

American Exceptionalism and Boomeranging Intellectuals: An International Perspective

Thesis:

American and Australian intellectuals who seemed most likely to support communism, in the end never did. They could not compromise what they viewed as the inherent right to be original, and resist coercion.

American Exceptionalism:

The term used by Joseph Stalin derisively in 1929 to refer to the popular assumption that America was resisting communism. Stalin believed such "exceptionalism" would be short-lived and failed to acknowledge its existence elsewhere in the world.



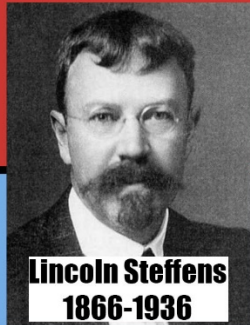
Congenital Individualism: tendency of these intellectuals to shrink from communistic idealism once their own individuality was threatened. They could not sanction 'coercion' to end coercion.

Obsessed with ridding the U.S. of corruption, Steffens believed Communism was the answer.

After meeting with Vladimir Lenin and the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, he said his famous words, "I have seen the future, and it works". Connecting, Australian poet, Hewett, she was a member of the Communist Party of Australia where, just like Steffens after visiting Russia, many of her writings communicated communists thoughts.

After traveling much as a young man, these experiences gave Dos Passos rich material for success as a writer. His theme focused on improving the quality of American life through a commitment to communist ideals. He adopted Marxism after visiting the Soviet Union in 1928, where he was involved with communist activities. Relating, Australian novelist, Devanny also was known for exposing her ideological concepts and principles through her writings and like Dos Passos, was involved in communist activities.

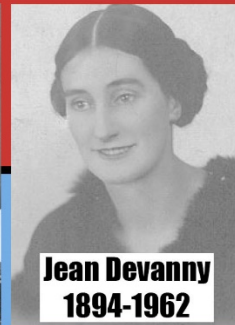
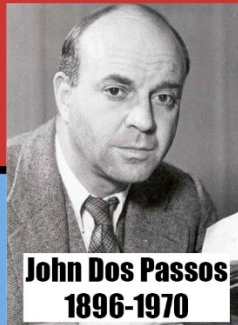
Karl Marx played a central role in Dewey's ideals. In 1928, he visited the Soviet Union, searching to vindicate his beliefs, Dewey exposed his hope for Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik experiment. So filled with conviction, Dewey said, "Any liberalism which is not also radicalism is irrelevant and doomed." Dewey's connection to Anderson is pervasive. Being part of the Australian Communist Party and developing his philosophy, "Australian Realism", Anderson shares a similar nature of thinking and ideals as Dewey.



COMMUNIST



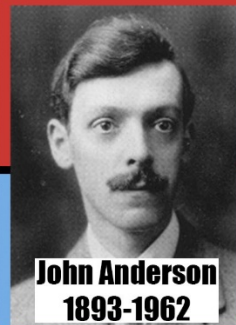
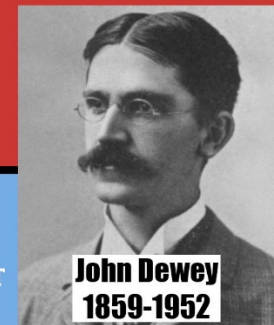
INDIVIDUALIST



COMMUNIST



INDIVIDUALIST



After 1930, Steffens began to reject and doubt the effectiveness of communism if there were to be a reform in government. He believed there must be a consensus in combatting corruption. Similarly with Hewett, she ceased all connection with the Australian Communist Party in 1968, where she saw a brutal suppression led by the Soviet Army in Czechoslovakia.

Dos Passos saw the true ruthless behavior of the Communist Party after they brutally rioted a rally in 1934. Believing communism was concerned with seeking power, rather than social reform. He ceased all involvement, dramatically shifting his political views to be a conservative. Devanny saw a similar shift as she was known for having "forthright avant-garde views" which led to many disputes with the Communist Party and was exiled for her independence and disgust with the party in 1949.

In 1935, after being investigated by the FBI and frightened, Dewey shifted the public eye away from his communist thinking through pragmatism and "experimentalism". The truth he wanted known most of all during the 1940s was that he was a brilliant, and respected scholar. Insisting continual experimentation of new philosophies, he exhibited congenital individualism. Anderson showed a similar change when he believed communism was purely coercive and repressive. Following Dewey, he remained a freethinker.