

# The Commoner.

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## Time to Organize Now

In an editorial in the Louisville Courier-Journal, Henry Watterson laments the fact that democrats who believe in democratic principles as represented in the Kansas City platform are beginning to organize very generally throughout the country. Mr. Watterson thinks this is a bad sign. It is, indeed, a bad sign for those whose ambition is to persuade the democratic party to repudiate its principles and to surrender itself into the merciless keeping of those who stand close to the trust magnates and who will cheerfully do their bidding.

Today men, who, after having been honored by the democratic party, forsook its principles and betrayed it into the hands of the enemy, are organizing; they expect with the aid and assistance of powerful interests to reorganize the party so that it will be so similar to the republican party that whichever party wins the interests of the trusts will be secure. By what reason, then, does any one claiming to be a democrat question the right of democrats who do not believe in trusts and who are devoted to what they conceive to be democratic principles to organize in order to wage battle with those who would strip the democratic party of all that would make it worthy of the devotion of intelligent and sincere men?

The only hope of these reorganizers to win the victory in the fight for the control of the democratic national convention is that the rank and file of the party will not organize and that democrats will not become active in the contests at the primaries. With all their enormous campaign fund, provided by the representatives of special interests, these reorganizers could not succeed in the presence of a thoroughly aroused democracy. Democrats who refuse to surrender their convictions; democrats who insist that their party shall occupy a sincere and consistent attitude toward public questions, have no campaign fund to expend, but these democrats are sufficiently large in numbers to control the national convention of 1904 if they but organize and do their duty to their party in the struggle in primary elections.

Every day provides new evidence of the activity and determination of these reorganizers. They pretend to believe that they represent the opinion of the majority; but they know that their hope of success depends upon the inactivity of men who really believe in democratic principles, and who are democrats not for revenue nor for office, but democrats from conviction.

It is the duty of every democrat who believes that the control of his party should not be surrendered to the hands of men who would destroy its principles and corrupt its methods to engage promptly in the work of organization.

In every precinct in the United States democratic clubs should be organized.

The Commoner will furnish upon application forms of constitution and membership blanks to those who request them.

Every reader of this paper who sympathizes with this movement is urged to engage in this work.

As rapidly as these clubs are organized, the secretaries should report the fact of organization,

notice of which will be made in The Commoner for the information of other communities.

This work of organization must be taken up at once and prosecuted with all possible vigor. Republicans who do not approve of special interests have found it impossible to keep their party from the control of representatives of those interests; and it will be no easy task to protect the democratic party from similar influences unless every democrat who does not approve of reorganizing the democratic party enlists for the fight.

## At War with Democracy.

If any one doubts that bimetalism is not the only feature of the democratic platform to which the reorganizers object, he has but to read an editorial that appeared in the Brooklyn Eagle of March 17. This editorial comments upon a speech delivered at Chicago by Edward M. Shepard of New York. Mr. Shepard is not a bimetalist. He pointed out some things which he thought the democratic platform of 1904 should approve. One of these things was "the promotion of Philippine self-government and independence." The Brooklyn Eagle objects to this and says that upon that statement the democratic party could not carry any of the north, west, middle or eastern states.

The Eagle says: "Another of Mr. Shepard's points involved the condemnation of the action of United States courts in the use of the injunction power;" and the Eagle thinks that it would be disastrous for the democracy to indulge in that condemnation. It declares that the attempt to unify any political party in antagonism to the use of the injunction power "will be as tactically unwise as it is morally amazing."

The Eagle refers to Mr. Shepard's reference to the duty of the wage earners to organize for protection against the powerful influences that seek to oppress them as "his apologetic language for certain dangerous forces of our time;" and the Eagle expresses the opinion that these propositions "will not commend themselves to the number of men necessary for the effective reorganization of the democratic party or to men of that quality of heart and mind to make such reorganization savory, defensible and successful."

The reorganizers are at war with the entire spirit of the democratic national platform—they are, indeed, at war with democracy.

## Who Cares?

"What care the mass of the democratic party as to what men or class of men have the conduct of the campaign?" inquired one of the speakers at the Iroquois banquet. Well, suppose J. P. Morgan is chairman of the national committee, Rockefeller treasurer and W. C. Whitney general corruption fund collector? What would such a victory be worth to the party or the country? An extreme case has been supposed, but what if the leaders are men who think like Morgan, Rockefeller and Whitney, but are not so well known; will the people fare any better? Plutocracy is never so odious as when it hides under a democratic name.

## What About Nominees

The Commoner has called attention to the demerits of some of the candidates suggested by the reorganizers, and it proposes to call attention to the merits of a number of men who are worthy of the democratic nomination. As has already been stated, there is no lack of presidential material among those democrats who are really wedded to democratic principles. It would be possible to find in every state in the union men sufficiently honest, sufficiently able and sufficiently experienced to discharge the duties of the office of president. There are many men who have never been heard of before outside of their own states who can poll two or three million more votes than any candidate named by the reorganizers. A man who has had no chance to make a conspicuous record, but whose record has been good as far as made, would be a much better candidate than a man who has made a conspicuous record on the wrong side of public questions. It may be suggested as a guiding principle that no man ought to be considered for the presidential nomination on the democratic ticket about whose democracy there is a shadow of a doubt. When a campaign is on our party has business enough on hand assailing republican policies and defending democratic principles. It cannot afford to spend any time trying to prove the democracy of its candidate. And how shall we know whether a candidate's democracy is beyond question? Not merely by his perfunctory support of a democratic ticket, but by his own convictions upon the issues involved. In every campaign many men vote their party ticket without being in sympathy with all or even the most important parts of their platform. With some men the party name is more than a party platform; but such men could not expect to represent their party in positions of leadership. The struggle between the gold democrats and the Chicago platform democrats was not a struggle over gold and silver. It involved a far more important question—namely, whether the financiers should control the financial system in their own interests or whether it should be controlled by the people in the interests of the people. That question is still an issue, and must ever remain an issue, and no man whose sympathies are with the financiers and against the people can or should expect to be the nominee of a party that stands for the people. The effort to put at the head of the democratic party a man who bolted in 1896 would be ludicrous if it were not serious. Would the republican party think of nominating for president a man who supported the democratic ticket in 1896? Some of the silver republicans who were with us six years ago have gone back to the republican party, but they have not attempted to change the party's policy; they have simply adopted their party's position on the money question. The gold democrats, on the other hand, are impudent enough to assume not only that they are entitled to leadership, but that they are entitled to it without in the least modifying their views on the questions that separated them from their party.

The Commoner will from time to time present the names of real democrats whose position on public questions cannot be questioned and whose