

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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The President's Opportunity

The Chicago Tribune, the most influential republican paper west of New York, begins a leading editorial in its issue of May 7 as follows:

"The meeting of the republican national convention, which will be in session in Chicago a month from today, will be the most important meeting of republican delegates since the party was founded.

"The issues confronting the country today are fully as great as those which faced our forefathers in 1860, while the influence of the republican delegates will be greater this year than it was at that time. In 1860 it was the division of their opponents which gave the control of the nation to the republicans. This year it will be only a division of republicans which will permit the government of the United States to remain in the hands of the democrats.

"Mr. Wilson is a minority president. He received a trifle under 6,300,000 votes, as compared to 7,600,000 and more cast for Roosevelt and Taft together. Thus the progressive-republican vote was more than 1,300,000 greater than the democratic vote, while it is probable that in their factional bitterness both republicans and progressives voted for Wilson in order to assure the defeat of their pet aversion.

"It therefore appears mathematically certain that if a candidate can be found who will please the voters who voted for Roosevelt and the voters who voted for Taft this person will be the next president of the United States.

"If only one candidate is chosen to represent progressives and republicans, Wilson will need to hold his entire 1912 vote and approximately 700,000 votes from his opponents."

It is just as well to look the facts in the face. The REPUBLICAN party, if united, can enter the campaign with a popular majority of 1,300,000 votes on its side. As a portion of this majority is made up of large majorities in a few republican states, our party's handicap is not quite as great as it appears, but it is still enough to compel serious consideration.

To the normal republican advantage must be added the disaffection among German and Irish democrats. Without attempting to decide whether the President was wise or unwise in taking the course that alienated them, the party is confronted with the FACT that this alienation will cost it a large number of votes—enough to defeat the party in several close states.

From what source can we draw the number of recruits necessary to give the party a fighting chance? From one source and from one source only, namely, the PEACE ELEMENT of the republican party; we can not draw votes from the war element.

There is a peace element in the republican party as shown by the vote cast for Henry Ford in Michigan, Nebraska, and other states. This is the only element to which the democratic party can appeal, and to appeal to this element it will be necessary to do more than has yet been done. If any considerable num-

Millions of men for defense against any nation that ever attacks us, but not one American boy to march under the banner of a foreign monarch or sacrifice his life in the settlement of European disputes.

ber of republicans felt friendly to, the President they would have shown it by writing in his name as their choice when they expressed themselves at the primary.

If this element is to be conciliated it must be done by a MOVE TOWARD PEACE. The opportunity is here. The German government, in accepting this government's position in the submarine controversy, gives as one of its reasons for doing so its unwillingness to be responsible for extending or spreading the war. It refers to the fact that it has twice expressed a desire to consider terms of peace. The way is open, will the President take advantage of the opportunity? Failure to secure peace would bring no humiliation, while success would be of TREMENDOUS advantage to him politically, as well as a blessing to this country and the world. He can at one stroke destroy all the advantage the republican party now has and make the race on the record of a peacemaker. Will he give voice to the world's conscience—to humanity's hopes?

W. J. BRYAN.

BETTING ON THE WAR

The metropolitan press, the press directly under the influence of money magnates of Wall street, is doing its best to force this country into a war with Germany. The financiers, having by loaning five hundred millions to one side, wagered their money on the result of the war, the subsidized papers must help them safeguard their money at the expense of the American people.

The Road to Peace

To the Readers of The Commoner:

The American people do not want war. No, by an overwhelming majority—almost unanimously—they desire peace. The President prays "God forbid that this nation should enter the war"; nearly every senator and congressman expresses himself as against going into this war and, except the subsidized metropolitan press, the entire press of the country is against war. Why, then, the constant talk of war? It is due to the sham standard of honor which accompanies the policy of terrorism. The doctrine of preparedness rests upon the theory that force and fear are the only foundation upon which the hope of peace can rest, and the diplomacy of the world is in harmony with this system of terrorism. Present diplomacy is dressed in uniform and carries a gun. Its tone has a rifle-ring to it. "We are loath to disturb the friendship, but if you do not comply with our demands within a certain time, it will become our painful duty to blow your ships out of the water, bombard your seaports and put to death as many of your people as possible." This is the diplomacy of the past and present, the diplomacy which has filled the earth with blood and tears. It is a kinsman of "the spear that knows no brother"—it spurns friendship as a weakness. This is the diplomacy which led the nations of Europe into the present war, each one protesting its desire for peace; and this is the diplomacy which has brought this nation face to face with war, notwithstanding the well nigh universal desire for peace.

Is it not time for this great Christian nation to set the world an example, and establish a new precedent? If the belligerent governments can change the rules of international law to suit the exigencies of war, why can not neutral nations change the rules of diplomacy to promote peace?

There are three things that this government can do to preserve peace with honor: 1st, lay aside its threats and invite both sides to confer with it as friends—real friends with whom friendships are to continue. Let the presumption be given to peace instead of to war. Is that dishonorable? What sane sense of honor would be offended by such a policy?

2nd. And why not apply the treaty plan to all disputes? It was offered to all the world and the offer has not been withdrawn; it has been embodied in treaties with thirty nations representing three-fourths of the population of the globe. Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy are among the nations that signed these treaties, while Germany, Austria and Belgium have formally endorsed the principle. These treaties provide that ALL DISPUTES OF EVERY KIND AND CHARACTER shall be investigated by an international tribunal. We are compelled by treaty to adopt this course with Great Britain, France,

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