The Elections of 1915

The elections of 1915 ought to serve as a warning to the democratic party. They indicate that the progressives have returned to the regular republican party and that the democrats can no longer hope to win by division in the ranks of the opposition. Neither can the democrats afford to dally with vital issues. In Massachusetts our candidate for governor, an able man with a splendid official record, was defeated. The democrats of that state endorsed preparedness. If it did not defeat them, it at least failed to save them. As a matter of party policy, it is seldom, if ever, wise to attempt to gain votes by appropriating the policies of the opposition. When the republicans borrowed the progressive ideas of the democrats it split their party and gave success to the democrats. It will not pay democrats to borrow preparedness from the republicans. If the country wants the frenzied preparedness that is now being advocated by militarists and jingoes the republican party will be entrusted with the carrying out of the policy, because the republican party likes to pile up taxes and spend money. The democratic party can not hope to bid against the republicans for the vote of the jingoes.

In Kentucky the democrats were unfortunate in taking the side of the liquor interests against prohibition. Their candidate, Congressman Stanley, made an admirable record in congress, and is a great campaigher, but he was badly handicapped by the position taken by the party. The democratic party can not afford to tie itself up with the liquor interests on any phase of the question. Alcohol will prove a mill-stone to any party that tries to carry it.

While the elections contain a warning, there is no reason why a democrat should be discouraged. If the party will take up the reform work where it was left at the end of the last congress, adopt cloture, proceed to carry out the platform and add to its excellent record on economic questions, it has no reason to fear the campaign of 1916, but this is no time to try experiments or to exchange the substantial support of the democratic masses for the flattery of the metropolitan press. There is an essential difference between the democratic party and the republican party, and it is never safe to overlook this difference. If the democratic party triumphs it must triumph on its merits and by strict adherence to the interests of the people.

THEN AND NOW

The jingoes of the country are quoting a passage from one of Washington's annual addresses to congress. It reads:

"There is a rank due the United States among nations which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it. If we desire to secure peace one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war."

If you will compare the situation now with the situation when Washington used these words, you will see how little application they have. In Washington's day we had just secured our freedom and were assuming an independent position with old and large nations menacing our existence. We are now the leading nation of the world, the greatest republic of all timewe have an ocean rolling on either side of us and a potential power of defense unequaled by any other country living or that has lived. In addition to that we are spending 250 millions a year on the army and the navy, and yet there are those who would turn the country from peaceful prosperity into a nation of swaggering swashbucklers looking for a fight.

W. J. BRYAN.

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A REPUBLICAN SCHEME

If the readers of The Commoner will watch the progress of the propaganda for preparedness they will be convinced that it is a part of the republican scheme to return to a protective tariff. Can democrats who have fought for a generation for tariff reform be led into the fold of the tariff barons by the scare manufactured by those who profit by preparedness?

And after preparedness? War.

DANGER OF PREPAREDNESS

On another page will be found a press dispatch from White Plains, New York, recently published in the New York Times, which tells about a volunteer fire company which found business so dull that its members decided to enter upon arson as a business in order to furnish themselves employment putting out fires. As a result a number of houses were burned and eleven of the firemen arrested. They had prepared themselves for fires and when the fires did not come, they could not afford to waste their preparedness and so they started some fires. The logic applies much more strongly to preparedness for war than to preparedness for fires, for in war the injury is upon others while in the case of the fire the loss fell upon people of the town. The dispatch says: "The town of Hartsdale, strange as it sounds, feels safer than it has felt for some time." Yes, and this nation will never feel as safe after it gets good and ready for war as it has felt under the old system when it relied upon friendship and justice to keep it out of war. If we build costly battleships and fill our land with professional soldiers, trained in the art of war surgery, it will be quite natural for them to want to use their tools, and why should they care for either the expense or the suffering that follow? W. J. BRYAN.

Mr. Ford now understands how necessary it is to consult the metropolitan dailies before having an opinion on any subject. His opposition to the doctrine of frenzied preparedness has called down upon him the wrath of these representatives of the predatory interests. The censorship established by the belligerent governments of Europe is nothing compared with the censorship of the plunderbund of this country. The only escape from their impudent, insolent and malicious attacks is to be found in servile submission to their dictates. However, if Mr. Ford has not won the admiration of these, he may be to some extent compensated by the fact that he has won the approval of about everybody else.

W. J. BRYAN.

A ONE-SIDED PATRIOTISM

The Navy league has organized a women's section, the members of which pledge themselves "to think, talk and work for patriotism, Americanism and sufficient national defense to keep the horrors of war far from America's homes and shores forever." Here they are trying to inculcate in the hearts of patriotic women the idea that it is American for us to imitate Europe and enter into the mad rivalry in preparedness which has led to the European war. If these women are willing to apply their philosophy at home, why not change the pledge to read: "I will think, talk and work for patriotism and Americanism, and in order to keep the horrors of bloodshed away from our homes forever, will urge every man to carry two revolvers so that he will be sufficiently prepared for defense." Why don't they do this? Because when they deal with every day life they know that the pistol-toting man is the one to get into trouble. Why not apply every day common sense to national affairs? The same moral principles that apply to individuals also apply to groups of individuals, and the same logic that would lead the citizen to win respect by upright conduct rather than by arms will lead a nation to cultivate the disposition of peace rather than the spirit that leads to war.

W. J. BRYAN.

Ex-President Roosevelt is still engaged with characteristic energy in elevating the plane of public discussion. His latest contributions to refined language are: "Damn the mollycoddles" and "To Hell with the hyphen." These emanations during his calmer moments give us some idea of the explosive power of his vocabulary if he were to become excited.

The best shrapnel which is being used in Europe is warranted to break into not less than one hundred and twelve pieces. But that is nothing; the war scare which the jingoes are trying to work up in this country breaks into a great many more pieces whenever it comes into contact with common sense.

Among the recent resignations are those of the premier of Greece, a member of the British cabinet, and a member of the French cabinet—and two of these while their countries are at war—and yet none of our plutocratic papers denounce them as traitors.

Back to Barbarism

Under the title "The Sham," the New York Tribune attempts to use the alleged lack of preparedness on the part of Great Britain (Great Britain was prepared on sea; Germany was prepared on land) as a rebuke to the United States and as an argument in favor of a large increase in the appropriations for the army and navy, but the editorial is really an exposure of the purpose of those who are back of the expensive preparedness propaganda.

The purpose of the jingoes is not to PREVENT war but to get ready for an EXPECTED war. The Tribune says: "We shall not escape our part in the world conflagration. We can not hope permanently to avoid participation in a world at war." Why? Because, it explains, "the whole world has turned to arms and force to settle the great questions that divide nations and races."

Here we have it—a shameless surrender of all that civilization stands for. "Back to barbarism," it shouts, and calls loudly for some one "big enough and brave enough to tell the American people the truth about the conditions now existing in the world." The mask is laid aside, and the war party steps into the arena insolently demanding that we bend our energies not toward preventing war but toward preparation for immediate participation in this war.

It is fortunate that the Tribune has raised the war standard thus early, before democrats are misled. Mr. Roosevelt demands that we enter the war at once; and Mr. Taft insists that we should enter into an agreement to help police Europe, and thus take part in their quarrels. Both plans contemplate war-not for the protection of our rights, not for the safeguarding of our interests, not for the advancement of our civilization, but because "the whole world has turned to arms and force." Republicans as well as democrats will decline to respond to the call of the brute; they will refuse to exchange the joys of fraternity, Christianity and civilization for the animal pleasure that they might find in blood-letting.

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Speaking of scares, why accept a little one when we can by a slight twist of the imagination, manufacture a big one? Suppose ALL the nations should combine against us? This is just as likely as that one alone would be foolish enough to attack us, what then? Must we have a navy equal to all the other navies combined, and an army equal to the combined armies of the world? Where shall we stop?

LEADER KITCHIN ON PREPAREDNESS

On another page will be found a very interesting and instructive letter written by Honorable Claude Kitchin, democratic leader of the house of representatives, to the World Bureau. In this letter Mr. Kitchin, after correcting the misrepresentations of his position, presents strong argument against the frenzied preparedness which is being urged. He points out first that our preparation is much more complete than the fingoes would have the public believe, second, that there is less danger from attack than ever before and, third, that our finances are in no condition to stand the largely increased appropriations that would be required for the proposed preparedness. He also calls attention to the relative superiority of the submarine over the dreadnaught.

It is fortunate for the party and the country that the democratic leader is too well poised to be "shooed" into the coop of the special interests by manufactured scares. Mr. Kitchin is not only a man of ability, but a man of courage, and the jingoes will have a hard time meeting his attacks. Mr. Kitchin's letter is commended to the readers of The Commoner for their careful perme

W. J. BRYAN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN SAYS-

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right, and part of him when he goes wrong.