

Right to Left: A Guide to Perplexed Voters

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In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant wrote, that there are some questions, which, if answered, create a spectacle like that of one man attempting to milk a he-goat and a second man waiting to catch the milk in a sieve. Such is the case of the man who tries to answer the question: “Where do you stand politically on the scale of right to left?”

‘Progressive Conservatism’

Personally, politically, I am a continuation of that current of the original Federalist Party which constituted, later the American Whig Party, and the Whig faction of the Democratic Party. I will tolerate the description, that I am a “progressive conservative.” I insist on progress, but I demand that improvement be measured by the Judeo-Christian republican tradition of such exemplars as St. Augustine, Nicholas of Cusa, Gottfried Leibniz, and Benjamin Franklin.

This means that I am an “anti-radical,” in the sense that the work of Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, and so on are the paragons of “British 19th-century liberalism,” of just plain “liberalism,” and also to the “radical” extremes of such “liberalism,” namely the modern “fascist” and “socialist” offspring of Giuseppe Mazzini’s 19th-century Young Europe and Young America organizations. In other words, “liberalism,” “extreme left,” and “extreme right” are each and all essentially varieties of the same evil.

I may be described as a “conservative Democrat,” in the sense of “progressive conservative.” However, I have no affinity with the “neo-conservatism” of Nazi-SS veterans’ “universal fascism,” the “conservatism” of such folk as William F. Buckley and other fascists today.

As a progressive conservative, I am broadly in sympathy with the aspirations of all people for the benefits of technological progress. However, I am bitterly opposed to what “Marxists” describe as “materialism.” Materialism is another name for bestial hedonism. I am for a high material standard of living for people, but I denounce vigorously, and without room for compromise on this point, the idea that the purpose of individual mortal existence ends with the grave. We live, if we are wise, to make our self-development and the use of those developed powers of durable benefit to humanity more broadly, to present and future

generations. To accomplish that, we each require certain material conditions of life; the purpose of consumption lies in the fact that such consumption is necessary to fulfil the higher purposes of our individual lives.

The principle, simply stated, is that society must develop each and every individual to the fullest degree of their potentialities possible, and afford each individual opportunity to contribute good to present and future generations through exercise of those developed potentialities. To accomplish this, we require governments which are themselves governed efficiently by commitment to that simple principle. Such forms of self-government of sovereign nations is republicanism. A republic ruled by aid of elections in which the general adult population may stand for office and may cast its vote, is a democratic republic.

That policy is the proper definition of a “progressive conservative.”

What Is Oligarchism?

The opposite political pole, the direct opposite of republicanism, is called oligarchism. This includes barbarism, it includes “liberalism,” it includes the “extreme right,” and the “extreme left.” Neither I, nor any other republican (progressive conservative), wants any part of any of these varieties of oligarchism.

Oligarchism means a society ordered by a ruling race or religious grouping, in which the ruling race or religious grouping itself is ruled by a collection of powerful families, an oligarchy.

The Soviet Union today is an oligarchical state and society. It is ruled by a ruling bureaucratic caste, like the Persian, Roman, and Byzantine empires before it. It is a “captive-house” of nationalities, and has a pervasive political ideology which corresponds to that political structure.

More generally, all forms of society, and political philosophy, which base the valuation of the person on biological or related criteria, rather than development of creative-mental powers for good, are varieties of oligarchical society.

In U.S. history, the paradigm of republican versus oligarchical is the American patriots of 1766–89 versus the British and American Tories. The proper question would be, therefore, “Where do you stand on the scale of republican to tory?”