

Feature Article

The Rise of the Progressive Party By Charles Keith

In 1620, a band of people fleeing religious and political persecution arrived on the shores of this land. They called themselves Pilgrims. Forced to leave most of their physical possessions behind, they brought something more precious. They carried close to their hearts the principles and beliefs embedded in our Declaration of Independence more than 150 years later. It acknowledges the source of our rights is derived from “the laws of Nature and of Nature’s God”, and that “all men are created equal, [and] that they are endowed with certain unalienable Rights.”

In the late 1800’s, the American Progressive movement took its lead from German philosopher George Hegel and his disciples who developed the organic or ‘living’ notion of the national state. Theodore Roosevelt said in 1912 at the Progressive Party convention in Chicago, “This country belongs to the people who inhabit it. Its resources, its business, its institutions and its laws should be utilized, maintained, or altered in whatever manner will best promote the general interest. It is time to set the public welfare in the first place.” Thus, the public welfare, or state, took precedence over individual rights.

President Teddy Roosevelt also said, “We grudge no man a fortune in civil life...[but] we should permit it to be gained only so long as the gain represents benefit to the community.” President Woodrow Wilson followed with, “socialism and democracy...both rest at the bottom upon the absolute right of the community to determine its destiny, and that of its members.” The most “dangerous aspect of Wilson’s vision [was]...that the president’s

power was to come directly from the people as opposed to the Constitution.”

In 1917, President Wilson established the West’s first modern ministry for propaganda, the Committee on Public Information. One of his appointees, Arthur Bullard, said “Truth and falsehood are arbitrary terms...The force of an idea lies in its inspirational value. It matters very little if it’s true or not.”

The progressive’s basket filled to overflowing during Franklin Roosevelt’s presidency. To keep prices high for the farmer during the depression, the Agricultural Adjustment Act ordered crops destroyed. A dry cleaner was jailed for three months for charging 35 cents to press a suit, rather than the 40 cents mandated by the National Recovery Administration code.

President Lyndon Johnson continued the progressive’s agenda in his Great Society. President Jimmy Carter signed the Community Reinvestment Act in 1977 to ‘meet the needs of low income borrowers’. In 1999, the Clinton Administration pressured Fannie Mae to expand home ownership by reducing down payments and credit requirements for minorities. The newest progressive, the most frightening of all, has just been elected.

What can we do? The same thing the Pilgrims did as they endured great hardships. As it says in Isaiah 50:7...”For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

Set your face like flint! 