

Insiders and Outsiders

THE New York constitution was prepared by men who generally figure as leading citizens of the community. They represented the power and the pride and not a little of the intelligence of New York State. They worked hard, and with extraordinary good faith. They suppressed or neutralized the more disreputable elements in both parties. They produced a document which in spite of its many faults was probably the most progressive state constitution which has been offered to the American people. Yet they were not only beaten, they were contemptuously dismissed. As fathers who have had the door slammed in their faces, they must be wondering why the voters misunderstood their best efforts, rejected their best ideas, and exhibited such stinging distrust of their intentions.

It was a case where leaders and followers found themselves so far apart that they were not even able to communicate. The small minority who stood for the constitution and the large majority who defeated it seemed to speak separate political languages. They did not understand each other's ideas, nor possess the same insights. It will not do to say that each side was determined by selfish interests. There were selfish interests on both sides no doubt, but they were not predominant. The constitution was drafted by men who were trying to do a public service, and it was rejected by the plain people of the state. Corporations, bosses, cranks played a rôle, but not the decisive one. The cleavage of opinion must have some deeper explanation.

We must go back, I think, to that division in what we call our democracy between insiders and outsiders, between those who have first-hand access to the men who direct affairs, and those who get their knowledge through the press and popular tradition. The insider is used to making decisions; he is not limited to gazing at the façade of public life. He knows more than the official character of men; he eats with them, gossips with them at clubs, knows their wives, their family histories, their intimate friends. He is in on the illuminating chatter of events, the unofficial reality, not merely the public parade. The insider understands that so-and-so is the person to see about this, and that the way to get that thing done is to ask Jim to see Billy about it. Such people read the newspapers and then telephone to find out what really happened; they listen to statesmen's speeches with a knowing amusement. They belong to a freemasonry of the privileged who deal with events personally and directly, not formally and at second hand. Rich people, of course, have far more access to this world than poor

ones, though a powerful labor leader may establish communication, and begin to know. This realm of deciding people is not narrow—it is in a position to learn what it wishes to know. So there is nothing strange in the fact that the effective people either belong to this world or touch its fringes. It is the society that commands the resources of civilization.

But in respect to the total population it is a very small group. For the great mass of wage-earners and farmers, for clerks and small managers, for most business men, in fact, the inwardness of events is a closed book. Politics to them moves in a mysterious way. Newspapers are naïvely accepted or naïvely rejected, finance is an awe-inspiring secret. They don't know, these outsiders in American life, but they have been fooled time without end. It is not strange that their point of view differs from that of the few who are trained to the making of big decisions.

At their best the insiders realize the need of administration. They are themselves the administrators. Following Bernard Shaw's maxim that each man is a revolutionist concerning the thing he understands, the insiders who worked at Albany were revolutionists about administrative technique. But the very element of politics towards which they were radical is the element which outsiders have the least chance to know anything about. The mass of men never administer anything—so they are complacently oblivious to the importance of administration.

It is not strange that the short ballot, the budget, and so on make no popular appeal. They are devices which seem important only to those who have actually to make decisions. Nor is it any wonder that an interest in administration is rarely to be found in a popular movement. For how can those who are excluded from power be expected to show concern about its technique? As a result, popular leaders are generally found to have more genius for rhetoric, for attack, for inspiration, than for administrative invention. They have no responsibility, they are often seduced into promising what they cannot fulfill. The power which has educated the insiders has left the outsiders uninformed. So they listen to the largest hope and follow the most magnetic personality. They are bored at progress in administrative science; constitutional problems are unreal to them; they have small interest in the difficulties of any great change; they are inclined to trust the magic of words, and to misjudge means and ends. There rises consequently a subtle distrust of popular action among the insiders, a feeling

that the people do not choose the better part.

This division produces a difference of emphasis. The insiders are generally interested in the aggrandizement of the executive, for they themselves are executives; the people are interested in the legislature because it seems to be the popular part of the government. Now the constitution drafted for New York was clearly an insider's document. Its reforms were administrative; its emphasis was on the executive; it seemed to decrease the power of the legislature. Instinctively the people turned upon it and destroyed it.

Where shall we put the blame for the fiasco? Ultimately, no doubt, on the class division in American life. Each side remained imprisoned in the narrow experience of its class—the insiders with their eyes open to the problem of administration and

their minds closed to the feelings and needs of the ordinary voter; the outsiders blind to the importance of a powerful executive, but emotionally true in their judgment of the kind of men who have been their executives.

This may seem a harsh statement to the able and public-spirited men who spent weary months writing the constitution. But after the crash of November 2nd it would be folly to mince words. Those insiders have been masters of American life for a generation. They have not used their power so as to gain popular confidence. They will have to show some deeper insight into American life before they can hope to get a hearing for their administrative reforms. They will have to break out of the circle of the aloof, and go to Canossa.

WALTER LIPPMANN.

The Admirable Anti

NOW when the turmoil and confusion of the local campaign for suffrage have been momentarily quieted, it becomes possible to reflect dispassionately upon elements in the anti-suffrage line-up that appeared exasperatingly inexplicable while the fight was on. There was never the least doubt as to the rationality of the machine politician's opposition to woman suffrage. His power, and consequently his living, was threatened. There may be a place for bosses under the new regime, but women's suffrage will involve a thorough reorganization of the art of bossism. Few of the old bosses will be able to make the readjustment. It is equally natural that interests which have looked to the bosses to defend them against the popular will should oppose any change that might even temporarily unlock the grip of bossism. It is further natural that certain timorous souls possessed of large property legitimately invested should consider themselves secure only when the "mob" is managed and controlled, and should believe that the management and control of the mob might be more difficult under conditions of universal suffrage. These and many other classes have a vested interest in the exclusion of women from the polls. Their action is so natural as to seem in a measure justifiable.

But what of the flying column of "best women" that supports the flanks of the array of political bosses, corporation lawyers, distillers and brewers, new-made aristocrats and would-be oligarchs? What vested interests of the "best women" are threatened that they should go up and down the country, dilating upon the constitutional weaknesses of the feminine organism and the limitations of the feminine

mind? "Best women" they are styled by the men whose political purposes they subserve. Let us forget the silly attempts of these men to draw comparisons between women of different political camps and different social classes, and express the conviction that it is not possible to overrate the moral value of many of the women opposing universal suffrage. Among these women, as among the suffragists, there are many who possess in the highest degree the qualities of devotion, sincerity, modesty, courage; and what better thing is there in the world than a woman possessing such qualities? They have taken their stand against woman suffrage on what they conceive to be purely disinterested grounds. But in matters political, apparent disinterestedness is likely to cloak interests so intensely personal that they merge in consciousness with the ideal of the public good. The spectre of the political woman revolts the anti-suffragist. She knows that there must be reasons for this antipathy, and she turns with the fullest confidence to the men upon whose judgment she has been accustomed to depend, and arms herself with their political claptrap. But the biological and sociological arguments against suffrage would not suffice to drag a woman of the anti-suffragist type upon the public platform. It is a very vital vested interest, well sunk into subconsciousness, that explains her fervor.

The living of the leisure-class woman in an organized society is based upon one of the most difficult techniques in the world. It is possible to incorporate in printed manuals all the details that make up the technique of surgery, engineering, architecture. An intelligent youth who has never had the least connection with them may none the less