

RUSSIAN AND JAPANESE CONSERVATISM

Conservatism is not a standard world history topic. However, conservatism experienced a number of crucial changes in the long nineteenth century, in a number of different societies, while remaining a vigorous force, sometimes a dominant force, in political life. The need to articulate reactions to change and foreign influence, and the increasing ability to use nationalism to help shape conservative response, were widespread developments that warrant explicit comparative treatment. Japanese and Russian conservatisms were important in their own right, but they also raise larger issues.

Conservatism is as old as human politics. Any political situation involves some people a bit more eager for change and others insistent that current arrangements should be preserved. These latter are conservatives. Some political cultures, because of an emphasis on order, are more dominated by conservatism than others—China before the twentieth century is an example frequently cited. But the general phenomenon is a common one in history.

During the nineteenth century so many changes were occurring, because of new political ideas (including ideas spread by the French Revolution), industrialization, and imperialism, that conservatives in many areas were inclined to become more explicit about their viewpoint and even to organize as a political movement. Formal conservatism, as opposed to more informal groupings of like-minded leaders, thus emerged in Europe during the French revolutionary era, around 1800. Further, outside Europe, pressures to import political and social ideas and institutions from the dynamic West prompted conservatives to worry about foreignness as well as about change in general. Many conservatives found themselves defending against Western corruption what they saw as vital elements of their own cultural and political traditions.

Because political changes and Western influence were particularly widespread in Japan from the Meiji era (beginning in 1868) onward and in Russia under Alexander II (1855–81), conservatism in these two countries gained unusual importance and complexity. Conservatives were forced to define what aspects of the contemporary West and what resultant reform proposals were particularly objectionable. But they might also identify certain ingredients that, altered to preserve national essentials, could be accepted as change. In both countries

conservatives wielded great influence, shaping much of the reform process in Japan and, in Russia, preventing certain kinds of reforms altogether.

Conservatism in the nineteenth century was rarely simple-minded. Many conservatives recognized the need for some change: they merely insisted that many older values and institutions should be essentially preserved and that change should not be blindly embraced. Many Russian conservatives after 1861, for example, clearly recognized that the emancipation of the serfs had been a desirable reform; they did not argue for a return to serfdom, though they rarely wanted many more concessions to the aggrieved peasantry. Russian conservatives also saw that their country should participate in the kinds of scientific research being spearheaded in Western Europe; there was danger in lagging behind here. Japanese conservatives were even more flexible: they granted that the old system of feudalism and the shogunate should not be restored (though they sometimes sought to maintain some of the older values, including military honor). Conservatives in both countries utilized the new force of nationalism. Interpreting modern conservatism as it began to develop in response to the massive changes of the long nineteenth century thus requires some subtlety: what did conservatives insist on keeping intact, and where were they willing to bend?

Russian conservatives were in the ascendancy after Alexander II was assassinated by terrorists in 1881. Although they did not oppose all change (industrialization continued), they definitely resisted any further alterations to the political and social structure. Their obstinacy helped develop an atmosphere of inflexibility and repression that led to the revolutions of 1905 and 1907. Japanese conservatives gained ground in the 1880s also, with the backing of the emperor, amid a widespread sense that disorder was spreading, for example, in the schools.

Russian conservatism was not uniform, though all its leading spokesmen favored nationalism, czarist autocracy, and the Orthodox church. Some conservative nationalists praised the Russian people in the abstract while defining distinctive views of the state and progress. Leaders such as Nikolai Danilevsky, in the 1860s, bitterly opposed the West, but they could grant the need for some limited change. After the terrorist assassination of czar Alexander II in 1881, however, Russian conservatism became more defensive. Constantine Pobedonostsev became Russia's conservative leader. A lawyer, he gained positions both in the government and in the Orthodox church, spurring reactionary policies between 1881 and 1905. Pobedonostsev was outspoken in his hostility to key Western principles and institutions.

In Japan, Yamagata Arimoto was the most conservative of the leading statesmen of the Meiji era and was closely associated with the army. He, too, objected to many Western values, but he also saw how certain Western practices, such as universal military conscription, though radical in terms of Japanese tradition,

could actually benefit a conservative Japanese state. Here, he tried to show how history set a Japanese precedent for a practice that was apparently new.

Comparing these two conservative currents requires the now-familiar balance between noting the important points they have in common—do Russian and Japanese leaders agree about Western political fallacies, for example?—and discerning the ways in which they differ in degree of openness to limited change.

Questions

1. How did Danilevsky define Russian superiority? What, in his view, were Russia's key strengths?
2. What did Danilevsky mean by freedom? What recent reform was he willing to defend? What few aspects of the West did he admire?
3. How do Danilevsky and Pobedonostsev compare as Russian nationalists and conservatives? Did they agree on the qualities of a strong state? How do their emphases differ?
4. Which version of Russian conservatism do Yamagata Arimoto's views most resemble: Danilevsky's or Pobedonostsev's?
5. Why and how did Russian conservatism change between the 1860s (Danilevsky, and the 1880s (Pobedonostsev)?
6. What aspects of Western politics did Yamagata Arimoto, Danilevsky, and Pobedonostsev all criticize? Did they agree in their reactions to the West?
7. How did Yamagata Arimoto and Pobedonostsev view voting and political parties and the remedies for divisiveness?
8. How did Yamagata Arimoto's Confucianism compare with Pobedonostsev's conservative ideals? Would Russian conservatives' advice to soldiers be different from Yamagata Arimoto's? What are the implications of these differences? By Russian conservative standards, is it accurate to call Yamagata Arimoto a conservative at all?
9. What kinds of differences in national setting did the two conservative movements suggest? In which country did conservatives have an easier time defending the status quo in the 1880s and 1890s?

For Further Discussion

1. What is conservative nationalism? How does it differ from liberal or radical nationalism?
2. Why did both Japanese and Russian conservatives emphasize the importance of an emperor and a strong state?

3. What aspects of the West were most likely to be criticized by foreign observers in the late nineteenth century? Are the same aspects still likely to be criticized today, or has the list changed?
4. Can Japan's greater success in combining change and stability be traced in the nature of its conservatism? How did Russia's version of conservatism play a role in the conditions that led to major revolution?

DANILEVSKY

The following selection was authored by an ardent Slavic nationalist, Nikolai Danilevsky, in a multiple-edition book called *Russia and Europe*, first issued in 1869. Danilevsky asserts the special virtues of the Slavic peoples as against other Europeans, and the dominance of Russia among the Slavs. Elements of his argument might seem comical: he twists history, he glosses over ongoing problems such as peasant discontent after emancipation, and he ludicrously promises stability in a country almost foredoomed to revolution. But Danilevsky's views about Russian distinctiveness and Western evil were widely shared, even by people opposed to the existing czarist regime. The complexities of his outlook were widely shared also, as he talked about some selective borrowing from the West. Complexities of this sort outlived the czarist regime and flourished after the Communist revolution of 1917.

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And now let us turn to the Slav world, and chiefly to Russia, its only independent representative, in order to examine the results and the promises of this world, a world still only at the beginning of its cultural-historical life. We must examine it from the viewpoint of the above four foci of reference: religion, culture, politics, and socio-economic structure, in order to elucidate what we rightfully expect as well as hope from the Slav cultural-historical type.

Religion constituted the most essential element of ancient Russian life, and at the present time, the overwhelming spiritual interest of the ordinary Russian is also involved in it; in truth, one cannot but wonder at the ignorance and the impertinence of these people who could insist (to gratify their fantasies) on the religious indifference of the Russian people.

From an objective, factual viewpoint, the Russian and the majority of Slav peoples became, with the Greeks, the chief guardians of the living tradition of religious truth, Orthodoxy, and in this way they continued the high calling, which was the destiny of Israel and Byzantium: to be the chosen people. . .

From Nikolai Danilevsky, *Russia and Europe*, in *The Mind of Modern Russia*, ed. Hans Kohn (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 200-211.

... The religious aspect of the cultural activity belongs to the Slav cultural type and to Russia in particular; it is its inalienable achievement, founded on the psychology of its people and on its guardianship of religious truth. . . .

Whatever the future may bring we are entitled, on the evidence of the past alone, to consider the Slavs among the most gifted families of the human race in political ability. Here we may turn our attention to the special character of this political ability and show how it manifested itself during the growth of the Russian state. The Russians do not send out colonists to create new political societies, as the Greeks did in antiquity or the English in modern times. Russia does not have colonial possessions, like Rome or like England. The Russian state from early Muscovite times on has been Russia herself, gradually, irresistibly spreading on all sides, settling neighboring non-settled territories, and assimilating into herself and into her national boundaries foreign populations. This basic character of Russian expansion was misunderstood because of the distortion of the original Russian point of view through Europeanization, the origin of every evil in Russia. . . .

But the expansion of the state, its attainment of stability, strength, and power, constitutes only one aspect of political activity. It has still another one, consisting of the establishment of equal relationships between the citizens themselves and between them and the state, i.e., in the establishment of civil and political freedom. A people not endowed with this freedom cannot be said to possess a healthy political sense. Is the Russian people capable of freedom?

Naturally our "well-wishers" give a negative answer: some regard slavery as a natural element of the Russians, and others are afraid, or pretend to be afraid, that freedom in Russian hands must lead to all sorts of excesses and abuses. But on the basis of Russian history and with knowledge of the views and traits of the Russian people, one can only form an opinion diametrically opposed to this view—namely, that there hardly ever has existed or exists a people so capable of enduring such a large share of freedom as the Russians and so little inclined to abuse it, due to their ability and habit to obey, their respect and trust in the authorities, their lack of love for power, and their loathing of interference in matters where they do not consider themselves competent. If we look into the causes of all political troubles, we shall find their root not in the striving after freedom, but in the love for power and the vain cravings of human beings to interfere in affairs that are beyond their comprehension. . . .

This nature of the Russian people is the true reason why Russia is the only state which never had (and in all probability never will have) a political revolution, i.e., a revolution having as its aim the limitation of the power of the ruler. . . .

With legality in the succession of the throne secured . . . and finally with the liberation of the peasants, all the reasons which in former times had agitated the people disappeared; and even an ordinary rebellion, going beyond the limits of a regrettable misunderstanding, has become impossible in Russia so long as the moral character of the Russian people does not change. . . .

... Thus we may conclude that the Russian people, by their attitude towards the power of the state, by their ability to sacrifice to it their own personal interests, and by their attitude towards the use of political and civil freedom, are gifted with wonderful political sense.

In the socio-economic sphere, Russia is the only large state which has solid ground under its feet, in which there are no landless masses, and in which, consequently, the social edifice does not rest on the misery of the majority of the citizens and on the insecurity of their situation. In Russia only there cannot and does not exist any contradiction between political and economic ideals. . . . The factors that give such superiority to the Russian social structure over the European, and give it an unshakable stability, are the peasant's land and its common ownership. On this health of Russia's socio-economic structure we found our hope for the great socio-economic significance of the Slav cultural-historical type. This type has been able for the first time to create a just and normal system of human activity, which embraces not only human relations in the moral and political sphere, but also man's mastery of nature, which is a means of satisfying human needs and requirements. Thus it establishes not only formal equality in the relations between citizens, but a real and concrete equality.

However, as regards the prominent place of the Slav cultural-historical type in the field of culture proper, one must admit that so far the Russian and other Slav achievements in the sciences and in the arts are insignificant in comparison with the accomplishments of the two great cultural types, the Greek and the European. . . .

Scientific and artistic activity can thrive only under conditions of leisure, of an overflow of forces that remain free from daily toil. Could much leisure be left over among Russians and Slavs? . . . All these considerations fully answer, it seems to me, the question why until now Russia and the other Slav countries could not occupy a respected position in purely cultural activities. . . . But indications of these aptitudes, of these spiritual forces, which are necessary for brilliant achievements in the fields of science and art are now indisputably present among the Slav peoples in spite of all the unfavorable conditions of their life; and, consequently, we are justified in expecting that with a change in these conditions, these peoples will bring forth remarkable creations. . . .

The Slav cultural type has already produced enough examples of artistic and, to a lesser degree, scientific achievements to allow us to conclude that it has attained a significant degree of development in these fields. The relative youth of the race and the concentration of all its forces upon other, more urgent types of activity have not, until now, given the Slavs the opportunity of acquiring cultural significance, in the exact meaning of the phrase. This should not embarrass us; rather, it points to the right path in our development. As long as there is no strong foundation, we cannot and we must not think of the erection of a durable edifice; we can only set up temporary buildings, which cannot be expected to display the talents of the builder in every respect. The political independence of the race is the indispensable foundation of culture,

and consequently all the Slav forces must be directed towards this goal. Independence is indispensable . . . [for] without the consciousness of Slav racial unity, as distinct from other races, an independent culture is impossible. . . .

The requisite preliminary achievement of political independence has still another importance in the cultural as well as in all other spheres: the struggle against the Germano-Roman world (without which Slav independence is impossible) will help to eradicate the cancer of imitativeness and the servile attitude towards the West, which through unfavorable conditions has eaten its way into the Slav body and soul.

POBEDONOSTSEV

Constantine Pobedonostsev (1827–1907) was a statesman and jurist, trained in the law. He tutored the future czar Alexander II, then served in the holy synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (1880–1905), where he became the leading spokesman of religious orthodoxy, nationalism, and autocracy. He had great influence over czar Alexander III and encouraged policies of rigorous censorship, persecution of religious minorities, and repression of all political opposition. He also supported an activist foreign policy designed to enhance Russia's national prestige. He wrote widely on Russian law and also authored a number of attacks on Western rationalism and liberalism.

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What is this freedom by which so many minds are agitated, which inspires so many insensate actions, so many wild speeches, which leads the people so often to misfortune? In the democratic sense of the word, freedom is the right of political power, or, to express it otherwise, the right to participate in the government of the State. This universal aspiration for a share in the government has no constant limitations, and seeks no definite issue, but incessantly extends. . . . Forever extending its base, the new Democracy now aspires to universal suffrage—a fatal error, and one of the most remarkable in the history of mankind. By this means, the political power so passionately demanded by Democracy would be shattered into a number of infinitesimal bits, of which each citizen acquires a single one. What will he do with it, then? How will he employ it? In the result it has undoubtedly been shown that in the attainment of this aim Democracy violates its sacred formula of “Freedom indissolubly joined with Equality.” It is shown that this apparently equal distribution of “freedom” among all involves the total destruction of equality. Each vote, representing an inconsiderable fragment of power, by itself signifies nothing; an aggregation of votes alone has a

From Konstantin P. Pobyedonostsev, *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, trans. Robert Crozier Long (London: Grant Richard, 1898), 23–30, 32–46, 52–54, 62–74.

relative value. The result may be likened to the general meetings of shareholders in public companies. By themselves individuals are ineffective, but he who controls a number of these fragmentary forces is master of all power, and directs all decisions and dispositions. We may well ask in what consists the superiority of Democracy. Everywhere the strongest man becomes master of the State; sometimes a fortunate and resolute general, sometimes a monarch or administrator with knowledge, dexterity, a clear plan of action, and a determined will; in a Democracy, the real rulers are the dexterous manipulators of votes, with their place-men, the mechanics who so skillfully operate the hidden springs which move the puppets in the arena of democratic elections. Men of this kind are ever ready with loud speeches lauding equality; in reality, they rule the people as any despot or military dictator might rule it. . . . Experience proves a very different thing. The history of mankind bears witness that the most necessary and fruitful reforms—the most durable measures—emanated from the supreme will of statesmen, or from a minority enlightened by lofty ideas and deep knowledge, and that, on the contrary, the extension of the representative principle is accompanied by an abasement of political ideas and the vulgarization of opinions in the mass of the electors. . . .

. . . Even in the classic countries of Parliamentarism [democracy] it would satisfy not one of [its criteria]. The elections in no way express the will of the electors. The popular representatives are in no way restricted by the opinions of their constituents, but are guided by their own views and considerations, modified by the tactics of their opponents. In reality, ministers are autocratic, and they rule, rather than are ruled by Parliament. They attain power, and lose power, not by virtue of the will of the people, but through immense influence . . . and they fear no censure while they enjoy the support in Parliament of a majority which they maintain by the distribution of bounties from the rich tables which the State has put at their disposal. In reality, the ministers are as irresponsible as the representatives of the people. Mistakes, abuse of power, and arbitrary acts, are of daily occurrence, yet how often do we hear of the grave responsibility of a minister? It may be once in fifty years a minister is tried for his crimes, with a result contemptible when compared with the celebrity gained by the solemn procedure. . . .

. . . It is sad to think that even in Russia there are men who aspire to the establishment of this falsehood among us; that our professors glorify to their young pupils representative government as the ideal of political science; that our newspapers pursue it . . . , under the name of justice and order, without troubling to examine without prejudice the working of the parliamentary machine. Yet even where centuries have sanctified its existence, faith already decays; the Liberal intelligence exalts it, but the people groans under its despotism, and recognizes its falsehood. We may not see, but our children and grandchildren assuredly will see, the overthrow of this idol, which contemporary thought in its vanity continues still to worship. . . .

The prevalent doctrine of the perfection of Democracy and of democratic government stands on the same delusive foundation. This doctrine presupposes the capacity

of the people to understand subtleties of political science which have a clear and substantial existence in the minds of its apostles only. Precision of knowledge is attainable only by the few minds which constitute the aristocracy of intellect; the mass, always and everywhere, is *vulgus*, and its conceptions of necessity are vulgar.

Democracy is the most complicated and the most burdensome system of government recorded in the history of humanity. For this reason it has never appeared save as a transitory manifestation, with few exceptions giving place before long to other systems. It is in no way surprising. The duty of the State is to act and to ordain: its dispositions are manifestations of a single will; without this, government is inconceivable. But how can a multitude of men, or a popular assembly act with a single will? . . . Such conditions inevitably lead to anarchy, from which society can be saved alone by dictatorship—that is, by the rehabilitation of autocracy in the government of the world.

YAMAGATA ARIMOTO

Yamagata Arimoto (1838–1922) was born a samurai but backed the Meiji side in the turmoil of 1860s. He studied military science in Europe and in the 1870s led in the restructuring of the Japanese army, copying German organizational models. In the 1880s he concentrated more on domestic affairs, encouraging more Confucian elements in the schools and repressing political opposition. He also supported Japanese imperialism and a strong military influence in the government. Clearly opposed to the more westernizing reformers in Japan, Yamagata Arimoto has been the subject of some debate among historians of Japan, who argue about whether a “conservative” label is really appropriate for this formative and dynamic leader in modern Japanese history.

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On Military Conscription, 1872

In the system in effect in our country in the ancient past everyone was a soldier. In an emergency the emperor became the Marshal, mobilizing the able-bodied youth for military service and thereby suppressing rebellion. When the campaign was over the men returned to their homes and their occupations. . . . When the State suffers disaster, the people cannot escape being affected. Thus, the people can ward off disaster to themselves by striving to ward off disaster to the State. And where there is a state,

From Ryusako Tsunoda, William Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 704–7, 709–10, 712–13. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

there is military defense; and if there is military defense there must be military service. It follows, therefore, that the law providing for a militia is the law of nature and not an accidental, man-made law. As for the system itself, it should be made after a survey of the past and the present, and adapted to the time and circumstance. The Occidental countries established their military systems after several hundred years of study and experience. Thus, their regulations are exact and detailed. However, the difference in geography rules out their wholesale adoption here. We should now select only what is good in them, use them to supplement our traditional military system, establish an army and a navy, require all males who attain the age of twenty—irrespective of class—to register for military service, and have them in readiness for all emergencies. Heads of communities and chiefs of villages should keep this aim in mind and they should instruct the people so that they will understand the fundamental principle of national defense.

Precepts for Soldiers and Sailors, 1882

1. The soldier and sailor should consider loyalty their essential duty. Who that is born in this land can be wanting in the spirit of grateful service to it? No soldier or sailor, especially, can be considered efficient unless this spirit be strong within him. A soldier or a sailor in whom this spirit is not strong, however skilled in art or proficient in science, is a mere puppet; and a body of soldiers or sailors wanting in loyalty, however well ordered and disciplined it may be, is in an emergency no better than a rabble. Remember that, as the protection of the state and the maintenance of its power depend upon the strength of its arms, the growth or decline of this strength must affect the nation's destiny for good or for evil; therefore neither be led astray by current opinions nor meddle in politics, but with single heart fulfil your essential duty of loyalty, and bear in mind that duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather. Never by failing in moral principle fall into disgrace and bring dishonor upon your name.

[The second article concerns the respect due to superiors and consideration to be shown inferiors. The third urges bravery and a sense of duty.]

4. The soldier and the sailor should highly value faithfulness and righteousness. . . . Faithfulness implies the keeping of one's word, and righteousness the fulfilment of one's duty. If then you wish to be faithful and righteous in any thing, you must carefully consider at the outset whether you can accomplish it or not. If you thoughtlessly agree to do something that is vague in its nature and bind yourself to unwise obligations, and then try to prove yourself faithful and righteous, you may find yourself in great straits from which there is no escape. . . . Ever since ancient times there have been repeated instances of great men and heroes who, overwhelmed by misfortune, have perished and left a tarnished name to posterity, simply because in their effort to be faithful in small matters they failed to discern right and wrong with reference

to fundamental principles, or because, losing sight of the true path of public duty, they kept faith in private relations. You should, then, take serious warning by these examples.

5. The soldier and sailor should make simplicity their aim. If you do not make simplicity your aim, you will become effeminate and frivolous and acquire fondness for luxurious and extravagant ways; you will finally grow selfish and sordid and sink to the last degree of baseness, so that neither loyalty nor valor will avail to save you from the contempt of the world.

On Local Government, 1890

. . . According to what I have heard, discord between political parties has gradually extended into every aspect of community life. Hardly a person in social, business, and economic relations, and in education, has remained untouched by this situation. . . . There are some people who abandon what they should be doing and expend both time and effort in unproductive political debate, and some who, losing their sense of purpose, even run afoul of the law. These evils are spreading their influence, morally, economically, and politically, throughout the country. They will impair the people's happiness and exert a harmful effect on the prosperity of the nation. In general, if a new government, in the course of its establishment, is abused for reasons of personal interests, the results could be extremely harmful. They could affect the strength and the cohesion of the entire people and become the cause of the decline of the nation. The history of our country and that of other countries provides many such examples in every age. The people, if they wish to prevent the growth of such evil influences, must regard at all times the unified endeavor of all as their highest aim. And the responsibility of those in a position to guide the people must be to apply themselves as administrators of the government to this ideal.

His Majesty the Emperor has granted the constitutional system to his ministers and subjects for the purpose of elevating their morals and of promoting their happiness. By virtue of this constitution ministers and subjects have been enabled to gain a higher degree of freedom and to improve their lot in life so that they can stand on an equal footing with peoples of other civilized nations. But if, unfortunately, we should err—however little—in putting this constitutional system into operation, we the people will have lost our position of honor. And thus, today, the duty of a loyal subject is to cultivate true constitutional liberty and to enjoy its benefits in peace.

If men lack self-respect and self-restraint, there cannot be freedom in its true sense. One who respects himself will of necessity respect others. One who wishes others to respect his own opinions must respect the views of others. There is no logic in the position that only one's own opinions are correct. Irrespective of place, diverse opinions are inevitable when the interests of people are not the same. Thus, we must make every effort to tolerate the views of others and to resolve differences mutually. If

this is not done contention will not cease. The constitutional system is an instrument for the adjustment of diverse views: the use of force and violence will not only fail to eradicate differences in viewpoints but will also aggravate them.

Political problems do not encompass the entire field of human interests. The people who might entertain different political views very frequently hold mutually identical views in religious and moral matters, and in matters of personal and social relations. It is not the way of a loyal, trustworthy man to set aside his religious, moral, personal, and social relationships in the sole interest of politics. Thus, to promote party rivalry to extremes is a human misfortune. Nay, to resort to violence and to use obstructionist methods against an opponent to promote one's political position is to permit personal passions to enslave him. It is against the principle of the observance of the law. It is against the spirit of the constitutional system.

It is especially undesirable that one abandon his occupational pursuit for the sake of a political cause. It is against his own interest as well as that of society as a whole. The economic strength of a country is dependent mainly on productive labor. Thus, it is not the way of the good citizen to indulge in needless arguments to the neglect of his calling. Not only will he thus fail to add his bit to the national wealth but he will also fail to induce others to develop industrious habits of self-reliance.

On Political Parties, 1917 (Repeating an 1898 Essay)

The parties seem smugly unconcerned over the danger to our country of having to stand alone and without support in the future among the powers of the world. The evils of partisan politics are indeed deplorable. If this trend is permitted to develop unchecked, I fear that the spirit of the Meiji Restoration will die and the splendid achievements of the late emperor will soon come to naught. The actual situation with respect to political parties in our country today indicates that when one party is excessively strong in Parliament, that party becomes reckless and arbitrary. When two parties are evenly matched, the struggle between them becomes extremely violent. Thus, to eliminate arbitrary actions and violent political struggles, it would seem advisable to divide their strength and to have them restrain each other mutually. I have faith in a plan to establish a three-party system in the Diet which would eliminate excesses and help foster moderation. If the third party is organized by men who are impartial and moderate, and possessed of intelligence and a sincere concern for the well-being of the country, it is my belief that it can make a contribution to the state toward the achievement of constitutional government, and it will set an example to others. . . . We must organize a group consisting of fair and intelligent men who will stand between the two existing parties and be partial to neither; who can check party excesses and irregularities; who can restrain the ambitions of those who seek to satisfy their avarice or their desire for political power through the instrument of the party; who can transcend the common run of politicians for whom politics is a means of livelihood; and who can go

forward, resolutely and firmly, with but the one thought in mind of service to the state. Only by the conduct of a central core of such men who would not be corrupted by thoughts of personal gain or fame, and only by having as a nucleus in the Diet men who would not falter in their public devotion, can the secret of true constitutional government be achieved.

The greater the number of such representatives we can gather, the better it will be. However, the number of such men, both economically established and patriotically inclined, need not be numerous. . . . There must be several million among our population of seventy million who have fixed property and are economically secure, and who therefore are above corruption. If such men come forward to organize a solid nucleus in the Diet, the empire will be on a firm and secure foundation, and there need be no anxiety in the country. . . .