

(2022 Apr 02) John Dewey- The Need for a New Party - The New Republic (18 March 1931)

John Dewey is often considered (when he is remembered at all) one of, if not the, most important American philosopher (the other main contenders being Ralph Waldo Emerson, Dewey's mentor William James and perhaps Richard Rorty- the last two, like Dewey, solidly in the pragmatist tradition). Writing in the midst of the Great Depression when among other things the income gap between the rich and everyone else was glaringly obvious, John Dewey had a lot to say, including his analysis of the failed two-party system of US politics in the New Republic article of 18 March 1931 linked here.

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"There is a deep-seated reason why the common man is convinced that neither the Democratic nor the Republican party represents him or his interests. The Republican party has played the role of Providence. . . . It has declared that when big capitalists were made prosperous, a general state of welfare would seep down and be enjoyed by the masses. . . .

the Democratic party. . . committed themselves to the policy of alliance with big business. . . . The generally acknowledged absence of genuine leadership in the Democratic party is a necessary by-product. . . .

There is no hope that either of the old main parties is going to change. The reason lies even deeper than the self-interest which binds leaders and office holders so closely to "business" . . . . Their mental habits are formed in the pattern of this alliance. . . . professed leaders have based the very structure of their beliefs on the doctrine of popular salvation by means of dependence on property interests. Whatever may be the convictions of individuals within the parties, the parties themselves are property-minded. In the clash between property interests and human interests, all their habits of thought and action fatally impel them to side with the former."

- John Dewey

<https://newrepublic.com/article/104638/the-need-new-party>