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The Coolidge Program

Capitalist
Democracy
& Prosperity
Exposed

by
Jay Lovestone

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An Acknowledgement With Thanks

THE series of publications of which this pamphlet is the second has been made possible thru a fund contributed by a number of comrades and sympathizers. Acknowledgement is due to Comrades Bertha and Samuel Rubin, J. Barry, Dr. B., A. T. and others for generous contributions.

First Edition December 5, 1927
New York, N. Y.

COMPOSED AND PRINTED BY UNION LABOR



The Coolidge Program

Capitalist Democracy and Prosperity Exposed

By JAY LOVESTONE

THE coming presidential election has a rather early opening. The high hats of the big business men have already been thrown into the ring. Their opening gun has been fired.

President Coolidge has opened the 1928 campaign for the biggest capitalist interests in his speech before the Union League Club of Philadelphia. Thru President Coolidge big business has given out its platform.

The most appropriate place for the opening of the Republican campaign is Pennsylvania. The Keystone state is the home of the biggest and most aggressive capitalist group in the country. In the Keystone state we also have today the mightiest and most heroic resistance by scores of thousands of workers to capitalist exploitation and oppression. Just now there is also a growing division within the ranks of the Republican Party in the state of Pennsylvania, particularly in the city of Philadelphia. Coolidge's prestige might go a long way towards healing the wounds in the organization and preventing severe losses to the Republican machine in the coming election.

A MOST SIGNIFICANT ADDRESS

Speeches delivered before the Union League Club of Philadelphia are not mere loose talks of second rate capitalist politicians. First of all, every Republican president since Lincoln, down or up, with the exception of President Harding, who died before he had his chance, spoke before this club. Secondly, the membership roster of this club is just one galaxy of American bourgeoisdom. Among the notables who greeted Coolidge's arrival and welcomed him in Philadelphia, were Governor Fisher of Pennsylvania, Vice-President of one of the worst scab coal corporations, now evicting and imprisoning

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miners; W. W. Atterbury, President of the Pennsylvania Railway Company, one of the most notorious labor-hating corporations in the country, now directing the persecution of thousands of coal miners; ex-Governor Sproul of Pennsylvania, infamous for his strike-breaking activities in the 1922 coal strike; Daniel Willard, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and author of the union-smashing B. & O. Plan.

Stripped of all its hackneyed verbiage and all its vainglorious boasting about the zenith of American power, and the glories of American democracy and capitalist individualism in the United States, the speech delivered by Coolidge was plainly and frankly the program of American imperialism. In this speech Coolidge not only told the world about the blessings of American democracy, but of the determination by the leading party of the ruling class in this country to fight against any attempt to encroach upon American imperialist supremacy. Mr. Coolidge hurled a defiant challenge to Communism. In fact, the speech of President Coolidge was a speech limited to making a brief for capitalism and a tirade against Communism.

Let us examine the President's speech in its salient features in the light of the objective conditions prevailing in the country.

THE COOLIDGE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

The Chief Executive of the capitalist class in this country laid down a theoretical basis for class relations in America when he declared:

"We have always held very strongly to the theory that in our country at least, more could be accomplished for human welfare thru the encouragement of private initiative than thru Government action. We have sought to establish a system under which the people will control the Government and not the Government control the people. If economic freedom vanishes, political freedom becomes nothing but a shadow."

Unfortunately there is too much truth in what the President has said. There is only one hitch to this truth. What the President has said has been very true only for a small sec-

tion of the population, only for the ruling class of this country. If the Fishers, the Sprouls, the Atterburys, and the Willards are *the* people of this country, then certainly the people control the government and not the government the people. If one uses this Coolidge yardstick, then the relations between economic freedom and political freedom are pretty accurately stated. Except, that in this instance also the accuracy and the blessings resulting therefrom hold true only for those whom Coolidge looks upon as *the* people, a small proportion, the exploiters, of the great mass of the population of this country.

We wonder how much private initiative the workers in the Ford factories, the workers who are treated as automatons, the workers in the steel mills, the workers evicted from the Ohio coal pits, the miners shot down in the hills of Colorado really have. Of course, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Schwab, Mr. Mellon, Mr. Hoover, Mr. Coolidge, these representatives of the people, do have private initiative. All their initiative is developed at the expense of the welfare of the great mass of the population, the great mass of workers and farmers who are today being ruled by the mightiest capitalist oligarchy that has ever been reared.

Let us take a few examples to see how this theory of private initiative has worked for the biggest capitalist interests of the country. The so-called builders of the continent, were presented by the government with tremendous areas of land which today are capitalized as railroad property. This land capitalization now serves as a further base enabling the railroad barons to rob the workers and pile up billions of dollars in interest and dividend payments. Thru Federal and Texas grants the railway barons of this country were given 312,000 square miles without one cent of payment. This territory is an area bigger than the six New England states, the five North Atlantic states, three South Atlantic states and the District of Columbia combined. The land given away for nothing to the railroad capitalists is 137,000 square miles more than the area of Turkey, 50,000 square miles more than the area of the whole Japanese empire, nearly 200,000 square miles bigger than Italy and 100,000 square miles in excess of the area of Germany or France before the war.

Certainly this is private initiative. Certainly this is human welfare. Certainly this is a great country for them—for the railroad capitalists and the class which they represent. Mr. Coolidge told the truth about their human welfare.

Besides boasting about what the Government has done for the railroad magnates, Mr. Coolidge went into extreme praise of the present tariff system. As a result of the present tariff, praised by Coolidge, the capitalist class of this country receives an annual tribute of \$6,000,000,000. The present tariff system aims to reduce the economic power of the farmers, the smallest capitalists and particularly the workers. The Fordney-McCumber tariff aims to enhance the economic power of the biggest capitalist interests of the country like the Mellons, the Schwabs, the Hoovers, the Rockefellers and their like.

And talking about private initiative and *the* people owning the government, Mr. Coolidge forgot to mention the splendid initiative developed by his close friends and class associates, William J. Burns, the labor hating jury crook, Sinclair the notorious oil thief, and Fall, erstwhile member of Coolidge's cabinet and world-infamous grafter.

WHO OWNS AMERICA?

Mr. Coolidge also spoke about the wide distribution of wealth in this country. This is a great illusion. This is plain propaganda handed out by the big capitalist news agencies and their economic experts. Some of this propaganda comes in the form of stories that there is a wide-spread distribution of stocks and wholesale ownership of shares in big corporations. The facts, of course, belie these statements and show the real purpose of the self-styled economic experts and prove the non-existent wealth of the workers. Bourgeois professors have repeatedly told us that there are from ten to fifteen million stockholders in the United States. This is fancy but false figuring. There are less than 2½ million stockholders in this country. Five per cent, or 120,000 of these stockholders, secure more than fifty per cent of the dividends accruing from the ownership of these stocks.

Furthermore, the stocks sold to workers of all grades, to employes of all categories, inclusive of managers, foremen,

technicians, etc., in the last 35 years have today a total value of \$700,000,000. Only 269,239 employes of all grades of 13 of the largest corporations in the United States control stocks having the value of \$425,000,000 out of this \$700,000,000 total value of the stocks sold to employes in nearly half a century. Add to these facts, the latest findings of the Federal Trade Commission regarding the distribution of wealth. Less than 25% of the people of this country own more than 90% of the wealth of this country. Eight big banks of New York control the biggest railroad and coal corporations.

Let us look at another side of the great prosperity for the working masses of the United States. It is true that compared with the standard of living in the war-torn European countries, the American workers, as a class, have a higher standard of living. It is likewise true that the upper crust of the American workers, several millions of the labor aristocracy, are occupying today a privileged position within the labor aristocracy of the whole world. This is due entirely to a temporary situation—the position of extreme dominance in which American imperialism finds itself today.

Even so loyal and well-known a servant of the American capitalists as Professor Irving Fisher of Yale University was compelled to declare the other day that our masses are not prosperous. According to the latest findings of this ultra-conservative capitalist economist 93,000,000 of our people make little, if any, more than their expenses; have an average annual income of only five hundred dollars, and at best have only enough to keep themselves above the "bottom level of health and decency." This is the prosperity our working class has under capitalist democracy in the United States.

ANOTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

But what conditions do we find for the mass of workers at large? First of all, in no country in the world are the workers exploited so intensely. In no country do the workers become old so quickly. Then in no country are scientific management, speed-up schemes, industrial espionage and other

efficiency methods to enslave and crush the workers, so extensively employed.

Secondly, the myth of general high wages must be exploded once and for all. According to the United States Department of Labor's last report, many millions of workers are getting only \$10.34 a week as wages. Lumber workers are paid \$17.17 a week on the average of 57½ hours work. At least 200,000 railroad laborers are averaging only \$17 weekly. Thousands upon thousands of machine shop laborers are averaging \$11.78 a week. Scores of thousands of bituminous mine laborers are receiving \$10.34 a week. Blast furnace men get \$24.34 weekly. Foundry laborers secure only \$25.25 a week, and large numbers of men in the most prosperous motor vehicle factories are making \$28.73 a week. On this basis some ten to twenty million persons, inclusive of women and children, are receiving a pittance and an insignificant share of the wealth produced by them for the country.

Even in "normal" times one out of every six of our workers is unemployed. In periods of unemployment, such as we are now entering, the number of jobless is increased by hundreds of thousands and even millions.

And while we are speaking of workers' conditions, we must not forget the situation in the coal fields. We must not blot out of our consciousness the fact that in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio, in the main coal strike area today, there are nearly three-quarters of a million of members of the working class, members of families of the United Mine Workers of America, who are today suffering from the worst excesses of industrial feudalism that this country has seen. We must not overlook the workers who have been maimed and shot down in cold blood in the hills of Colorado. It is certainly a painfully significant commentary on American prosperity that at the very moment when the President of the country boasts about the zenith of prosperity, workers are being shot down in Colorado and evicted and jailed in Pennsylvania and Ohio for striking for a near living wage.

America, with all its efficiency, with all its high development of industrial technique, with its powerful system of finance, still has nearly 60% of its workers compelled to

grind away more than 48 hours a week for their employers.

In the face of these indisputable facts, Mr. Coolidge told his multi-millionaire listeners at the Philadelphia Union League Club dinner, that America can be proud of "its liberal rate of wages, unprecedented distribution of wealth and its high standard of living." No wonder that the strike-breaking ex-Governor Sproul of Pennsylvania in presenting a gold medal to President Coolidge said; "I wanted you to see what these worth-while people think of you."

AMERICA'S PEACE AND FREEDOM

Certainly Mr. Coolidge had enough brazenness to dare to tell, at this time, the country that:

"At present our land is the abiding place of peace, universal freedom and undoubted loyalty, holding the regard of all the world as a mighty power, stable, secure, respected. The people are prosperous, the standards of social justice were never so high, the rights of the individual never so extensively protected."

Mr. Coolidge is trying hard to give us the impression that all is well in the land. It is very well indeed for the class Mr. Coolidge and the Republican Party represent. It is not for the Coolidges to think of the jailed and dying men and women in the coal fields of Colorado. It is only for the Coolidges to turn a deaf ear to the pleas of even the most conservative, even the blackest reactionary trade union leaders to remedy the plight of the evicted coal miners of Ohio, the clubbed and exploited coal diggers of Western Pennsylvania and the injunction-ridden mass of workers of the New York subways. For Mr. Coolidge, Mr. Mellon, Mr. Dawes, Mr. Hoover, and the whole Executive Committee of the capitalist class, social justice and injunctions are synonymous. Prosperity and a \$10-a-week wage for millions of workers are identical. The right to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness and the jailing of scores of the workers' leaders in Colorado and the most militant workers in Western Pennsylvania, is one and the same thing.

Great justice, indeed, do we have in this country! Look at the brutal murder of Sacco and Vanzetti by capitalist justice—dispensers of Mr. Coolidge's own state of Massachu-

setts in the face of protest and despite the belief in their innocence by scores of millions of the masses in this country and thruout the world.

PROSPERITY MUST CONTINUE—FOR THE AMERICAN
IMPERIALISTS

President Coolidge let the world know that he means real business. We must keep in mind that he is the spokesman of the capitalist class, the veritable dynamo of the steering committee, the machine recording its master's voice. Mr. Coolidge informed the world that the present conditions must continue in America. All the world knows that the basis of American so-called prosperity, the basis of American domination of the world market and appropriation of the world's gold is to be found in its key, in its strategic, position as the outstanding imperialist power of the world. The President has spoken in no unmistakable terms to the effect that insofar as this country is concerned, its ruling class will proceed most energetically to perpetuate its privileged position abroad as well as at home and continue the regime of prosperity for the exploiters of the United States. The President thus displayed real force in these chosen words:

"On the sea we shall round out our navy with more submarines and more cruisers, and private ownership should provide us with an auxiliary merchant marine of fast cargo boats.

"On land we shall be building up our air forces, especially by encouraging commercial aviation. We wish to promote peace. *We hold a great treasure which must be protected.*

"Our relationship with the vast territories between the Rio Grande and Cape Horn in a commercial way will become more intimate. Much of that country could be greatly benefited by lines of aviation, which we should hasten to assist them to open."

Here we have the entire foreign policy of the American ruling clique. A big navy; the biggest navy in the world; the development of commercial aviation—as a step forward towards the development of supremacy in military and naval aviation for Uncle Shylock. Peace is to be promoted by the use of the biggest navy, the biggest aviation fleet and the improvement of the army. Latin-America is to be "stabilized"

by the development of aviation so that America's military and financial overlords can be rushed down in double quick time to strengthen reaction and crush the progressive forces thruout these countries. Mr. Coolidge has pledged himself to bring true the dream of President Taft that the American geographical boundaries will sooner rather than later reach from Alaska to Cape Horn. In a military, political and financial way this task must be realized quickly. Nicaragua can now be sure of "stability." Nicaragua can now be sure that it will have genuine democracy! The proof of it all is that within the last year the whitest guards, the watch-dogs of American capitalist democracy, the marines, have murdered in cold blood over 700 Nicaraguans, defenseless workers and farmers.

And while Coolidge babbles about the great peace that is upon us, his doves are much ruffled. The United States is working overtime preparing chemical, naval, aerial, and military death-dealing and hell-pouring devices for the impending world war. Everywhere the hatred of American imperialism is rising and is sweeping the capitalist rivals of American imperialism towards a new test of strength, an infernal imperialist holocaust—a devastating world war.

COOLIDGE DENOUNCES COMMUNISM

In summing up his speech, in rounding out his program of American capitalism, Mr. Coolidge declared:

"Those are some of the economic results which have accrued from the American principles of reliance upon the initiative and the freedom of the individual. *It is the very antithesis of Communism, but it has raised the general welfare of the people to a position beyond even the promises of the extremists.*

"Arising from this same principle is popular education, the right to justice, free speech and free religious worship, all of which we cherish under the general designation of liberty under the law."

Mr. Coolidge is correct. This is the crux of the question. The issue is between Communism and capitalism. It took the Soviet Union five years to teach the imperialist powers that they cannot overthrow the first Workers' and Farmers' Republic by the most powerful military forces. It took the

Soviet Union another five years to teach the imperialist powers that the socialist economy will be built up within the Soviet Union despite the hostility and blockades of the imperialist cliques thruout the world. Mr. Coolidge's speech is an answer to the establishment of the 7-hour day in the Soviet Union. It only affords us striking proof of the intense disappointment in the ranks of even the American exploiters resulting from the establishment of the 7-hour day in the Soviet Union. Surely it must be much more harrowing for the capitalists of the other countries, if it is so disturbing for the most proud, the most aggressive and virile capitalist class in the world, the American imperialists, to find that the Soviet Union, harassed and blockaded by all those who control the capital of the world today, is proceeding to establish a 7-hour day.

But let us examine some more of the basic facts to find out whether Mr. Coolidge's boast has a leg to stand on. Mr. Coolidge only closed his eyes to the existence of the miserable slums in the industrial sections of the country. In these slums millions of the workers live. Mr. Coolidge might have inquired from the captain of the aviation corps commanding the airplanes now used in terrorizing the striking Colorado miners regarding the amount of free speech the workers are enjoying there. Mr. Coolidge did not tell us that even the bourgeois papers which carry strike news have been seized and suppressed and in the Colorado coal fields because the workers are to be kept in complete ignorance as to what the masses outside the coal fields think of the outrages being perpetrated against them at this moment.

Then, speaking of popular education, why didn't Mr. Coolidge tell us what approximately 90% of those engaged in producing the basic wealth of this country, approximately 90% of 14,000,000 American workers at the looms, in the machine shops, at the lathes and in the mines do not receive any education after the elementary school or rather after seven and a half years of the elementary schooling. When Mr. Coolidge speaks of popular education he certainly does not speak of education for the great masses of workers. Consider the recent remarks of the Dean of Columbia University. This

gentleman has said that there are too many people getting higher education nowadays, getting higher degrees at Columbia University. Apparently the plan of our ruling class in the interest of popular education a la Coolidge is to prohibit even the insignificant, infinitesimal fraction of the exploited classes from procuring a higher education.

THE FREEDOM AND WELFARE WE HAVE WITH US

When Coolidge speaks of free religious worship he of course has in mind the situation in the South where both the colored workers and the whites are permitted to be members of the Baptist and Methodist Church, but are not permitted to enter the same church or participate in the same prayers to and ceremonies for the God of Wall Street. We have no illusions about religion and its organization in America. We know that the church is one of the strongholds of capitalist reaction in the United States. But even the church is forthwith squelched when, in cases of extreme rarity, it tries to utter the faintest word of protest against exceedingly brutal capitalist terrorism.

Sometimes the bourgeoisie of this country develop a peculiar sense of humor. We have in mind the injunction issued by Judge Langham of Pennsylvania, to prevent the coal miners from going to church for fear that in church they might receive some food or might speak to other workers about striking and picketing. This is free religious worship that only our religion-hungry exploiters can well be proud of.

Mr. Coolidge's boasts about the general welfare of the masses are likewise empty. Not a word was said by Mr. Coolidge about thousands of workers, maimed and slaughtered every year in the mines, in the mills and in the factories in the United States. Not a word was said by the strike-breaker President about the fact that more workers are wounded every year in American industry than there were amongst the American forces in the World War. Every year American capitalist industry kills at least 35,000 and wounds at least two and a half million workers while on the job producing profits for their exploiters. The present industrial accident

539250

rate in the United States is about four times as high as in any other highly developed capitalist country.

Nor did Mr. Coolidge find it necessary to speak about the acute depression prevailing in the agricultural sections, the rising toll of bankruptcies among the farmers. Except for the years 1915 and 1920, America's agricultural crops were never as good as they were in 1926-27, yet the total income of the farmers for this period is more than a half billion less than in the preceding like period. He did not find it necessary to explain why it is that hundreds of thousands of farmers are deserting the land and fleeing to the city every year. He did not find it necessary to say a word about the oppression and degradation of the Negro masses. Finally, in speaking of the high standing which America has achieved under its capitalist regime, Mr. Coolidge found it necessary to keep silent and thus show his real wisdom by not saying a word about the ravages of the American marines in Nicaragua, about the mounting tides of hatred against American imperialism in Latin-America, regarding the growing resistance to Yankee imperialist encroachments in Europe, Asia and Africa.

President Coolidge will have to go a long way to show the blessing of American capitalism for the great masses of this country. Mr. Coolidge will have to work overtime to explain why it is that the Soviet Union, after inheriting the stinking corpse of Czarism, after beating back imperialist enemies on sixteen fronts, after years of devastating warfare, after famine, is able to establish the 7-hour day, and that America, which has gained so much from the World War, which now controls more than half the gold of the world, which dominates the markets of the world, which is the wealthiest country all around, does not establish a 7-hour day and even denies the workers the right to organize, the right to freedom of speech, the right of freedom of assembly, the right to strike and the right to picket.

WHAT COOLIDGE CAN TEACH US

Certain lessons are to be drawn from the President's speech. The oration before the Union League Club in Philadelphia is the platform of the dominant, the most powerful capitalist

interests in the United States. It is on this platform that the Republican Party will place its candidates in 1928. It is these keynotes which the President will strike in his forthcoming message to Congress. It is for the defense of these interests that the President, his Cabinet and the whole strike-breaking United States Government machinery will be mobilized in the coming months when the workers will show signs of energetic resistance to injunction democracy.

The workers ought to take a leaf out of the book of Coolidge and his clique. Coolidge and the capitalist class are members of a well organized, efficient political party. The workers also must build their own political party on a mass scale. The workers and poor farmers must proceed to declare their complete independence from the capitalist parties. The workers and exploited farmers must proceed to unite their forces politically, to form a labor party. Injunctions must be fought tooth and nail. No quarter must be given to injunction democracy.

The American workers, because of the intense exploitation to which they are subject in this country, have been able to produce tremendous wealth. It is the American workers and farmers that have produced the wealth of this country. The time is rotten ripe to take effective steps to reclaim this country for those to whom it really belongs and to those from whom it was stolen.

The capitalists in Massachusetts once issued the slogan "Have Faith in Coolidge." No self-respecting workers, no liberty-loving exploited farmers, can have any faith in Coolidge or in his Party, or in the leaders of his Party, the Hoovers, the Mellons, the Dawses and the rest of the Wall Street clique which today is dominating the life of the country thru its stranglehold on the resources and the industries of the United States.

We are not frightened by Mr. Coolidge's denunciation of Communism and defense of capitalism. We welcome his drawing the lines sharper and clearer for the American workers.

It is now up to the workers to think and to translate their thoughts into deeds, deeds which will promote their class

power, deeds which will hasten the establishment of a genuine, a workingclass democracy in the United States. To this our Party is pledged. To this task every member of our party has consecrated himself. To this task every worker, every militant, every progressive, every genuine left winger, must devote all his time, energies, all his resources and all his abilities.

Every working man and working woman who believes in, and wants to fight for the right to organize; every worker who is for militant, powerful trade unions, the organization of the unorganized and is a sworn foe of injunctions; every workingman who is for a labor party and against capitalist parties; every worker who has any class pride in himself or herself and who wants to take immediate effective steps towards developing in this country a genuine working class democracy, a workers' and farmers' republic, should unite and join hands with those who are giving their all for working class freedom by becoming a member of the Workers (Communist) Party.

Every self-respecting worker who believes in his class and is prepared to fight for his class should join the Party of the most conscious, the most advanced, the best-disciplined and most militant fighters for the working class—The Workers (Comunist) Party.

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