

# WHO IS ROOSEVELT?

## William Z. Foster, Communist Candidate for President, Unmasks Wall St. Nominee in Columbus, O. Speech

COMRADES and Fellow Workers! Today Mr. Roosevelt, the standard bearer of the Democratic Party for president of the United States, spoke in Columbus. I am going to deal especially with his party at this time. I listened to Mr. Roosevelt's speech: he presents himself literally as a saviour of the country. But let us see what he really has to offer the workers and poor farmers of the United States in this period of unparalleled crises and mass starvation.

### BOSS PARTY PLATFORM IDENTICAL

First of all, let me say that the policy of Mr. Roosevelt's party is identical in all essentials with that of the Republican Party. The platform of the Republican Party could be adopted by the Democratic Party and they could get along very nicely with it. Or the candidate of the Democratic Party could run on the Republican Party ticket; Mr. Hoover could be a member of Mr. Roosevelt's cabinet or vice-versa. These men are representatives of the big capitalists of this country and both of them serve the capitalist class. The Democratic Party is controlled by such big organizations as the General Motors, headed by Raskob, an affiliate of Morgan and Company, and the Republican Party is controlled by similar bankers and big capitalists and the speech that we listened to here in Columbus from Mr. Roosevelt was a bid to the capitalists of this country, especially to put the Democratic Party in power because it can serve the capitalists of this country better than

that is concerned), but the real basis is the very nature of the capitalist system itself, and all that Mr. Roosevelt might propose, and all that he has proposed in the past, would not have prevented one iota of the present crisis. And I want to point out that during the course of this crisis the policy of Mr. Roosevelt, "saviour" of the country, and that of his Party, has been identical with that of the Republican Party. And what is their basic policy? It is to save big business from bankruptcy. To this end they have given four billion dollars to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. As for the workers—they can starve! That is the policy of the Democratic Party just as much as the Republican Party, and both cooperated in the past Congress, on every legislative hall in every city and state in the U. S. to put that policy into effect. Giving concessions to the capitalists in the forms of loans and subsidies, and nothing for the workers but "hopes" that good times will come automatically; that is the policy of both of the parties of capitalism. Any quarrels between them have been matters of detail.

### RELIEF FOR UNEMPLOYED

Let us look more closely into this matter. Take the question of unemployed relief. Fifteen million unemployed in the U. S., ten million part time. What is the policy of the Hoover government? Let them starve! Shove off the responsibility from the Federal government to the communities; stagger system; divide the work so that starvation spreads everywhere; and

publican governor of Illinois is sending his troops against Illinois miners to force them to accept a wage cut. Both parties have identical policies. In Pennsylvania, speaking of the Republicans, we find the so-called Progressive Republicans; Mr. Pinchot, working hand in hand with the coal operators to destroy the strike of the coal miners a year ago, and the Socialist Party in Milwaukee, the third capitalist party, works like every other capitalist party to cut the wages of the workers. There is one Party in the country fighting against the wage cutting policy of the capitalist government and that is the Communist Party. It goes out and fights the wage cuts. (Applause).

Practically every important strike against wage cuts during the past two years in this country has been led either directly by the revolutionary unions or through the minorities in the old unions organized by the Trade Union Unity League. Among the strikes recently led by the revolutionary unions were those of the miners in Pennsylvania and Kentucky, the textile workers in Lawrence, the beet workers in Colorado. This is action against wage cuts, not talk like the fakers of the Roosevelt stamp.

### POVERTY, RUIN ON FARMS

And what does Roosevelt offer the farmers? Today much is said in his speeches and in the platform about the generosity of the Democratic



the Republican Party has done.

Now, comrades, the Democratic Party: a few words about its role, its tasks in this election. The Democratic Party appears as an opposition party, but its opposition consists in words only. It is a party that serves, or that the capitalists hope will serve to catch the discontented masses, those who are disillusioned with the Hoover regime, those who are looking for some relief and the Democratic Party, with its demagoguery, radical phrases and vague promises to the workers and poor farmers is exactly designed to accomplish this task. Mr. Roosevelt appears with a veneer of liberalism, a veneer of radicalism, but how thin that is has been fully exposed in many instances.

### ROOSEVELT AND TAMMANY

Take the case of Mayor Walker and the other Tammany grafters in New York. What is his attitude towards this situation. Well, he has done nothing to expose the monumental corruption in New York City, but on the contrary, has used this opposition to block the attempt to make a real exposure in New York. How much Mr. Roosevelt is a radical, a progressive, a liberal, is indicated by the fact that he said recently in one of his speeches that in the present election campaign he will prove to the people of this country that Mr. Hoover is a radical. Can you imagine such a thing? Mr. Roosevelt is nothing more nor less than a lightning rod for capitalism to protect it from danger. What does he offer in the present election? He offers to the workers and poor farmers and the starving masses of this country, the opportunity of jumping out of the Hoover frying pan into the Roosevelt fire. Comrades, there is one party in the United States, and one alone, that represents the interests of the working class and that is the Communist Party. (Applause).

Let me point out how similar the policies of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hoover are. On the question of the tariff: Mr. Roosevelt today made a lot of remarks about the high tariff. But, as a matter of fact, in 1928, Al Smith running for president on the Democratic ticket, called for a high tariff policy just the same as the Republican Party, and the Democratic platform calls for a high tariff; and in the recent Congress the Democratic representatives, under the cover of levying taxes, put tariffs on higher even than the Republicans did. Identical policy on tariffs. On prohibition: For a moment it appeared there was a difference between the parties on this question. The Republicans dry, and the Democrats wet, but Mr. Hoover's speech shows us even this difference is wiped out. Again identical policy. Mr. Roosevelt today pointed out that there was virtual bankruptcy in the country, but he simply undertook to blame that upon the Republican Party; that this in some manner was due to the mistakes and ignorance of the Republican Party.

### HOOVER, ROOSEVELT AND THE CRISIS

This is not so. The Republican Party, like every other capitalist institution, contributed towards making this crisis, but if Mr. Roosevelt had been in power, we would have had the crisis just the same. This crisis arises out of the very character of the capitalist system itself. It arises out of the contradictions of capitalism, out of the fact, primarily, that the production runs away beyond the possibilities of the capitalist market to absorb what the workers and farmers produce, and is not due to mistakes of Mr. Hoover (he is stupid enough as far as

Mr. Roosevelt is in complete agreement with this policy. The Democrats voted in Congress for it and Mr. Roosevelt has supported it in practice. Take the state of New York. What has it done? Not more than any Republican state in the country. Just a few days ago I spoke in the city of Schenectady, and what is the situation there? They have a diet expert in that city and he says the workers can live on nine cents a day; this in Mr. Roosevelt's state, and this is the man who is coming here, appearing before the workers as offering them some form of relief.

Mr. Roosevelt and his party also speak of unemployment insurance. And how do they dispose of it? By making some evasive, hypocritical "proposals" about state insurance. And I may ask this: **If the task is for the states to organize unemployment insurance, how about the southern states, all controlled by the Democratic Party? How many have unemployment insurance? Not a damn one of them.** Yet, the unemployed in this country have established an institution that is very well-known, a new type of American city. You see it along the railroad tracks, in the garbage dumps, etc. and these all have one name—Hooverville. If Mr. Roosevelt gets the presidency, as he may, all that will be necessary to do in these cities is to change the name to Rooseveltburg. Mr. Roosevelt's regime would be just as productive of such shameful cities of poverty and misery as that of the Republican Party. There is one Party in America fighting for unemployment relief and insurance, and that is the Communist Party. **We demand from the federal government a system of unemployment relief financed by the government and the employers and managed by the workers.** The Communist Party does not write a vague platform of unemployment insurance like Roosevelt and his Democratic Party but it fights for it, and it fights Roosevelt just as much as Hoover. (Applause).

### BOSS CANDIDATES BACK WAGE CUTS

On the question of wage cuts. Every worker in this country, industrial workers, workers for the city, etc. have had their wages cut. The Hoover government has the policy of slashing the wages. Mr. Hoover says he is against wage cuts, so does Mr. Green of the American Federation of Labor. But apparently to prove that they are against wage cuts they cut the wages of every worker in this country. And what about Mr. Roosevelt? When the government and the employers have cut the wages of the workers in this country they had the full support of the A. F. of L.—and of the Socialist Party whenever it has any strength—and Mr. Roosevelt, who appears here in Columbus, who comes before the masses with all these phrases about the "forgotten man," and what he is going to do for the workers of this country, is just as much a wage cutter as Mr. Hoover is. Let him talk until he is blue in the face about the incorrectness of cutting wages, but he cuts the wages just the same. Look in New York state and you will find the workers there have had their wages cut as much as in any other state in the union.

And what did Mr. Roosevelt or his party against it? Exactly nothing. They have been the willing, eager instruments of the capitalists of this country to slash the wages of the American working class.

A typical situation is to be found here in the southern part of Ohio. Gov. White, a Democrat, sent his troops against the coal miners to force them to accept wage cuts and the Re-

Party towards the farmers. First, what is Hoover's policy? Under the Republican administration tens of thousands of farmers have been bankrupted, and 150 million acres of land confiscated for non payment of taxes—admitted by Republicans themselves. And how about Mr. Roosevelt's party? In Mississippi, controlled by the Democratic party, we see the Democratic farmers' policy. Just a few months ago we had the unparalleled exhibition in Mississippi of 40,000 farms sold in one day by auction for non-payment of taxes—seven million acres under a Democratic government auctioned for non-payment of taxes. This is Mr. Roosevelt's farm policy in fact. There is one Party that stands for the farmers' interests, and that is the Communist Party. In the forefront of our demands for the farmers stands the demand of no forced collection of debts from the farmers thru mortgage charges, taxes or otherwise. The Party of the poor farmers in America is the Communist Party and thousands of farmers all over this country are waking up to that important fact.

### "CRIMES AGAINST 13 MILLION NEGROES"

Let us take another important issue before the people of America and what Mr. Roosevelt's position is on this. I refer to the Negro question. In the United States there are approximately 13 million Negroes, and capitalism in this country is guilty of many crimes, but I doubt if it has to its score any more terrible crime than that committed against the 13 million Negroes. We can search the world and there is not another section of the population in any country that suffers such systematic terrible oppression, persecution, ostracism and general suppression as do the 13 million Negroes here in the United States. Lynching, jim-crowism, discrimination in every conceivable form, and the Hoover government has tolerated it—not only that—it has built it up and is responsible for it. What of Mr. Roosevelt?

There is no more important situation in the United States than the suppression and repression of all these masses of toilers of the Negro race. What about Mr. Roosevelt party? What does it offer? To get a measure of his party, look to the south. That is the stronghold of Mr. Roosevelt's party. He personally is the darling of the Bourbons, of the lynchers of the jim-crowers of the south. What is his attitude towards the Negro masses? **It is 100% support of the entire system of repression and exploitation of the Negro masses, in its worst forms.** Down south, at the present time in Alabama, they are trying to lynch nine Negro boys. They have framed a charge against the Negro boys. They are innocent of that charge. The purpose of this attempted legal lynching is to terrorize the Negroes of the south. Mr. Roosevelt has never spoken a word against this attempted legal lynching. Why? Because he supports it as a basic policy of the Democratic Party, and the Negro masses must understand that fundamental fact. The whole thing is part of the process of suppressing and persecuting the Negro masses, and everybody who votes for Mr. Roosevelt is voting directly against the Negroes in the U. S.

(CONCLUDED TOMORROW)