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Change the World

Why Doesn't Mrs. Roosevelt Look Into the Facts?

By Mike Gold

DURING the Roosevelt decade the wife of the great President also did much for democracy, for trade unions and the Negro, for the rights of women and children.

She created a gallant legend that must endure as long as the President's in our history books. Yet if Marie Fuller ate crackers in bed, and Madame George Sand devoured the genius of her lovers, Mrs. Roosevelt also has faults. The latest rotten apple in her barrel of democratic thought would seem to be her friendship for the Dubinsky gang.

Mrs. Roosevelt has never looked into the crass dictatorship that enables Dubinsky to hold power in his union.

She has never allowed herself to examine the constant collaboration against President Roosevelt and the whole anti-Nazi war that went on between Dubinsky and John L. Lewis, for instance.

Mrs. Roosevelt is a militant liberal democrat. But Dubinsky and his crowd of "socialists" belong to that peculiar variety of red-baiter that grows out of the labor hierarchies. This type hates Communists for no political or social reason, but mostly because Communists are honest, and form the effective opposition to labor dictators and grafters.

Such people as Dubinsky have always hated Russia more than they did Hitler and fascism. In Europe, socialists and labor leaders who held out to Hitler always began with the kind of red-baiting for which Dubinsky is best known.

BUT Mrs. Roosevelt has never looked into the facts. She has accepted the Dubinsky-Cahan crowd uncritically and sentimentally. Thirty years ago the Abe Cahans formed a picturesque vanguard in the ranks of American labor. They were pioneers of socialism and liberal thinking. Thirty years is a long time ago. The arteries grow harder, the heart colder. The opportunist gradually succumbs to increasing temptations. His love for humanity grows dimmer as his bankbook grows larger. The price of progress seems too heavy to pay.

Am I just calling names, Mrs. Roosevelt? If so, I will take it all back if you will interview 50 rank-and-file members of a Dubinsky union chosen at random. Out of these 50 at least half will be sure to open your eyes.

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FACTS, facts, facts! Liberals like Roosevelt are painfully scrupulous as to the accuracy of their facts. They would feel deeply ashamed if they presented a single unverified fact in attack upon the worst sweatshop owner or cheating corporation.

But against the scapegoat Communist, any wild rumor or reckless lie is acceptable. Mrs. Roosevelt recently took a hand in the Communist debate on the present political situation which has been going on, partly as a result of the Duclos letter.

Mrs. Roosevelt must have heard about it at second hand, from some tainted source like Dubinsky.

"We feel kindly toward the Soviet people. But American Communists who encourage a policy of world revolution have done the peace of the world harm. Now they are out to force Communism on our democracy. That we will not tolerate."

And so on and on—sound and rumor like that of a Westbrook Pegler or Dubinsky—typical red-baiting that splits labor and democracy. It was so out of character with the Roosevelt legend that Westbrook Pegler, America's foremost slanderer of Roosevelt, let out an excited, joyful scream.

"The most interesting essay she ever wrote . . . an important political event—she acknowledges that recent actions of our Communists have increased the general fear of Communism as an international force . . . she states the position of all of us who oppose the American Communists throughout a long time when Mrs. Roosevelt appeared to sympathize with them."

Mrs. Roosevelt will not thank Pegler for this sudden praise nor accept the outstretched hand covered with the slime of gutter-journalism.

But when she recklessly charges Communists with things that never happen and thoughts that are not to be found, she has brought grist to the mill of Hearst.

No, the American Communists are not agitating for red revolution or a swing to crazy leftism or for any movement "to force Communism on the American people."

Mrs. Roosevelt should go to the sources, dig out the facts, facts, facts. Let her read the sober and responsible letters from the Communist rank and file now appearing in the Communist press. Let her discover what suddenly agitates us so. Maybe she will learn something about the mighty threat of the great cartels and corporations that has loomed again, and that leads straight to a third world war for super-profit and empire. Facts, facts, facts!

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