Clarion Review

Social Science

Progressive Dystopia
Michael Ozga
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Two Stars (out of Five)

Michael Ozga issues an ultra-conservative rallying cry with *Progressive Dystopia*, a quotation-filled collection of Republican rhetoric meant to discredit a broad range of liberal leaders and their policies. With near-evangelical fervor, Ozga offers his views on presidents from Roosevelt to Obama.

"American Progressivism shares its political DNA with communism, which championed class, fascism, which championed nation and Nazism which championed race," writes Ozga in the first chapter, setting the stage for his broad condemnation of progressive politics that follows. Starting with Theodore Roosevelt, whom the author unconventionally refers to as TR, Ozga decries the twenty-sixth president's use of "coercive power" to manipulate the economy, and he declares that Roosevelt's national parks program amounted to a "paternalistic exertion of power." Rather than offer balanced evidence that allows the reader to evaluate his statements, Ozga submits a stream of quotations that support his views.

Each chapter examines the record of a particular president, skewering Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Barack Obama in equal measure. Ozga attempts to buoy his arguments with extensive documentation that lends a scholarly air to his opinions. Footnotes dot every page, and a lengthy reference section closes the book. A close look at his references, however, reveals that Ozga uses the same sources repeatedly—such as *The Forgotten Man* by Amity Shlaes—often paraphrasing from several consecutive pages. Visits to some of the Web sites Ozga reveal invalid or defunct addresses.

Each chapter is followed by biographies of people Ozga accuses of unduly influencing the president in question. He includes a wide variety of philosophers, politicians, and scientists. For instance, Ozga writes that both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson were manipulated by the work of people including Friedrich Engels, Charles Darwin, Jane Addams,

and Otto von Bismarck. He condemns these thinkers as “the wise and knowledgeable few,” elitists who lead nations toward centrally planned—and in Ozga’s eyes, doomed—governments and away from Ozga’s preferred free-market approach. Many of the names appear repeatedly, along with profiles drawn from a variety of Web sites.

Ozga spends relatively little time exploring the policies of leaders he admires. Short sections on George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Ronald Reagan praise their patriotism, religious beliefs, and adherence to a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

Readers who share Ozga’s conservative stance may come away from *Progressive Dystopia* feeling vindicated. Folks who disagree will not likely change their minds in light of Ozga’s words.

Sheila M. Trask