

From Governor Cox's Secretary

What Presidential candidates talk most about is not always what progressive voters would most like to listen to. But though that is true of Presidential candidates, it is not always true of secretaries of Presidential candidates. We have asked Mr. Charles E. Morris certain frank questions about Attorney-General Palmer, about Mexico, about espionage bills, and about Russia. This is his reply.—THE EDITORS.

I HAVE been associated with Governor Cox six years. For nearly four years I have been his private secretary. I hold that post today. Of course I am biased. But I think that I know the Governor. I think, too, that I can detach myself far enough to discuss him without frills. Let me add simply that I now write on my own responsibility. Governor Cox has not seen this article. It is written without his advice or consent.

As a youthfully cynical outsider in 1912 I voted for him with some misgivings. I watched him make good as a progressive executive, winning to his support those extremely partisan Democrats who accepted him rather than chose him as their chief. I saw him champion the new state constitution and put it over despite the reactionary forces—forces led, through a strange coincidence, by that same man who is his opponent for the Presidency today. I saw him, by sheer personality and individual force, drive through fifty-six laws in fifty-six days in the Ohio legislature, vitalizing this new constitution and keeping to the letter the pledges he has made as candidate. In the way he met problems of war; in his masterful handling of a coal strike in the stress of winter; and in his settlement of strikes without disorder and with infringement upon the rights of neither party, I have been given evidence of his peculiar ability to take vexatious situations in his hands and get results. I am convinced there will be no disappointment in his record for those who think liberally on public questions.

The following paragraphs I write upon my own responsibility. They deal with issues not featured in the press, but issues all-important to the progressive voter. One of them—the first—is concerned simply with a rumor. But it is a rumor that has had wide circulation. The three other paragraphs require no explaining. They deal with matters every liberal believes are vital at this moment.

(1) I have heard stories to the effect that Governor Cox is under obligation to reappoint Attorney-General Palmer, because of Mr. Palmer's withdrawal from the race at San Francisco. Governor Cox was not at San Francisco. I was. I know that no personal obligations exist. I know, moreover,

that Governor Cox will exercise independent judgment to secure the best possible results, free from any bias of obligation, fancied or real. From what I know of Governor Cox and his opinions, and from my knowledge of the integrity and independence of Attorney-General Palmer, I should be amazed should the one tender, or in case of tender, the other accept appointment.

(2) Governor Cox as President will not be stampeded into war with Mexico by any propaganda, no matter how strong or from what source. In his handling of serious industrial difficulties in Ohio he has shown his ability to resist pressure of great power, and even when his advisers have ruled otherwise he has resisted every appeal to send soldiers into a strike territory. Though he is no man to trifle in emergencies, during his six years as Governor not a shot has been fired in the settlement of a strike.

(3) When Cox is President there will be no re-enactment of the Espionage bill with his consent. Recognizing the inevitability of unusual tactics in time of war, he finds no excuse for keeping clamp upon a free people in time of peace. He looks askance at federal encroachment upon a liberty-loving people. As President, he will not attempt to beat socialism and its kindred philosophies by making physical war upon them. He does not believe the present upheaval in European countries is justified by anything else than the absence of good faith which the European peoples have had in the treatment accorded them since the armistice. Concerning unrest in our own country, Governor Cox has little confidence in the efficacy of political imprisonment and political persecution. He believes there are better ways of meeting that unrest.

(4) As Cox hews his own way in domestic administration, so as President he will have a foreign policy characteristically American. He has the ability to force through a cause he believes to be right, nor would he tag along after any other leaders of any other nations. He is day after day stressing the fact that Congress, and Congress alone, has the right to declare war, and he would certainly never consent to the use of United States soldiers in any undeclared war.

These are tenets in the faith of the Governor Cox, I know, and they mark him as a man in whom progressives can put faith. I use the term "progressive" to define that vast number of thinking men and women who believe the world can be made a better place in which to live. I know you people in the New Republic office have declared: "Being able to rattle back and forth between two parties does not seem to produce much independence." Some of my liberal friends, too, have tried me not

a little by their rebellious desire to leave one or the other of the so-called old parties and form a new organization. Although I probably have not been able to convince them, I have thoroughly convinced myself that the better way to influence an organization is from within rather than from without. The Progressive Republicans, to be sure, do not seem to have made much of a dent in the side of the G. O. P. Against this I should point out that but for the instillation of progressive thought into

the Democratic party, Governor Cox would not be the candidate of that party today. For a record of progressive measures was the chief asset he commanded. As I see it, those progressives who vote in 1920 for one of the minor political parties will misunderstand the opportunities and the duties before them. They will be missing a chance to help put a progressive executive at the head of the country during the four next important years.

CHARLES E. MORRIS.

Bolshevik Theory

I. The Materialistic Conception of History*

THE materialistic conception of history, as it is called, is due to Marx, and underlies the whole communist philosophy. I do not mean, of course, that a man could not be a communist without accepting it, but that in fact it is accepted by the Communist party and that it profoundly influences their views as to politics and tactics. The name does not convey at all accurately what is meant by the theory. It means that all the mass phenomena of history are determined by economic motives. This view has no essential connection with materialism in the philosophic sense. Materialism in the philosophic sense may be defined as the theory that all apparently mental occurrences either are really physical, or at any rate have purely physical causes. Materialism in this sense also was preached by Marx and is accepted by all orthodox Marxians. The arguments for and against it are long and complicated, and need not concern us, since, in fact, its truth or falsehood has little or no bearing on politics.

In particular, philosophic materialism does not prove that economic causes are fundamental in politics. The view of Buckle, for example, according to which climate is one of the decisive factors, is equally compatible with materialism. So is the Freudian view, which traces everything to sex. There are innumerable ways of viewing history which are materialistic in the philosophic sense without being economic or falling within the Marxian formula. Thus the "materialistic conception of history" may be false, even if materialism in the philosophic sense should be true.

On the other hand, economic causes might be at the bottom of all political events, even if philosophic materialism were false. Economic causes

operate through men's desire for possessions, and would be supreme if this desire were supreme, even if desire could not, from a philosophic point of view, be explained in materialistic terms.

There is, therefore, no logical connection either way between philosophic materialism and what is called the "materialistic conception of history."

It is of some moment to realize such facts as this, because otherwise political theories are both supported and opposed for quite irrelevant reasons, and arguments of theoretical philosophy are employed to determine questions which depend upon concrete facts of human nature. This mixture damages both philosophy and politics, and is therefore important to avoid.

For another reason, also, the attempt to base a political theory upon a philosophical doctrine is undesirable. The philosophical doctrine of materialism, if true at all, is true everywhere and always; we cannot expect exceptions to it, say in Buddhism or in the Hussite movement. And so it comes about that people whose politics are supposed to be a consequence of their metaphysics grow absolute and sweeping, unable to admit that a general theory of history is likely, at best, to be only true on the whole and in the main. The dogmatic character of Marxian communism finds support in the supposed philosophic basis of the doctrine; it has the fixed certainty of catholic theology, not the changing fluidity and sceptical practicality of modern science.

Treated as a practical approximation, not as an exact metaphysical law, the materialistic conception of history has a very large measure of truth. Take, as an instance of its truth, the influence of industrialism upon ideas. It is industrialism rather than the arguments of Darwinians and Biblical critics, that has led to the decay of religious belief in the urban working class. At the same time, industrialism has revived religious belief

*The first of a series of three articles.