

PUBLIC PRESS

IMPERIAL WASHINGTON (1922)

-R. F. Pettigrew

(Former U. S. Senator from S. Dakota)

"I watched the power over public affairs shift from the weakened structure of republican political machinery to the vigorous new business empire. ...I saw the machinery of business pass from the hands of individuals into the hands of corporations-artificial persons, created in the imaginations of lawyers," Adam Smith: "'Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defense of the rich against the poor,'" "The Constitution is...the greatest document ever designed by man for the safeguarding of the few in their work of exploiting and robbing the many." The Constitutional Convention convened behind closed doors, the delegates sworn to secrecy. Debates had one theme: "How to secure a government, not by the people and for the people, but by the classes and for the classes, with the lawyers in control." Sherman, of Connecticut: "'The people should have as little to do as may be about the Government.'" Of the 55 delegates, the majority were lawyers-no farmers, mechanics or laborers. Five-sixths had property interests; 40 owned revolutionary scrip, bought up at 9 ¢, redeemed at \$ 1; 14 were land speculators; 24 were money-lenders; 11 were merchants; 15 were slave-holders. Washington was a slave-holder, land speculator and a large scrip owner, the country's only millionaire. "The lawyer makes a good servant of the ruling class because he spends his life making the world believe that the property rights are more important than the human rights. ...under...(his) ethics ... (he) is the only man who can take a bribe and call it a fee." Over half of Congress and most judges are lawyers. Pettigrew would bar them from these offices.

The author proposed a bill to keep nature's gifts in the public domain, perpetually in the whole people, leasing them for individual use, while managing them for development and conservation. Not reported out. Nearly all minerals, oil and timber, much of the waterways are individually exploited. The public, lulled by a controlled press, believed that Government would protect their "liberty" in this "free country," with "constitutional rights." Pettigrew thought that "no person or corporation should be permitted to do a banking business under any circumstances; that the medium of exchange was the life-blood of business and the most important of all public utilities and that, therefore, it should be controlled by the government alone...and that the government should...loan money to the people at just what it cost to do business..." Our system, invented by Lord Overstone and the European Rothschilds, consists of the smallest amount of legal tender, varied by extension and withdrawal of credit. From 1803 to 1913, France, England and the United States, linked by the gold standard, with three exceptions, had 18 financial panics the same or almost the same year. The Federal Reserve Act united 30,000 banks. Japan turned to government banks, after trying our system.

In 1872 New York banks sent a circular to all U. S. banks: "...Let...the banks issue the paper money of the country, for then we can better protect each other. To repeal the law creating National Bank notes, or to restore to circulation the Government issue of money, will be to provide the people with money, and will therefore seriously affect your individual profit as bankers and lenders.'" In 1893 the following circular went out: "...Silver, silver certificates and Treasury notes must be retired and National Bank notes upon a gold basis made the only money. ...You will at once retire one-third of your circulation and call in one-half of your loans. Be careful to make a money stringency felt among your patrons.'" A similar letter in 1920. Panics enable creditors to buy up devalued assets. The one in 1973 caused farm tenancy in six rich middle western states to rise to between 16 % to 31 %. The 1893 panic was almost equally disastrous. By 1920 more than half the Dakota homesteaders were tenants. Tenancy has since grown alarmingly. Banks control all major business. The author favors money of no intrinsic value, to avoid fluctuations from commercial usage, with the quantity adjusted, to maintain a constant price index.

The Supreme Court negated anti-trust laws, interpreting "restraint of trade" as what they considered "unreasonable restraint of trade." Railroads received 10 times the rate per pound of mail that express companies received, using the same cars. Wide discrimination in rates favored the strong, ruined the weak. Many members of Congress received stock in Credit Mobilier, the construction company for the Union and Central Pacific Railroads. Government provided the money to build the road from Omaha to San Francisco; also half the land 10 miles wide on both sides. It later permitted exchange of their poor or deforested land for the best remaining land in the public domain. 32 leading railroads pooled their freight and fixed their rates. The Government only nominally took over the roads during World War I, but was billed for grossly excessive charges, making it appear to be a poor manager.

Author's letter to Samuel Gompers: "'The Trade Union should be universal. ...I am sure labor will never receive what it earns until the land and implements of production are cooperatively or publicly owned.'" He favored compulsory arbitration laws. Another letter: "'The only way to make a Federation of Labor effective (for all) is to combine all those who are producers of wealth into a political organization and take charge of the local, state and national governments (emphasis added), and administer (them in the interests of producers).'" Abraham Lincoln: "'corporations have been enthroned, and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign...until all the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the republic is destroyed.'" "Take over the railroads, take over the banks and the issue of money and the public-utility concerns, and take over the title of the lands that have no value except the value that the community has given it, and then use all of this property for the general welfare of the community." (Take over everything in limited supply-natural monopolies-inevitably overcharging, and impossible to regulate. Assessing the full ground rent would give the public the value which the community (plus nature) has given the land, making sale prices nominal, and ending high speculative rentals, which create artificial shortages of available sites. This alone causes constant unemployment, periodically multiplied by deliberately created money shortages. Surplus jobs would permit selection, and promote safer, more ethical, more efficient, less polluting operations, with opportunities for all, at wages equivalent to their production, and a minimum of social problems, none of which can adequately be legislated away.)

(We slaughtered more than half the Indians, stole all their good land, and continue to rob, starve, sicken and harass them. We seized about 18 million Africans, killing half in filthy, cramped slave ships, and cheat and badger them in and out of barbarous prisons.) We stole the best half of Mexico, and annexed the Philippines, who had done most of the ground fighting to free themselves. (We killed one-sixth of the population, vandalizing widely, and torturing many.) Economic interests arranged the revolution in Hawaii, by which we gained control. We helped Panama secede from Columbia, to obtain canal rights. Porto Ricans, who had supported themselves in a rich country, were compelled to raise only sugar and tobacco, and work in factories, at starvation wages, while their uneducated, naked children roamed the streets, until able to work. (With our military, money and arms, spying and police and prison torture, we have long and viciously exploited most of Latin America. We exploited and helped ruin the economy, health and government of imperial China, and tried to destroy the republic. We helped support a civil war in the Soviet Union, costing several times as many lives as World War I. We destroyed every building in North and South Korea, in a war we encouraged. We organized a revolution, so we could exploit Indonesia, nearly all whose resources are apportioned to foreigners, the war costing perhaps half a million lives. We killed two million in Indochina, burned alive, disemboweled, mutilated and tortured countless thousands, raped tens of thousands, poisoned crops to feed a million, dislocated most of the population, for slave labor, flooded farmlands, used antipersonnel bombs on civilians, vandalized the country, and poisoned the earth and water, so that half the children didn't live till age five) "Let a free people once set out on an imperial course and the institutions that are dear to every lover of liberty disappear like an April snow." (We thus have perpetual unemployment, a high incidence of many diseases, a high percentage of people in prison, a vicious prison system, corrupt business, corrupt government, deficient foods, a very high murder rate, and a disorderly society. We need a DESIRE for improvement everywhere.)