private ownership of industry to public ownership should be gradual, beginning with those of public character such as banking, insurance, mining, transportation and communication. The farm workers should be organized on as strong a basis as industrial workers. The party is opposed to militarism, imperialism and war. It seeks to attain its political and economic ends by orderly methods and depends upon education and organization of the masses. Its concrete demands have been already given in the section on the 1932 campaign. The headquarters are in Chicago and New York City.

4. The Committee of Forty-Eight, organized in 1919, composed of liberal men and women from the forty-eight states, with headquarters in New York City. Its main purpose is to foster the growth of a progressive third party in opposition to the two major parties.

5. Communist Party, organized in 1919 by left-wing
members of the Socialist party who believed revolutionary methods necessary to bring about social and political reform. This party exists under an outlaw decree of the United States Government passed in 1920. It has no definite headquarters.

6. United Communist Party, organized in 1920, a merger of the Communist Labor Party (1919) and a wing of the Communist Party. Recognized by the Third Internationales of Moscow as the official Communist party of the United States.

7. Farmer-Labor Party, organized in 1920 at a convention called by the Committee of Forty-Eight. It is a successor to the National Labor Party of 1919. It joined LaFollette's Progressive party in 1924 but withdrew after the election. Headquarters are in Denver and Minneapolis.

8. The Workers' Party, organized 1921 by radicals who had withdrawn or been expelled from the Socialist party. It is avowedly a revolutionary party, not concerned with reform of the present system. It asks for a Proletarian revolution which will create a Soviet government and dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Workers' Party is fraternally affiliated with the Third Internationales. The main office is in Chicago. William Z. Foster is the present prominent leader.

9. The American Labor Party, organized 1922 in New York City by disgruntled groups of socialists, farmer-laborers, and labor organizations.

10. The Commonwealth Land Party, organized 1924, and successor to the Single Tax party. Headquarters in New York City. It demands that the full rent of land be collected by the government in place of all direct and indirect taxes and that all buildings, machinery, and improvements on land, all industry, wages, salaries, incomes, and every product of labor or intellect be entirely exempt from taxation. The platform also states that the private ownership of land is a denial of men's right to the earth and that it restricts the conditions under which the landless must produce. The struggle for existence is primarily between capital and labor on one hand and land monopoly on the other.
11. The American Party, organized 1924 at Columbus, Ohio, as an anti-Catholic movement, and as an outgrowth of the Klu Klux Klan.

12. The League for Independent Political Action, started in 1926 and successor to the Conference for Progressive Political Action. The Conference for Progressive Political Action was organized in 1922, and was composed of delegates from the Railway unions, Farmer-Labor, Socialist, Non-Partisan League, cooperative societies and Single Tax party. (The Workers' Party delegates were excluded.) This group was mainly responsible for the La Follette platform and campaign of 1924. The Conference for Progressive Political Action disbanded in 1925.

The League for Independent Political Action is not in fact a party but is a group similar to the Committee of Forty-Eight, while at the same time trying to embrace all the various elements of the former Conference for Progressive Political Action. Its main purpose is an attempt to educate and reconcile the various progressive and radical groups and parties into a strong third party of farmer-labor. It is also conducting a steady campaign of opposition to the old major parties and is making a bid for the middle class, salaried class, professional class and teaching profession to abandon old party habits and join in the formation of a strong progressive party. The League supported Norman Thomas and the Socialist platform in 1932.

We thus have twelve separate national political groups in the United States in addition to the Republicans and Democrats. All but two or three out of the twelve groups are aiming at the same ultimate goal, but they are as antagonistic to each other as they are to the major parties. It is small wonder that even when the American worker does feel the urge to cast his lot with a third party he is confused and disgusted by the variety of third parties and their rival claims. It is no wonder that he has the conviction--
as many did in 1932—that his vote would be merely wasted by voting the Socialist ticket. Lack of unity, lack of agreement and action, along general essential principles, seems to be the prevailing and besetting sin of most progressives either within or without the old parties.

In view of the average American voter’s taste in politics, in view of his regular tendency to partake of political fruit which he knows will make him bilious, one may say that he is constitutionally inclined toward the enjoyment of political indigestion.

However difficult and discouraging the outlook may seem for the building of a progressive third party which would satisfy the political aspirations of the whole wage-earning class, the conditions and forces are present and are shaping themselves to compel a political revolution unless the present administration puts through measures that adequately attack the fundamental issues and problems of our social and economic order. From the "intellectual" to the lowliest wage earner there is a deep-seated conviction that fundamental conditions must be remedied. Political propaganda and a temporary prosperity era may delay this political upheaval but an industrial America is rapidly coming of age and will not for much longer be contented with the old political fairy tales.
FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS
OF THE WAGE EARNING CLASS

In no other land, probably in no other historical period, have men and women been so dependent upon one another in their habits, wants, desires and livelihood, as are these inheritors of a late-departed pioneering individualism. The great development of machine methods of production and distribution has linked intimately on the economic plane the lives of the California fruit grower, the Kansas wheat farmer, the Pittsburgh steel worker and the Montana lumberjack. It has also made potentially attainable for all Americans a satisfaction of material wants and a leisure for culture. Given a planned cooperative effort, this country might become the utopia of the modern world. But the United States has been decreasingly less and less of an industrial utopia for the millions of workers within its borders. In the midst of untold wealth and resources, in the midst of plenty and cries of overproduction, millions are in want and millions more are existing at a bare subsistence level. More and more it becomes self-evident that the state must intervene on a larger scale in the social and economic life of the people.

The social and economic evils that must be faced, the

fundamental problems of the whole wage earning class, can no longer be left to a laissez-faire political policy and individualistic political philosophy. The following faults and problems not only concern the wage earning class but eventually our entire people.

1. A large proportion of our people receive in "prosperous" times less than sufficient to permit them to live lives of health and decency.

2. The average farmer is living on a deficit. He does not make enough to pay himself a small wage and a minimum interest on capital invested.

3. From a million and a half to over twelve million are unemployed in good and bad years since 1920.

4. Between one and two million children are forced to leave school and work for a pittance, while thousands of other children toil long hours without any money compensation.

5. A total of 350,000,000 days more or less are lost each year through sickness—most of it preventable—by those gainfully employed. Between twenty and twenty-five thousand workers are killed annually in our industries, while some two and one-half million are injured.

5. U.S. Children's Bureau, Bulletin #197 (1930).
6. Millions of children go to school, in "good years", each day without proper nourishment.

7. Over four million residents more than ten years of age are illiterate.

8. Millions of workers in the cities and on farms still live in tenements and in shacks unfit for human habitation.

9. Perhaps one-half of the energies of our workers is wasted as a result of the present chaotic competitive economic order.

10. The causes of unemployment, a large amount of which is preventable, and which come under the following heads:

The labor reserve. Industry attracts a reserve force above its peak needs. It has been a policy of many of our industries to encourage this reserve not only so as to have a plentiful supply of labor at any given moment, but to have also a more tractable force of employees.

Seasonal industries, such as canning, Christmas goods, building trades, which by their very nature give no employment during several months of the year.

Business cycles, whose history is first a period of great prosperity, followed by overexpansion and overproduction, then resulting falling prices and depression. Anarchy in a competitive economy is one of the chief causes of these cycles.

Technological inventions and labor saving machines which are throwing an ever increasing number of men out of work with no hope for the majority thus unemployed.

Permanent changes in demand for certain types of manufactured goods, such as style changes.

7. U. S. Census, 1930.
example is the modern style in weight, particularly among women, which has materially reduced the demand for bread and wheat products.

Maladjustment in the labor market and the lack of national and state labor exchanges seriously affects the floating labor population, affects the mobility of labor and the connection between job demand and job supply.

The large amount of unskilled and ignorant labor in the immigrant class, their congestion in the large cities, their inadaptability to changing conditions, and their high birth rate, seriously affect the unemployment problem.

The recent increasing tendency toward giant mergers and consolidations of industrial corporations has materially affected the increase of unemployment among the "white-collar" salaried class.

There is also a constant mass of unemployable due to physical and mental deficiency, premature old age, and the hobo and tramp class.

Lastly, there is the rapid industrialization of the United States, the change from an importer of finished goods to an exporter, the change from a debtor nation to a creditor nation and the consequent dependence upon world conditions and markets, which at any time is liable to affect production and employment in America. Our increasingly high tariff wall has become a barrier to world trade and has caused restrictive retaliatory tariffs to be enacted by our chief customers.

11. The social and economic costs of unemployment include lower standards of living, particularly in the vital necessities of food and clothing; poor medical and dental care; loss of markets to merchants and manufacturers, losses from unused fixed capital; loss from restricted output by workers--induced by fear of unemployment; the growth of sweat shops preying upon the cheap labor of women and children; increase in crimes.

against property; all of which, including many others, are of serious concern to the state.\textsuperscript{10}

12. Due to the nature of our industrial life, uniform wage and hour legislation is essential to protect the great mass of unorganized workers.

13. Safeguards and provision should be established for those working in such industries as cause occupational diseases—mining, textiles, chemicals, etc.

14. Safety devices should be compelled in all industries where there is danger to life and limb.

15. Adequate, impartial and honest inspection personnel must be provided to enforce the above two measures.

16. Present day high speed industry produces premature old age among its workers and at the same time refuses to hire many men above the age of 45. Such industry should be compelled to bear the cost of providing for their "worn-out" workers.\textsuperscript{11}

17. Insecurity, the specter haunting both the salaried and wage earning classes, must be eliminated.

18. Uniform and effective legislation must be had on health insurance, accident compensation, and old age insurance or pensions.

19. The child labor amendment, so far favorably voted upon by only fourteen states, must be put through at once. The industrial states and backward states must be brought into line to eliminate this national disgrace.

20. The power of the courts to veto legislation must be abolished or curtailed.

21. Farm relief in a fundamental sense, not in the form of a subsidy, is the crying need of agriculture.

22. The present unfair and discriminatory use of the

\textsuperscript{10} Gillin-Witmer and Colbert, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 414-463.

\textsuperscript{11} Cummins, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 107-114.
injunction, and the use of company police in industrial troubles are particularly sore spots in the demands of labor.

23. Restrictions must be placed upon the methods of militant employers' associations who are using every effort to break down the forces of organized labor and make the wage earner more subject to their power. These methods include the open shop, the closed shop, company unions, "yellow dog" contracts, intimidation, blacklist, and the spy system.

24. The causes of great depressions must be prevented as far as possible and their dire effects made less serious upon the masses. A study of the forces that helped bring on the present depression shows the following conditions:

The failure of the capitalistic system to provide against recurring cycles of depression.

Anarchy in our competitive system, resulting in over-expansion and over-production beyond the capacity to produce at a profit.

High-pressure advertising and salesmanship.

Philosophy of perpetual prosperity.

Unwise lending by banks to all classes of borrowers and on inflated or insufficient security.

Unwarranted and unwise increase of capital expense and overhead in industry.

Promotion schemes, and the underwriting of securities by large banking interests, which were unloaded on smaller banks and a gullible public.

Hosts of wage earners encouraged into debt with no security of future income.

Extensive development of holding companies on a large scale and the control of these secured at great expense—often at false values. Then the floating of stock issues to the public in excess of unwarranted prices. The consequent charge of excessive rates to consumers, based upon earnings that must provide
attractive dividends on fictitious valuations.

The failure to allot earnings to a reserve fund to meet reactions.

Forced appreciation of market values of depreciated shares, based upon assumed future profits, and the effort to earn and pay increasing dividends thereon.

Piling up of great wealth by professional speculators, non-producers, and their parade of extravagances. Universal speculation on the market. Enormous gambling in food staples. All of which produced an orgy of spending, a turning away from traditional American thrift and caused a universal unhealthy financial atmosphere.

Defalcations of bank and trust company officials involving the loss of millions—due to playing the market—resulting in closed banks and a general lack of faith in our banking institutions.

Neglect of banking and industry to take any constructive steps to remedy conditions that came about through their own actions.

25. Then we have the international factors which added to our domestic depression, as follows:

Heavy loans (nearly $15,000,000,000) by United States investors on doubtful security to foreign governments and industries on the hope of large profits.

Unloading of foreign bonds and securities on the United States public by our own big banks.

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Bernard Ostrolenk, "Why the Banks Collapsed", in Current History, May, 1933.
Thomas, op. cit., pp. 1-23.
Unpaid war debts of over $10,000,000,000 owed us by European governments, plus our own national war debt of over $5,000,000,000.

The new economic nationalism in all countries after the war, with the effort to industrialize each country so as to be as self-sufficient as possible. The result of this economic nationalism profoundly affected world trade because it meant the establishment of non-basic, non-fundamental industries subsidized by high tariffs. Following this came the "battle of the tariffs" with a consequent reduction in world markets. Since it is an economic law that goods must in large part be paid for by goods, this economic nationalism has in it the seeds of its own defeat. There was also an attempt to "dump" goods on the world market by low-cost production nations, and a price war ensued.

The United States, with its new high tariff of 1930, was one of the chief offenders in the battle of tariffs, and the action of a Congress inspired by capitalistic interests was a severe blow to the welfare of labor in America.13

These are the fundamental evils which not only beset the wage earner but also the majority of our people. These are the fundamental problems that labor demands shall be met by some sort of political action. That capital interests will strongly oppose any measures that will affect the "status quo ante" is evidenced by the article in the New York Times of April 2, 1933. This article gives the request—signed by twenty-two industrial chiefs—that the government declare a "moratorium" on labor and social legislation and put no further

Ronald Necker, "Tasks of World Recovery", in Current History, June, 1933.
burdens or restrictions upon industry. In their own words, "We urge that no laws be passed this year adding further burdens of any kind to industry. In particular we urge that no law be passed extending the cost of workmen's compensation; that no compulsory unemployment or health insurance law be passed. We believe a moratorium on all further regulatory social or labor legislation would be the best possible policy."

We name a few of these twenty-two men just to show the type of industry they represent: J. T. Lores, Vice-President and General-Manager of the Delaware and Hudson Railway; F. E. Williamson, President of New York Central Railroad; W. B. Bell, President of American Cyanamid Company; George W. Johnson, President of Endicott-Johnson Corporation; James H. Post, President of National Sugar Refining Company; James M. Brown, President of Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York. The other men are heads of cotton mills, chemical works, iron and steel works. This action is typical of what is happening all over the country and it is an attitude that will try to defeat the practical workings of progressive political measures.\(^{14}\)

The question remains, just what has been done by the new administration and special Congress to not only meet the present crisis but to permanently affect the needs of labor?

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\(^{14}\) Editorial, "Opposition to Recovery Act by United States Chamber of Commerce" in The Nation, June 14, 1933.
"NEW DEAL" POLICIES SO FAR ENACTED AND THEIR RELATION TO THE FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS OF LABOR.

The bank "holiday" which closed all banks for a short period, to permit reorganization of banks and resources, to subject banks to inspection as to their soundness, and to refuse reopening to those that could not pass inspection. This measure also suspended domestic gold payments for the time and also continued the embargo on gold shipments abroad. It further called for the surrender of all privately hoarded gold.

The Economy Act, reducing veterans' compensation by about $200,000,000 and the pay of government workers by $125,000,000.

The Beer Bill, to legalize beer and wine of not more than 3.2 per cent alcohol, and the placing of a federal tax on beer and wine.

The Farm Relief Bill, carrying a subsidy to farmers. With this bill were passed measures authorizing inflation, reduction of the gold content of the dollar by 50 per cent, and the providing of two billion dollars to refinance farm mortgages.

The Muscle Shoals bill.

The Civilian Conservation Corps bill, to put 275,000 unemployed at work in the national forests.

The Industrial Control bill, to allow industry to enter agreements limiting production, setting of minimum wages and reducing working hours, and a public works program.

The Glass-Steagall banking reform bill, with some measure of guarantee of deposits, and looking ahead to a possible unified banking system.

The Wagner-Peyser bill, setting up a federal-state employment system.

A railroad measure to enable carriers to remedy their troubles through a federal coordinator.

The Home Mortgage bill providing two billion dollars for refinancing mortgages on homes.
The abrogation of the gold payment clause in all existing or future contracts.

The act to regulate the marketing of securities and to protect the buyer.

Measures combining the federal agriculture credit institutions under the farm credit administration.

The three billion dollar public works program, passed as a part of the industrial control bill.

A $500,000,000 grant for direct relief to the states.

Congress gave President Roosevelt more executive power than any other president ever had. He has almost unlimited control over the direction and execution of the measures passed and has been given war-time powers. He may "use his best judgment" in the contraction or expansion of the measures passed. He has a free hand until next January and the proper administration of measures passed are entirely his responsibility. For example, he may invoke war-time powers to regulate transactions in credit, currency, gold and silver, even to embargo gold or foreign exchange. He may fix restrictions on the banking business of the Federal Reserve System irrespective of the Federal Reserve Board. He may inflate the currency either by requiring open market operations in federal securities, devaluing the gold dollar.

1. Cong. Record, April, May, June, 1933.
2. Cong. Digest, """
by not more than fifty per cent, issuing United States
notes up to three billion dollars, or accept up to two
hundred million in silver in part payment of allied war
debts. He has full authority to complete the Muscle Shoals
project and to develop the natural resources of the
Tennessee Valley. 2

There is neither the time nor the purpose to go into a
detailed examination and explanation of the many measures
passed by the special Congress of March-June 1933. What
concerns us is how many of these measures affect labor's
troubles, and what has been entirely omitted. Many of the
measures recently enacted are still in the initial stage and
no just criticism of them can be made at this time. It is
also too early to make any complete judgment of the work or
intentions of the new administration. However, there are
many things sorely needed, but not mentioned in a special
session that was supposedly called to remedy our most
fundamental faults.

Al Smith, staunch Democrat though he is, in an editorial
in the Outlook of June 1933, states his serious doubt of the
wisdom of many of the new acts and feels that the real needs
of the people will not be satisfied. Norman Thomas states

2. E. Francis Brown, "Presidential Planning" in Current
History, June, 1933.
New York Times, June 4, 11, 13, 25; July 2, 9, 16.
(New York Times, May 5, 1933) that not a single measure passed so far has touched upon the vital issues affecting the real needs of the wage earning masses. Senator Carter Glass, Democrat and recognized banking authority, violently protested and voted against the inflationary measures, and protested that the new bank bill did not "carry the teeth" in it to make it really effective as a remedy for banking evils. The American Federation of Labor is protesting against the proposed fixing of minimum wages—by the director of the industrial recovery act—at a level of eleven dollars a week, claiming that this is not even a subsistence wage for a family man. In the ranks of labor there is a wide-spread feeling that the final results of the new acts will most certainly help the banks, insurance companies, railways and the bond-holders, but that the underlying evils of our system have scarcely been touched; that the "New Deal" so far is a desperate effort to bolster up, protect and save capitalism from a worse fate.

A "Continental Congress for Economic Reconstruction" was held in Washington May 6 and 7, 1933. Norman Thomas, Senator Frazier of North Dakota and John Simpson, President of the National Farmers' Union, were the leaders of this meeting. A resolution was passed as follows: " Favoritism has been shown our bankers and railways over the starving millions of workers. Bond markets are manipulated by shrewd and ruthless gamblers--
falsely considered to be the financial barometer of the country. Great corporations, with high salaried officials and saturated with watered stock, have been given the majority of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds. Our entire banking system should be put upon a uniform national code. The government so far has only patched up the banking system, then handed it back to the men who helped wreck the country. The government is about to coordinate the railroads--still under private ownership--not for the benefit of the workers or the public but for the bondholders."  

Nothing was done in regard to lowering the highest protective tariff in American history--the evils of which are apparent to all--but delegates have been sent to a world economic conference, now in session, in the fond hope that some international agreement may be arrived at on this question.

While the administration rushed through a beer and wine bill for the purpose of new revenue, and has repeatedly urged the states to hurry and repeal the 18th Amendment for the purpose of further revenue, thus escaping censure for the alternative of having to levy new taxes, no urgent request was made to push through the child labor amendment. Booze and new revenue took precedence over measures to prevent

child labor while the 1930 census showed over two million children between 10 and 17 years of age employed at small wages and long hours and over 800,000 not attending school.

Nothing was done in regard to wages except an attempt to get voluntary agreements on an extremely low minimum scale, under the Industrial Recovery Act. Even in the prosperous years of 1926-27 the average wage for all industrial workers was less than $25.00 per week, while an annual income of about $2,000 was estimated as essential to a decent standard of living for a family of four or five. 4

Uniform, compulsory measures on health and accident are still in the future, and the basic causes of insecurity, premature old age and unemployment are still untouched.

Nothing has been done in regard to the power of the courts to nullify legislation or to restrict the unfair use of the injunction, or to curb the power of industry in its effort to further enslave the wage earner.

Roosevelt's new deal has so far meant the following: the seizure of more or less unconstitutional dictatorial powers; the closing of thousands of small banks, with the tie-up of the savings of millions; the buttressing of the big banks; 5 the failure to insist on a national bank code which would

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5. The New York Times of July 9, 1933, quotes a protest by bankers and citizens of Vermont against the alleged unfair practices of the bank closures.
treat all alike and which would eliminate the most profound evils of our banking system; the slashing of government expenses at the demand of big business, with the burden falling upon government employees and needy veterans; a legislative program of half-way measures forced through a submissive Congress; the failure to curb the gambling on the stock markets, whereby only recently false and unwarranted values have been given stocks and bonds only to lure a gullible public into the Wall Street net. Capital and business interests have been helped and one or two million unemployed may be put to work. But what of the basic needs of the wage earner, and what of the ten to twelve million still unemployed? What of an economic system that permits an ever increasing accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few while the great mass of labor exists on the poverty line?

The writer has found upon investigation, in this territory and in the middle west, that the middle class accepts with pathetic eagerness the new program and hopefully looks for a return to the "status quo ante". He has also found among the "intellectuals" and the proletariat an opinion that basic issues have not been touched upon, and a serious conviction that only a real labor party can satisfy the needs

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of the masses. Norman Thomas, in the New York Times, June 17, 1935, dubbed the whole new deal “state capitalism”. Let us therefore examine the new measures a little more closely to see their real nature.

Under the guise of a vast public program, the Roosevelt administration is inaugurating the heaviest naval construction program yet proposed. The army and navy appropriations for 1933-34 amount to $565,000,000. The proposed public works program does not call for the elimination of slums and like public cancers, yet $230,000,000 has been taken from this fund for the building of thirty new warships. The excuse given is that preparing for war is a good use of funds for unemployment. It is doubtful if such a measure could ever have gotten by Congress as a straight appropriation.

The Farm Relief Bill is nothing less than a sales tax on the food and clothing of the urban consumer, imposed through a wholesale bribe to the farmer to produce less so that the prices of his products may be raised. The rise of farm commodity prices would supposedly be reflected in a rise in farm property values, would raise the value of farm mortgages and would add to the solvency of the mortgagee—the banker. There is not a word about lowering the prices of the goods the farmer must buy, the prices of monopoly protected goods—fuels, fertilizers, machinery, clothing and other
materials. Instead, the proposal is made to raise farm prices to somewhere near the prices of protected manufactured goods through a subsidy paid by consumers, which means mainly by the city worker. 7

The Farm Bill is probably the most radical agricultural measure ever brought to the floor of Congress. It means that there will be price-fixing by taxing the processors of farm products sufficient to raise prices to pre-war parity with industrial products. There is reduction of acreage by agreements with farmers and by the renting of land to keep it non-productive, while millions go hungry. There is control of imports and exports of agricultural products vested in the Secretary of Agriculture. Conservatives are horrified to learn that it will cost nearly $800,000,000 a year to operate, that it means price-fixing, that it will raise the price of necessities over a billion dollars a year and that the tax on the processors may interfere with competition abroad. It leaves the farmer still crushed with debt, instead of eliminating the bankers' cut. It leaves him at the mercy of stock exchange speculators and middle men by not taking over the marketing and processing. Finally, it has already cost the American people nearly two hundred million

7. Lane W. Lancaster, Professor of Political Science, University of Nebraska, "Sidestepping the Farm Problem" in Current History, May 1933.
dollars (Federal Farm Board Act) to find out two simple economic truths, first, that you cannot fix the domestic price of any commodity which is produced by the entire world, second, that the law of supply and demand is still working.

In short, we are to "get rich by decreasing available wealth".8

In connection with Roosevelt's dictatorship powers he was able, without public discussion, to allocate $238,000,000 for new naval construction out of the public works appropriation. As mentioned before, the justification for this action is that it will make work. But in the meanwhile the government is laying off regular governmental employees elsewhere and is cutting out important educational and scientific projects.9 Secretary of the Navy Swanson claims that 65 per cent of the naval money will go for labor, a claim that would be hard to prove. In this connection it has been suggested that "if he would pay men to play leap frog, 100 per cent of the money would go for labor and the consequences would be far less mischievous."

It is admitted that there has been much inefficiency and waste in government departments and the veterans' administration, and some economy here is justified. But there is irony

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in the phenomenon of slashing several hundred million dollars from the federal payroll to balance the budget while, at the same time, projects are promoted for public works to aid the unemployed. Circuity and confusion result from taking a person from one payroll to reinstate him on another. Furthermore, men are set at unfamiliar tasks, at a low wage, and nothing much of real value is accomplished. (The sending of thousands of eastern city boys to our nation's forests is a good example of this.) Also, to help balance the budget, the administration is cutting the already low salaries of its employees thereby diminishing their purchasing power, a further push toward deflation. 10

To balance the budget by cutting wages and slashing relief to veterans, many of whom will almost starve if their pensions are stopped at this time, does not appear to be wise economy. If income and inheritance taxes in the higher brackets were drastically increased, and the $725,000,000 in interest on the debt which the government annually pays to coupon-clippers were reduced, and the $565,000,000 which the government puts into preparing for war were slashed, millions could be made available for constructive relief of a suffering people, instead of paring expenses where they are doing

some good at least at present.

If inflation of the currency ever goes far, and prices rise largely in consequence, the benefits will go to bankers, merchants, manufacturers and brokers. Wage earners and salaried men will suffer between the rapid increase in prices and the slow, inadequate gain in pay. As far as gold is concerned, we have gone off the gold standard without any of the advantages that were supposed to result. We are still tied to gold and gold values, but the gold is locked securely in the vaults. Thus far the cost of the depression and consequent unemployment has been borne primarily by wage earners, in hunger and misery, and by the middle class in the wiping out of their savings. If "prosperity" arrives by means of inflation, the poor will pay for it "out of their hides" and the middle class out of their pocketbooks. This method appears to be the only method the profit system knows and most Americans appear to believe in its technique. ¹²

The question of whether we were to have 3.2 or 3.5 per cent beer was surely a momentous question in these days of economic chaos. The fact that the drinkers of the country had become, under prohibition, used to much more

powerful booze, or that the country might not imbibe heartily of such weak stuff, was overlooked in the hope for revenue from a thirsty people. Even in 1919 revenue from beer brought in only $113,000,000. If the beer and wine taxes do not materially help the budget, the measures will at least have been a good "political gesture".

The work-sharing and the thirty hour week campaigns are an offensive against the standard of living of the working classes. They are a method of wholesale wage cutting that drives down the living standard of all wage earners. At the same time they place the chief burden of unemployment on the shoulders of the wage workers, leaving capital free to use its own surpluses and the funds of the government to subsidize industries, railroads and banks. The crucial point about the Black thirty hour week bill is its possible effect on wages. If reduced work is to be socially desirable there must be no reduction in wages. The thirty hour week is only desirable when it is a way to a new society in which labor gets the benefits of technological advance. The work-sharing, thirty hour week movement may permit more men to work, but there is no mention at present of a maintained wage. Thus industry may get the benefit of two men's work at the rate of pay for one man. Such has been the case where it
has been in operation.

The Civilian Conservation Corps has many objectionable features. It is a military type of enlistment and bears a resemblance to Hitler's projected labor brigades. The American Federation of Labor has rightly objected that to hire men at army rates of pay depresses the wage standards of the whole working class. In Montana and other forest districts there is an outcry from the unemployed local citizenry that the work in the forests could be done much better by hiring the people who are living in these areas and who are more or less acquainted with the work instead of shipping out incompetent youngsters from eastern cities. The conditions within the Civilian Conservation Corps are of common knowledge, that the men are unruly and that they do as little work as possible. The work planned is work that needs to be done and the scheme looks nice on paper, but nothing much is being accomplished by the plan except the removal, at great expense, of thousands of potential trouble makers from crowded industrial centers. Also, the plan is far removed from competition with business interests. Planting forests, in a country of rugged individualism, is less harmful to business interests than clearing up slums and providing decent housing.

The effect of the Industrial Recovery Act will depend largely upon its administration. As passed, it gives the government elaborate control of private enterprise. It is a plan to stimulate business and stabilize it at the same time. To help stimulate business, over three billion dollars are provided for loans to states and for immediate spending on public works. As this measure is just getting started to function at this date, one cannot foresee the actual good, or harm, it will do. The main idea back of it, outside of the public works, is to set business and industry on the road to recovery. Thereby, perhaps, assuming that if business is prosperous then we will all be prosperous. The Act is not greatly concerned with the advancement of the workers. The American Federation of Labor has loudly protested against the wage agreements so far made. One cannot help noting the significant fact that the wage scale is an agreement between the government and business heads, not a three-way agreement including labor. Furthermore, the measure, as applying to industrial stabilization agreements, does not seem to be making rapid headway among our corporation heads. The fact that a large part of the program depends upon voluntary action on the part of business may prove to be a serious stumbling block. The Act provides a certain amount of coercion, if necessary, but it is doubtful if this
will be used or could be enforced if attempted. 14

There is power in the Industrial Control Act, if mis-handled, to bring about the following disasters to the labor movement: suspension of anti-trust laws; new subsidies for capital and a guarantee of minimum profits through price-fixing; the driving out of small capitalists and a further concentration in fewer hands; competition may not be abolished but "raised to a higher level", whatever that means; a greater control of government by financial interests; the guarantee of profits to bankrupt industries at the expense of the workers; preparations for a coming imperialist war; the fixing of low minimum wages with nothing to prevent them becoming standard wages; the creation of machinery for compulsory arbitration, resulting in the outlawing of strikes and the crushing of militant labor organizations. 15

The teaching profession, unorganized, unprotected and already generally underpaid, is seeing daily a reduction in wages to a bare subsistence level from which it may take many years to recover.

Arnold and Sturgiss, op. cit.
New York Times, June 4, 11, 18, 25; July 2, 9, 16.
Editorial, New Republic, July 19, 1933.

15. Ibid.
In conclusion, the whole "New Deal" may fulfill Norman Thomas' prophecy that it is entirely inadequate, that it does not reach the fundamental issues and that it is merely a form of state capitalism. There are many who say that even if the New Deal does all that its admirers hope for that the necessity for a labor party will become clearer than ever. One hesitates to predict just what will happen if the New Deal fails in its major projects.
THE OUTLOOK

Today, when most of the workers are compelled to think politically, there exists a greater opportunity than ever before to bring class politics to the labor movement. There is the growing depth of radicalization of the workers as a result of their cumulative experiences during the depression, and out of this comes a greater realization of the need and desire for unity. At the same time labor is looking with suspicion upon New Deal measures as an attempt to stifle a revolutionary spirit and an effort to prevent a united front on the part of the wage earners.

The conservative leaders of the American Federation of Labor have changed front and are now demanding help, through legislation, for measures once held sacred to collective bargaining. For example, the last Federation convention endorsed compulsory unemployment insurance, which it had opposed steadily for some forty years.¹ President Green has lately threatened a general strike in order to secure the thirty hour week and other measures, but has publicly stated that the Federation would rather secure these demands through legislation.² This emphasis on legislation is a revolutionary departure from the traditional policy of the American Federa-

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¹ American Federation of Labor Proceedings, 1932.
² New York Times, June 4, 1933.
ation of Labor. The realization has been forced upon its leaders that political action must take the place of voluntarism and collective bargaining as a requisite of attaining labor's demands.

In spite of the fact that American Federation of Labor leaders have turned to legislation, they still adhere to their old non-partisan policy. Since the Federation has usually, unofficially, favored the Democrats, it considers its non-partisan policy in the last election as highly successful. At the last convention, independent political action was not even seriously discussed. Most of the leaders, particularly state and local leaders, are still tied up with the old parties and are even important cogs in old party machines. Against this situation we have an ever growing sentiment among individuals and individual unions for a union of organized labor with an independent party. These are the people who forced through the changed attitude of the American Federation of Labor, over their leaders' protests, in regard to a legislative program, and they are the people who may force an abandonment of the non-partisan policy. The rank and file are the great sufferers and if conditions do not materially improve they will certainly turn toward independent political action.

The League for Independent Political Action is taking the lead in an attempt to unite all elements that favor inde-
pendent political action. Preliminary plans are now being made for a national joint conference in order to consider the formation of a united labor-farmer party. The aim is to run candidates in the congressional election in 1954 and thus lay the ground for a united front in the 1936 presidential campaign. Howard Y. Williams, national director of the League, states: "The ramparts of the old parties cracked in the last election. Millions changed political habits of a lifetime. Roosevelt's election meant not a rebirth of the Democratic party, but a desperate attempt to secure an immediate new deal by any means."

The League's platform demands that the people rise in support of an independent, progressive party that shall put an end to an era of raw individualism and cut-throat competition; that a society which has permitted crime and speculation, luxury and slums, charity in place of justice, privilege and oppression, insecurity, fear and increasing panics and depressions, shall be reorganized; that the keynote of the new era must be planning, not drift; that the object of the planning must be the creation and distribution of wealth in such a manner that it will be a stable and continuous benefit to all the people and not to a privileged few.

The League states that the new era can be made possible only by the creation of a new party. It calls on all industrial workers, all farmers, all "white-collar" and professional workers who have no stake in the inequality of the present system, all persons who hold the national good above the privilege of a few, to join in forming a united party and in carrying that party through to power. The keynote of its call is for solidarity in political opinion and action.

The League asks that the government meet the present emergency in an adequate manner, a billion for immediate relief and five billions for public works and employment. It asks for immediate nationalization of banks, railroads and public utilities. The raising of the necessary money by heavy increase of taxation of large incomes, inheritance taxes, loans and necessary reflation. The rescue of the farmer by compulsory mortgage moratoriums, federal refinancing at lower interest costs, reduction of tariffs to make a more equitable level between farm prices and industrial prices and to help restore markets.

The League demands that the people own their all-essential services, claiming that American resources and technical mastery make possible a general living standard many times higher than that of today. The present day situation, starvation and misery in a land of plenty, must be
abolished. An economic planning council of expert servants of the public must direct those vital basic industries which are now the instruments of private greed. The thirty-hour week, accompanied by higher wages, must be installed. Security in employment, security against sickness and old age, must be guaranteed by the government.

It is demanded that a constitutional convention be called by a party which will represent the common interests of the people. The Constitution and state and municipal laws must be changed to meet the demands of a modern world.

Finally, it is asked that the United States take a definite stand for the cooperation of nations. Another great war menaces the world and its background is economic and nationalistic. Cut-throat competition among nations is a result. Debts, armaments and tariffs must be reduced as a first step in world cooperation.4

Such are the general principles and program of the League for Independent Political Action. The difficulty of uniting warring factions, the difficulty of creating an intelligent interest among the American workers, make the future of the League for Independent Political Action quite unpredictable.

Among the various factors that influence the political habits of American labor, progressives regard none as more likely to defeat the formation of a labor party than the type of person known as the "hundred-percenter". He is the typical honest, hard-working family man. His name is legion. He is found mostly in the middle class groups of salaried and professional men and the upper strata of Federation unions. He is fertile ground to high-pressure salesmen, the movies, the newspaper, the machine politician, and to every agency that depends upon mass gullibility for success. He has an incurable faith in political leaders and parties--his choice usually running toward Republicans. There is something about the unctuous phrases used by old party politicians that is soothing and reassuring to the hundred-percenter. Their speeches and writings rumble with sonorous security, their phrases echo time-worn calls to patriotism and duty. Draping themselves in the flag, they make party allegiance appear a patriotic virtue to our hundred-percenters.

The hundred-percenters are a part of the millions whose reading is mostly confined to headlines, the sensational tabloids, sex magazines and the sport page. The movies are their university and the comic strip influences their conversation. Their ignorance is abysmal, yet they feel qualified to express set opinions on almost any economic or political subject. A composite picture of the hundred-percenters
reveals their beliefs somewhat as follows:

That the American Constitution is sacred, in fact, almost an act of Providence.

That words like "propaganda", "agitator", "socialized", "socialism", radical", and "pacificism" have an esoteric and foreign flavor and are bound up with designs to wreck American government and the home.

That all progressives such as LaFollette, Norris, Thomas, Jane Addams, etc., are more or less tied up with the Reds.

That third parties are backed by "radicals".

That America can tell the rest of the world "where to get off" because one American soldier can whip ten foreigners.

That we would not have had the depression had we stayed at home during the World War and minded our own business.

That repeal of prohibition is a major social question, would balance the budget and would put millions of men to work.

That the luxuries of the rich provide employment for millions of workers.

That the wealthy are suffering as a result of the depression almost as much as the poor.

That private charity is the best plan because under it "everybody chips in".

That the government ought to print several billion dollars in new money.

That unemployment, distribution, wandering youth driven to crime, are not manifestations of great social significance but are evidences of individual misfortune.

That the Bonus Army was mob action and was probably led by Communists.

That hunger marchers are dangerous radicals.
Low salaries and wages, mounting personal debts, a growing sense of insecurity, a muddling through from day to day and a pathetic hope that some day he will "get a break"—such is the daily existence of our hundred-percenter. In the meanwhile, politicians, a capitalist press and chambers of commerce continue to issue blatantly optimistic slogans and bulletins, and conservative economists and panacea-mongers issue new plans for recovery—fiat money, primitive barter, inflation, subsidized agriculture, and insurmountable tariffs.

The hundred-percenter is an arch-conservative and a staunch individualist when it comes to questions of political habits, but he is becoming sunk in a bewildering mental state which alternates between baseless hope or despair. It appears that nothing short of continued or repeated depressions and disaster will be sufficient to awaken him from his political and intellectual stupor.

Thus we leave our problem in the summer of 1933, in an uncertainty as to its final outcome. Economic events and political concessions within the next few months may greatly change the question of labor and politics in the United States and make the forming of a labor party a far distant thing. On the other hand, if conditions do not materially
improve within a short time, and if the New Deal measures fall flat, the general opinion seems to be that the United States will be facing a most violent political revolution.

In either case, it appears that the labor and middle class elements have both drunk too deeply of the dregs of our present system ever to completely revert to the pre-depression status. However, historical and contemporary experience lead one to doubt if there is any limit beyond which political obduracy will not go. It has become the fashion to affect a cynical outlook about all political endeavor; in short, to accept as an axiom that politics are the chief instrument whereby, for their own mysterious good, the common people are chastised.
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