

The Reactionary in Politics

There is a natural line running through politics, as well as through society in general, separating the conservative from the radical. The division is due in part, but not entirely, to difference in information. Two people equally well informed, may take opposite views of a subject because of what may be called a constitutional tendency. These two forces contribute, each its part, to the welfare of society. If it were not for the conservative the radical would go too fast; if it were not for the radical the conservative would not go at all. In so far as the conservative simply compels deliberation, he performs a real service, and, when conscientious and not influenced by ulterior motives, he gradually yields to public opinion, based upon intelligent discussion.

But while the conservative can be tolerated because of the element of caution that he contributes, the reactionary belongs to a very different class. The conservative accepts progress when it becomes an accomplished fact and uses that which has been acquired when he contests some new step in advance. The reactionary, on the other hand, is usually the secret agent of a public enemy and, therefore, less candid in giving reasons for his course. An honest conservative points out the dangers as he sees them and utters a warning as conscientiously as a radical pleads for a change. But the reactionary, conscious of his inability to defend his position by open argument, resorts to subterfuge and false pretense. The progressive forces of society have nothing to fear from honest conservatism; on the contrary they welcome its challenge and meet its inquiries in the spirit in which they are presented.

But the reactionary, working in the dark and actuated by motives he can neither disclose nor defend, is the real foe whom the reformer has to fear and against whom he must continually fight.

The conflict between the unorganized masses, who ask only justice and are content with the recognition of their rights, and the predatory interests, rages in every land, and nowhere more bitterly than in the United States. The stake is bigger here because the wealth which is within the reach of avarice here surpasses the dreams of the plutocrats of other lands, and the very intelligence of our people becomes the avenue through which misrepresentation can be spread when great newspapers are brought to the support of schemes of exploitation.

The corporation, a real invention in commerce, and an apostle of Democracy when properly employed, has become the means through which greed does the major part of its mischief. A corporation permits a large number of people to cooperate under conditions much more favorable than any partnership can offer, and when properly managed, furnishes to the masses a means of sharing in great industries and enterprises. But the corporation, like every other good thing, is liable to be abused, and it has been grossly abused in the United States. A few designing men can, when they obtain control of a corporation, turn a well-intended instrumentality entirely away from its proper course and use it for the enrichment of those who are in a position to direct its energies. When once a controlling interest is secured the rights of the minority stockholders are sometimes ignored and the valuable privileges which accompany the management of a corporation are turned to the pecuniary advantage of those in charge.

Passing over the period during which the trusts reached their maximum development, let us consider the change that followed the election of 1912. When President Wilson entered the White House he had a Senate and House in sympathy with him, and the Democratic party made a record along the line of economic reform without a parallel in our history. It lowered the tariff; it enacted a currency law that has proven to be the best in the world; it gave the farmers relief through a Farm Loan Law; it created a Federal trade commission and began a war against the trusts. It distinguished between labor and merchandise and gave to the wage earner protection from government by injunction and also gave an eight-hour day. All of these steps in advance were contested by the big corporations. The tariff barons fought the tariff law; the financiers waged a fierce fight against the currency law; the trusts bitterly opposed legisla-

tion aimed at them and all combined to resist the eight-hour day.

In the campaign of 1916, the predatory interests made a united attack upon the Democratic party and, but for the women's vote in the west, would have succeeded in overthrowing the party. And it should be remembered that the election in the west was won, not upon economic grounds, but because the President had resisted the efforts made to force him into the European war and into war with Mexico. He received so large a support in the suffrage states as to be elected by a small majority in the electoral college in spite of the east. An inspection of the returns of that election leaves no doubt as to the completeness of the political organization formed by the moneyed interests of the country.

Then came our entry into the war when, as a war necessity, the government took over the railroads, the telegraph lines and the telephones. This angered the monopolists beyond measure. While they had to confess the inability of private management to meet the exigencies of the war, they saw at once that they had to meet the issue between private monopoly and government ownership. From that moment the fight was on in earnest, and government ownership was the point of attack. With the railroads, the telegraph lines and the telephones under the management of persons opposed to government ownership (It being impossible under the circumstances to substitute new men for those in charge), the experiment had to be tried under the most unfavorable conditions. The fact that those in immediate control were out of sympathy with the policy of government ownership would have been enough to paralyze the experiment, but to the lack of sympathy was added an active effort to demonstrate the failure of government ownership, and every newspaper, controlled or owned by monopolies, local or national, teemed with criticism.

The Republican victory in the congressional campaign of 1918 was due primarily to the aggressiveness of these predatory interests rallied by the promise of the Republican leaders, and the Congress elected in 1918 has so far lived up to the highest expectations of those who desire to return the government to the control of the big interests.

We are now approaching the campaign of 1920 where the case is to be tried out before the people—not fairly, by an open honest statement of issues, but by evasion, misrepresentation and subterfuge. No party dares openly to espouse the policy of the big financial magnates who demand nothing less than the absolute control of the federal government in every branch that the power of private monopoly may be complete. They want the President because his veto would throw upon them the necessity of having two-thirds of both Houses—a preponderance they cannot hope to secure. They also want a president who will turn the federal reserve system over to Wall street and put friends of the railroads on the Inter-State Commerce commission and the Supreme Bench. They want a senate that can prevent any interference with the ambitions of monopolies, profiteers and exploiters, and a House of Representatives subservient to the demands of the favor-seeking corporations. They will try to control both parties, write both platforms and nominate both candidates; then they will be able to throw the Democratic party on the ash-pile and give the Republican party a majority large enough to encourage it recklessly to obey the instructions from Wall street.

The talk of a "business man's candidate" is only a premonitory symptom of the non-partisan movement now on foot—non-partisan, because big business has no politics. Its patriotism is the "patriotism of pelf" and its God is Mammon. Its arrogance and insolence do more to breed anarchy and stir up discontent than all the utterances of those who profess to be anarchists.

The reactionary movement has its headquarters in the Republican party; it is now in the saddle in both Senate and House. But the Democratic party is honey-combed with secret supporters of the reactionary movement. If the Republicans have a close vote and lose a few of the progressives in their party, they are not without hope, for they count upon getting enough recruits from the Democratic party to make up for their losses. The reactionary is in politics today as he has not been in years; he has money

without limit and newspapers galore. His stake is control of the government of the richest nation in the world. Nothing but an aroused electorate can save the country from an unexampled era of exploitation. If the rank and file of the Republican party can be awakened in time to prevent the nomination of a reactionary every patriot will have reason to rejoice. If the conscience of the Republican party does not assert itself at the convention the responsibility thrown upon the Democratic party will be grave indeed. It might be to its political advantage to carry the standard of reform against a Republican reactionary, but the only safe plan is for the friends of progress in both parties to control their respective conventions, then, no matter which party wins, the country will be safe. If either party champions the reactionary movement no prophet can foretell the result. If both parties are captured by the reactionaries the uncertainties will be multiplied. It behooves every lover of his country to work from now until the conventions meet to expose the schemes of the reactionaries in both parties and to prevent their consummation.

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COX'S MARCH TOWARD THE GRAVE

The number of votes cast for Governor James M. Cox of Ohio at the primary elections in that state, including the 1920 primary, follows:

August, 1914 (For Governor)	138,021
August, 1916 (For Governor)	135,583
August, 1918, (For Governor)	133,435
May, 1920 (Presidential Preference)	85,838

The number of votes cast on the submission of statewide prohibition to the voters of Ohio for the years 1914, 1915, 1917, 1918, and 1919, follows:

	Yes	No	Majority
1914	504,177	588,329	Wet, 84,152
1915	484,969	540,377	Wet, 55,408
1917	522,590	523,727	Wet, 1,137
1918	463,654	437,895	Dry, 25,759
1919	496,786	454,933	Dry, 41,853

On the proposition for defining intoxicating liquor to mean not to exceed 2.75 per cent alcoholic content, submitted to the voters of Ohio in 1919, the vote was 504,688 against and 474,907 for—a dry majority of 29,781, or against 2.75 per cent beer as initiated by the Home Rule Association.

Shall Governor Cox be allowed to head his party in his march toward the grave?

THE OWEN RESOLUTION

Senator Owen of Oklahoma introduced the following joint resolution to amend Article V of the Constitution of the United States, in the United States Senate, March 22, 1920:

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That in pursuance of Article V of the Constitution of the United States the following amendment to the Constitution be, and hereby is, proposed to the States, to become valid as a part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of the several States as provided by the Constitution:

ARTICLE—

"The President shall have power, by and with the advice of the Senate to frame treaties and, with the consent of the Senate, a majority of the Senators present concurring, to conclude the same."

This proposed amendment should be adopted.

SALOON FOES DISSATISFIED

The "law and order" plank of the Republican national platform adopted at Chicago does not mention prohibition and does not refer to the Volstead enforcement act. It merely declares for impartial enforcement of all laws. In commenting on the action of the convention, P. A. Baker, general superintendent of the Anti-Saloon league of America, said:

"We were assured by Senator Smoot and other members of the resolutions committee up until and even after the committee adjourned today that there was reference in the platform to the Volstead act as one of the party achievements and a statement declaring for the enforcement of the law. Millions of voters will demand to know who is responsible for this omission."