

NATIONALISM AND PROGRESS

In this issue of *The Outlook* Mr. Roosevelt begins, under the above general title, a series of articles in which he discusses the Spirit of Nationalism that has taken a new vigor and form in the political and social life of the American people since the close of the war with Spain. He will endeavor, as he did in his speeches¹ throughout the West last summer, to define this new National spirit and to show how it may be applied to some of the specific and concrete problems that confront us.

In his brilliant life of the elder Pitt, who later became Lord Chatham, Lord Rosebery shows how Europe and England in "the shameless and naked cynicism of the eighteenth century" had lost the sense of nationalism, and how the political and military contests of the time had become merely "contests of prey." Under Pitt the nationalism of England was reborn and became in very truth a "new nationalism"—that is to say, a nationalism whose function it was to promote the common rights, not merely of the court and aristocracy, but of all the English people.

In the United States at the conclusion of the Civil War began a period when government, through the "shameless cynicism" of the money-maker, became very largely an agency for the promotion of wealth. Special privileges overshadowed common rights. It promises well for this country that there is to-day a new ideal of government springing up in the minds of the citizens—a new spirit of Nationalism. In experience as an officer of government and in high ideals as a private citizen, no one is better qualified than Mr. Roosevelt to discuss the various phases of this new spirit in our National life. We are especially glad, therefore, to have the opportunity to present his articles on this subject to the readers of *The Outlook*.—THE EDITORS.

PROGRESSIVE NATIONALISM; OR WHAT?

In the series of articles of which this is the first, I wish, at the outset, to ask the readers of *The Outlook* two questions.

The first question is: Are you satisfied that there is no need of bettering our present social, political, and industrial system? If, after sober thought, you feel that there is no need for betterment, if you do not feel the need of raising the condition of the men who toil and of altering the status of the huge corporations as regards the public, if you are satisfied with things as they are and feel no desire to work for a greater justice in our social system—you will not believe in the spirit and principles of Progressive Nationalism.

In the second place, if you are not satisfied with things as they are and believe there should be improvement, but think the methods and proposals of the Progressives are wrong, if you do not believe in the principles and spirit of a broad, far-reaching, and Progressive Nationalism, which shall imply the full and efficient development of the powers of both the Federal and the State Governments,

what alternative to this movement do you suggest? In considering a principle, a policy, an ideal, it is always well, before condemning it, to consider what is the alternative.

In the discussion of these questions I propose, first, to indicate what are the principles and spirit of the Progressive movement in American politics which in previous speeches and articles I have sometimes alluded to as the "New Nationalism," a movement which in its essence is to render governmental action thoroughly efficient in Nation, State, and municipality, which is furthermore to make this governmental action absolutely responsive to the need and will of the people, and which is finally to inspire the country with the knowledge that even the wisest governmental action will avail nothing unless the average citizen is himself a man of high and fine character, who combines rugged strength with the desire to do justice to his fellow-men.

In successive articles I shall endeavor to show how those principles and that spirit would work out in application to certain specific National and international problems.

Those of us who believe in Progressive Nationalism are sometimes dismissed with the statement that we are "radicals." So

¹ The principal speeches have since been printed in book form, under the title of "The New Nationalism."

we are ; we are radicals in such matters as eliminating special privilege and securing genuine popular rule, the genuine rule of the democracy. But we are not overmuch concerned with matters of mere terminology. We are not in the least afraid of the word "conservative," and, wherever there is any reason for caution, we are not only content but desirous to make progress slowly and in a cautious, conservative manner. Moreover, ultraradicalism may be as hostile to real progress now as it was in Lincoln's day. Lincoln was a radical compared to Buchanan and Fillmore ; he was a conservative compared to John Brown and Wendell Phillips ; and he was right in both positions. The men and forces whom and which he had to overcome were those behind Buchanan and Fillmore ; to overcome them was vital to the Nation ; and they would never have been overcome under the leadership of men like Brown and Phillips. Lincoln was to the full as conscientious as the extremists who regarded him as an opportunist and a compromiser ; and he was far wiser and saner, and therefore infinitely better able to accomplish practical results on a National scale.

The great movement of our day, the Progressive National movement against special privilege and in favor of an honest and efficient political and industrial democracy, is as emphatically a wise and moral movement as the movement of half a century ago in which Lincoln was the great and commanding figure. But, thank Heaven, the present movement is free from taint of sectionalism, and all good citizens, North and South, East and West, can stand shoulder to shoulder in advocating the basic principles on which the movement rests.

Of course the Progressive movement has some opponents whom we can have no expectation of converting. The dishonest man of swollen riches whose wealth has been made in ways which he desires to conceal from the law, and the politician who does not really believe in the right of the people to rule and who prefers to trust to corruption and class favoritism rather than to honesty and fair dealing in politics, are both naturally against us. Moreover, many men who, according to

their lights, are sincere and honest, are yet so dominated by real or fancied self-interest as likewise to be against us. The rich man who has made his riches, not by law-breaking, but by the profits of special privileges which the law should abolish, and who denies the right of Government to regulate in the public interest the business use of corporate wealth ; the man who puts property rights above human rights and denies the right of Government to interfere with his business by guaranteeing to his laborers that they shall work under safe and healthy conditions and be compensated for loss of life or limb due to the dangers of their trade—these also, and the many like them, we must expect to exert their power against the Progressive movement.

There is thus one group composed of those who understand Progressive Nationalism and heartily approve it because they believe it tends toward the abolition of special privilege and of political corruption and toward the development of a genuine democracy ; and another group composed of those who cordially fear and fight it because they wish to preserve special privilege and evade control. There is yet another group who are not in the movement because they *misunderstand* it. One of the most frequently advanced allegations about the movement, made for the purpose of discrediting it in the minds of good men who do not know the facts, is that it stands for "over-centralization" and for the destruction of States' rights. Nothing could be further from the truth. The advocates of Progressive Nationalism will, I believe, agree with what I said on this question at Denver and Osawatomic last summer : "The State must be made efficient for the work which concerns only the people of the State, and the Nation for that which concerns all the people. There must remain no neutral ground to serve as a refuge for lawbreakers, and especially for lawbreakers of great wealth who can hire the vulpine legal cunning which will teach them how to avoid both jurisdictions. It is a misfortune when the National Legislature fails to do its duty in providing a National remedy, so that the only National activity is the purely negative activity of the judiciary in forbidding the State to exercise power in the prem-

ises. I do not ask for over-centralization ; but I do ask that we work in a spirit of broad and far-reaching Nationalism when we work for what concerns the people as a whole. We are all Americans. Our common interests are as broad as the continent. The National Government belongs to the whole American people, and, where the whole American people are interested, that interest can be guarded effectively only by the National Government."

The advocates of a Progressive Nationalism emphatically plead for efficient State action as well as for efficient National action. All they demand is that both State and National action be in the interest of, and not against the interest of, the people. The most efficient possible development of State power is not only incompatible with but is likely to accompany the most efficient possible development of National power. Wisconsin offers the best case in point. Under the leadership of Senator La Follette, Wisconsin, during the last decade, has advanced at least as far as, and probably farther than, any other State in securing both genuine popular rule and the wise use of the collective power of the people to do what cannot be done by merely individual effort—the University of Wisconsin, by the way, playing a very important part in the movement. Yet this has in no way interfered with Wisconsin's hearty support of the movement to make the National power in its sphere also more efficient.

The representatives and beneficiaries of the special interests desire, not unnaturally, to escape all Governmental control. What they prefer is that popular unrest should find its vent in mere debate, in unlimited discussion of an academic kind as to the sanctity of contract, full liberty of contract, and other kindred subjects. They feel the need of construing the Constitution with rigid narrowness when property rights are involved, and of carrying the "division of power" theory to such an extreme as to deprive every Governmental agency of all real power and responsibility. They prefer the *status quo*, for they know that the mass of conflicting judicial decision has created just what they wish, a neutral ground where State and Nation each merely exercises the power of main-

taining that the other has none. I wish to contrast with this position of the special interests the spirit and purpose of Progressive Nationalism. Its advocates desire to secure to both State and Nation, each within its own sphere, power to give the people complete control over the various forms of corporate activity, and power to permit the people to safeguard the vital interests of all citizens, of whatever class. Again I ask the critics of Progressive Nationalism just what it is to which they object in the position of its adherents. If they do not approve of it, do they wish to leave things as they are? If not, what alternative do they propose?

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