

The Commoner

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Placing the Blame

While the majorities are larger than even the Republican leaders expected, a Democratic defeat was inevitable and the blame is easily placed. The President laid the foundations for the disaster and Governor Cox completed the structure. The President attempted to drive out of public life every Democrat who dared to differ from him even in minute details, while he made no effort to strengthen the Democrats who made him the keeper of their conscience. He alienated all Republican support and invited partisan opposition by his appeal, just before the election of 1918, for a congress that would support his personal leadership, and then, though knowing full well the majority in the nation was against him, he refused to deal with the senate as a co-ordinate branch of the government. Instead of recognizing that the constitutional provision requiring a two-thirds majority for ratification **COMPELLED COMPROMISE**, he insisted upon dictating the terms upon which ratification could be had, and then, on the 19th of last March, stubbornly rejected ratification with reservations even when Senator Harding and some thirty-five other Republicans were willing to accept the league as he wrote it with the few changes upon which they insisted. By thus preventing ratification, the President assumed responsibility for the nation's failure to enter the league and thrust the league into the campaign as a partisan issue. The people, confronted with the choice between presidential infallibility and respect for the opinion of the majority of the Senate, naturally chose the latter and the Democratic party, by endorsing the President's position, invited the defeat that has overtaken it.

Governor Cox, instead of repairing the injury done by the President, aggravated the situation by the manner in which he avoided domestic issues and misrepresented the position of the Republican party on the league issue, which he declared to be paramount. He dodged the liquor question, seeking to create in the west the impression that he favored prohibition while attempting to hold the wet vote of the east by his wet record. He sought to conciliate Wall Street by advocating the repeal of the excess profits tax while he appealed to the west against the reactionaries. His attempt to put the Democratic party in the attitude of being the sole guardian of peace was ridiculous, and his assaults upon such well known advocates of peace as Ex-President Taft and Herbert Hoover were disgraceful.

The American people want the government to play its part in the abolition of war but they are indifferent as to whether we are part of a league or part of an association of nations. There is nothing in a name but everything in a sentiment. The real issue presented by the Democratic party was not whether we should cooperate with other nations interested in peace,

DESERVE TO WIN— THEN ORGANIZE

The overwhelming defeat of the Democratic candidates, state and national, was not accidental. The people meant it. The Democratic national convention voted down the resolutions that represented the people's aspirations and desires on moral and economic measures. The party went into the campaign with a wet candidate nominated by the reactionary leaders on an evasive platform. The rebuke and repudiation were in proportion to the offense.

An officer of the Democratic National Committee has announced a plan of hiring an organizer to organize all varieties of Democrats into one body of workers, etc. The Democratic forces of the country don't need an organizer; they need a program, an ideal, issues and leaders who represent the needs and ambitions of the people. The party needs to take a stand that will entitle it to the confidence of the public, and its motives and leaders must be such that the women will rally to its support. The leaders in control of the San Francisco convention and the work of that convention did not reflect the opinions or needs of the great democratic membership of the party. The people were not alert when the primaries were being held but they were aroused before election day.

The day is past when the liquor machines and Wall Street interests of the large cities can successfully dictate to the great moral majority of the nation. Make the Democratic party deserve to win, then organize for the coming struggle. The Republican party, as organized, officered and controlled, can not bring content and prosperity to the masses—the reaction will come fast and emphatic. Democrats, progressives and independents should meet, confer, plan and outline legislative needs, municipal, state and national.

The Commoner desires to hear from those who will undertake to help rehabilitate the party in their respective counties and states.

but whether we should assume a moral obligation which had no weight except as it suspended the right of congress to act independently when the time arrived for action. The nation will do its part in aiding to prevent war but it will not surrender into the keeping of any foreign group the right to determine when we shall declare war.

Now that our participation will rest upon the will of congress and not upon the arbitrary opinion of a single man, we may expect that universal disarmament will be made one of the conditions upon which we attempt to advise. Peace by terrorism has been proven impossible; peace based upon friendship and cooperation will be tried, provided the nations of Europe are willing to lay aside their land-grabbing schemes and join together on the basis of good will. The country will expect Mr. Harding to carry out his pledge to advance the cause of world peace, and there is no reason to doubt that he will do so. In the meantime, the progressive forces of the nation will organize to compel congress and the President to provide the legislative means by which the masses can protect themselves from the greed of the exploiters. W. J. BRYAN.

Why Wait?

The President refused to allow the nation to enter the league with the reservations favored by the Senate and demanded a referendum. The returns of the referendum are now tabulated; the people by an unprecedented majority reject the league as the President framed it and authorize President-elect Harding to proceed with his "association of nations"—a plan outlined in the Republican platform, endorsed by Senator Harding in his campaign speeches and pledged anew in post-election utterances. Now that the voters have rendered their verdict—nearly unanimous—on an issue declared by both parties to be paramount, why not proceed to give immediate effect to that verdict? All the people want the United States to participate in securing world peace: their only difference was as to the means of securing it and as to the terms on which our nation should co-operate. It is fair to assume that the President would like IMMEDIATE ACTION and, fortunately, our constitution provides a way by which the people's will can be put into effect AT ONCE. The President can, by resigning, allow Vice-President Marshall to become chief executive, thus rewarding the Vice-President for the loyal service he has rendered the President, sometimes at a high cost to himself. President Marshall can, say at the convening of congress, appoint Mr. Harding secretary of state and resign. Secretary Harding would then by the law of succession become president and, with a Senate and House in sympathy with him, could immediately enter into negotiation with the other governments and hasten the beginning of our nation's participation in the association of nations.

Besides preventing delay in settling an international question it would clear the way for an earlier consideration of pressing domestic problems.

Will the President favor such a plan? No one doubts his earnest desire to promote world peace: his health is such that he is likely to welcome relief from official cares as soon as he can honorably lay down the burden: and what pleasure can he expect to derive from a three months' combat with a hostile congress, elected as a protest and now endorsed in its opposition?

As for the President-elect, how could he if asked refuse to assume at once the responsibilities to which he has been called?

W. J. BRYAN.

DEAD AS SLAVERY

The defeat of Governor Cox will put an end to all agitation for the repeal or weakening of the Volstead law. The wets of the east regarded the nomination of the governor as a triumph for their plans, but sometime before the election it became apparent that the wets were deserting Cox. They can not fool the Democrats any more and Harding does not dare espouse their cause. The liquor traffic is dead.