

INTRODUCTION

I earnestly wish that this book could be read by all Progressives. The Progressive Party in this country embodies the Progressive movement, the movement which concerns itself with the rights of all men and women, and especially with the welfare of all who toil. The Progressive Movement is greater than the Progressive Party; yet the Progressive Party is at present the only instrument through which that movement can be advanced. Our effort is to make this country economically as well as politically a genuine democracy. The leaders of both the old parties at times pay lip service to the principles and the purposes of our party; but it is only lip service. Our purposes are the purposes of Thomas Jefferson when he founded the Democratic Party; although the lapse of a century has shown that the extreme individualism and the minimized government control which in that day served to achieve his purposes are in our day no longer serviceable. Both our purposes and our principles are those of Abraham Lincoln and of the Republicans of his day. All we have done has been to apply these principles in actual fact to the living problems of today; instead of praising

them as applied to the dead problems of half a century back, and repudiating them with abhorrence when they are invoked on behalf of the men, women and children who toil in the Twentieth Century.

As has been so well pointed by Mr. Duncan-Clark, this movement is in its very nature a mass movement and not in any sense a one-man movement. It is the intelligent expression of a popular protest; it is the instrument of the people's aspiration for a larger, economic social and political life; it is the acknowledgment that our progress has been unequal from the ethical, political and industrial standpoints, so that our governmental clothes need to be changed and enlarged to fit our increasing bodily growth, our increasing and changing economic needs. Government and industry are the two chief functions of our social organism. It is impossible wholly to separate these, the political and the economic functions. They are interdependent. There is a constant interplay and interchange among the forces severally going to the composition of each of them. The Progressive Party recognizes this fact, not as a mere glittering generalization or as a philosophy of theoretical abstraction, but as something concrete to be practically dealt with. In consequence we have adopted certain funda-

mental principles and have accompanied them with a practical programme through which they may be realized and wrought into the fabric of our social organism.

Mr. Duncan-Clark takes up chapter by chapter the chief features of this programme. I commend each chapter to the study of our people. He has well and truthfully portrayed the conditions which demand a new party. He has shown that both the old parties as at present controlled and managed represent the forces of reaction. If the Republicans had been true to the principles of Abraham Lincoln, if they had followed these principles in good faith, there would have been no need of the new party. But the Republican managers, the bosses in the Republican machine deliberately stole the party organization from the rank and file of the party, and denied to the rank and file the right to express their own political convictions. They deliberately wrecked the party in the interests of political and commercial privilege, preferring to see it ruined rather than that the rank and file should be allowed to control it in their own interest and in the interest of the people as a whole. If the Democratic Party were true to the purposes of Thomas Jefferson for the uplifting of the people it would of necessity adopt the Progressive plat-

form. Unfortunately the Democratic Party has inherited such a legacy of bad principles from its States' Rights and pro-Slavery days, and from the advocates of an uncontrolled and unlimited individualism, that it seems practically impossible for it under any leadership to shake itself free from the shackles of its own creation.

The Socialists are trying to construct a party based on class consciousness, and for one class only. Socialism may mean almost anything. A Socialist may be a man who in practice is a violent anarchist, and the greatest possible menace to this country, or he may merely be a radical reformer with whom most of the men who think as I do can work heartily as regards the major part of his programme. But we thoroughly repudiate his doctrine of class consciousness. The Progressives preach social consciousness as an antidote to class consciousness. We point out to the reactionaries who so bitterly opposed us that such social consciousness is the only effective antidote to the class consciousness of the Socialist. I believe emphatically, as Mr. Duncan-Clark says, that one or the other of these two gospels will prevail; and the attitude of the owning class will largely determine which of them does prevail. Frank acceptance of the Progressive doctrine of social consciousness by the men at the top is the

only effective way to prevent the woeful damage that would come from the triumph of class consciousness.

I commend to our readers all these different chapters, those on child labor, on our industrial ills, on the need of conserving our rural life, all of them. Perhaps it is especially well at this time to study those chapters dealing with the Progressive Movement, the Trusts and Big Business, and the Judiciary and the People. As Mr. Duncan-Clark says:

“To the Progressive the Big Corporation is not an evil to be eradicated, but a potential good to be developed. While insisting that no method of duress or chicanery must be allowed to interfere with the opportunities for competition, he does not blind himself to the fact that the competitive era in industry is passing, and that government must reckon with co-operation as the new force in shaping the economic life of the Nation.”

“Frankly recognizing the economic conditions that make for big business, and the social value of industry organized upon a large scale for production and distribution, the Progressive Movement proposes a programme that will give little business an op-

portunity to grow bigger and impel big business to be honest; and by honesty is meant more than a mere technical obedience to the law of business as it stands; more than scrupulous fair dealing with competitors—it includes an acknowledgment of obligation to the people as they are represented by the workers and consumers.”

As Mr. Duncan-Clark well points out, the Progressives take a fundamental and radical issue with President Wilson when he says that a lowering of the tariff, or any kind of tariff reform, will solve the trust question and that aside from this what is needed for a solution of the question is a return to the practice of universal and unlimited competition. As Mr. Duncan-Clark says:

“The Democratic Party, more strongly impressed than even the Republicans with the desirability of competition, proposes to eliminate the idea of ‘reasonable restraint’ from the Sherman law, and to precipitate itself in implacable warfare against all business combination. The outcome of such propaganda must be worse than that pursued by the Republicans. It will result in a disastrous disturbance of business to no good end, and its impossibilism will become more manifest with every step.”

As Mr. Duncan-Clark points out, the effort to insist on returning to conditions that prevailed fifty or more years ago is madness. As a matter of fact it is futile madness. It would accomplish but a little mischief even if honestly tried. It is preposterous to propose to abandon all that has been wrought out in the application of the co-operative idea in business and to return to the era of cut-throat competition. We of the Progressive Party propose to increase the prosperity of the business man, but we propose that that prosperity shall be shared with general public and with the wage-workers. Our proposals are definite. We do not propose to set an arbitrary limit to growth. We do not propose to make mere size an offence. We do propose that there shall be hearty and generous recognition of exceptional ability if guided by a decent spirit of fair play, and if the reward is made to depend upon serving, and not upon swindling, the public. We do propose to prevent growth by oppression, and wholesomely to discipline unscrupulous business into a sense of social responsibility. We propose as remedies publicity, supervision and regulation. Even the reactionaries are now reluctantly admitting that there is need of the first two of these three remedies. As Mr. Duncan Clark says:

“As to the character and extent of the third there is room for debate, and the final determination must be the result of careful experiment, a step or so at a time, as has been the case in the Government’s dealing with the railroads.”

Mr. Duncan-Clark points out that the Progressive Movement assumes the innate decency of man. We believe that business men would prefer to conduct their affairs honestly rather than dishonestly. We believe that the spirit of fair play is dominant in the hearts of most of us, and will awaken to new strength under conditions designed to stimulate it and to make it easier of operation. We believe that the average decent business man—and the average business man is decent—will welcome the kind supervision and regulation that affords guidance to him in the conduct of his affairs, pointing the way to compliance with the law, and to social co-operation, rather than waiting until wrong has been done, and then hauling the offenders into court. We believe that the Progressives have in mind a better solution for the great business proposition before the public than is offered by any other group of political thinkers. The business plank is one of the most essential parts of the platform. It is as essential

to the well being and happiness of those of our people for whom the conditions of life are hard as are our specific pledges for their benefit. We believe that the business man, the farmer, the professional man, the wage workers, down at bottom have more interests in common than they have interests that are diverse, and we believe that the Progressive Party alone offers the programme by which the diverse interests can be reconciled or minimized and all the needs of the great common interest fully met.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Sept. 12, 1913.

The Progressive Movement

*Its Principles and Its
Programme*

BY
S. J. DUNCAN-CLARK

With an Introduction
BY
THEODORE ROOSEVELT



BOSTON
SMALL, MAYNARD & COMPANY