

Middle class dillusionment



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Progressivism: Middle Class Disillusionment In 1958, a man named George Mowry explains the economic, social, and political divisions of the progressivism movement. The progressivism movement ties in a lot with our society today and shows how history does indeed repeat itself. Mowry describes the good, and bad of progressivism, but emphasizes the bad. Mowry is really trying to exhibit the differences between capitalism and socialism in his essay and explain why progressivism is not good for the well being and future of America, which can be proven today but our economic instability and division as a nation.

More importantly however Mowry displays how progressives try to create, "heaven on earth" by their moral actions. Mowry first describes the type of people who are involved in progressivism. People who were involved in progressivism were the solid middle class, who were intellectual and ethical climate of age, a significant cluster of prejudices and biases, and people who created great inventions, beautiful pictures, and the law. The people of the solid middle class were lawyers, newspaper, publishing, independent manufacturers, merchants, medicine, banking, and real-estate.

The progressive leaders included the Chicago tribune family, and Charles Evan Hughes, "if names mean anything, an overwhelming proportion of this reform group came from old American stock with British origins consistently indicated." More dangerous than rich people who inherited money from their ancestors was their rich youth, "Obviously this was a period, like the ones after the war of 1812 and 1850's, when energetic and incautious youth took command." This is ironic because all of their ancestors earned their money through capitalism and that's what progressives are trying to take away now.

Religious affiliations of the progressivism movement were the woman of the Quaker faith, and Jewish faith. Overall the progressives hated the economic system of capitalism, believed that the wealthy are bad people who we must take away money from and give it to the masses, and most of these people are young. Joseph Medill Patterson, whose godfather founded the Tribune resigned from the Chicago commissions of public works to become a socialist. Patterson believed it was impossible to reform a city under capitalism, " he announced , it was impossible to reform the city and country under capitalism. Patterson was exemplifying capitalism vs. socialism. Capitalism is the idea that Capital is owned, operated, and traded for the purpose of generating profits for private owners or shareholders. Emphasis on individual profit rather than on workers or society as a whole. On the other hand socialism is according to his/her ability, to each according to his contribution. Emphasis on profit being distributed among the society or workforce in addition to receiving a wage. Today we can see many links between capitalism and socialism.

Our government today is run on progressivism/ socialist ideals. President Barack Obama has several plans and ideas to help the poor by giving them the money of the rich people, and supplying them with health care (obamacare) and so on. Progressives wanted to help people, they wanted to help the poor, this was not morally wrong but many other people saw that this was hurting our economy. Our government is socialist/ progressive because they want to have government control over other money and they want to have the ability to decide where that money goes.

But you can't just do that. If those people earned their wealth they should have every right to keep it, they should not be entitled to try to help the poor. Furthermore during this time of the progressivism movement there were many Democrat-republicans who supported the idea of progressivism. Some of those commonly known leaders are Theodore Roosevelt, Robert La Follete, Lincoln Steffens, William Allen White, Woodrow Wilson, John Johnson, and Hooke Smith of Georgia. Another group of people who were making a movement was populism.

Populism were a group of people who were economically secured, well educated, middle class group who arose from farmer distress in a period of acute depression. " According to William Allen White, populism had ' shaved its whiskers, washed its shirt, put on a derby, and moved up into the middle class... populism arose from a farmer distress in a period of acute depression. Its reforms were belly reforms. The movement was led by angry men and woman not too far removed from the Grange hall. The motivation of these farmers was heart.

They believed its not fair to take farm land and stick a bunch of windmills on there, not only was it not fair but it also made the agriculture business lose money. In a specific case California lost money for putting up windmills in farmer land and turning the production of agriculture into a nominal size. This idea of motivation of heart also relates to today because our motivation for supplying all of this aid comes from heart, because we believe it isn't fair that one shouldn't have medical care, or food etc.

However there are just some gray areas to this plan that need to be filled and that is what in term ends up costing us millions. Another important point

that Mowry discusses is the rise of industrial and commercial cities. The positive things about the rise of these cities are that it was, " a refuge from an ugly country side and hostile natural environment", and it also provided a place of excitement and opportunities. In contrast to the positive things were the negative things.

The negative things about the rise of industrial and commercial cities is that its, " Devils berg of crimes", successful= financial workers and failures if they remained family workers. It also created an anti-urban feeling which romanticized pioneer past and agrarian background, involved western stories and virtues of the countryside. Miss. Glasgow believed, " Country was the world as God has planned it, the city as man had made it. " There was definitely some mixed feelings between the citizens about urban and a city lifestyle. Mowry described the income people had into three categories.

The first category was the upper-class which we defined as, " people who had more money than was good for them". The middle class were those who had just enough and the lower class were those who had much less than was morally good for them. In regards to these three categories each community made artificial arrangements by property, classical economic laws repeatedly described in the past as natural had become artificial and progressives had destroyed the popular sanction behind the laws of rent, prices and wages. In response to the actions of the progressives came the enforcement and rise of labor unions.

Mowry viewed the labor unions as a menace not only to the employer but to the entire community, the small employer and many middle class professional unions gave the same results of industrial monopoly. The labor

unions made a steady decrease in opportunities for the individual operating as an individual, thus putting an end to open society, and putting the burden of the industrial revolution upon the middle class. In an attempt to rebuttal the vicious attack of the labor union on progressives the progressives created a co operation of progressive and organized labor.

This operation left only the progressives to lead. The captain of industry and labor boss was standard. Monopolistic closed shop was an abomination not to be tolerated with or without the government and progressives became a majority. The progressives were motivated by fear and confidence to exceed any other group. They believed that they were " The good men", " The better element", " The moral crowd" because of the fact that they believed in helping people. The progressives planned to increase the number of " large hearted men" to counteract the class organization of both capital and labor.

The progressives believed that gaining more support from others would make them the majority and be favored, loved, and even looked up too. The progressives wanted to eliminate capitalism and labor unions. The progressives were strong for fighting back against the mass numbers of capitalists and labor unions, but fight they did and they did not back down. Although the intentions of progressives were morally correct it was not economically correct for the success and future of America.

Our government and administrators today might believe that what they are doing is right for the people but they have to also consider what is right for our nation. The way Mowry described the mentality of progressives can be used to describe the mentality of some of our administrators today, "

Reactionary and reform impulse, a desire to create heaven on earth, moral superiority is greater than our economy, and lastly individualism dynamism and leadership. " These are the characteristics of progressives today and of 1958. It is true that history repeats itself.