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GROWING POPULISM

Dr. Victor Rosewater of the Omaha Bee
Standing up for Populism in
City Affairs

During the past year The Independent has heard a good many populists speak in a hopeless sort of way about the "death of the people's party." This sentiment is fostered by a great many republicans, socialists and democrats who expect their respective parties to profit by the dissolution of the people's party. To a great extent the party has by fusion lost its identity as far as concerns mere abstracts of votes cast; but this is an appearance that deceives no one who wants to know the truth. The state records of Nebraska show a mid-road populist vote of about a thousand—but they do not show how many of the hundred thousand fusionists are populists.

But suppose it were true (which it is not) that the people's party organization is dead. What of it? The principles of populism were never more alive than today. They permeate every political party. "What are you going to do next year," said a well-known Lincoln man not long since to the associate editor; "the republicans are taking up populist doctrines and will have stolen about all your platform by next year." "Oh," said the associate, "if they do that I'll probably do as you did a few years ago—join the republican party." ("This man was a gold democrat formerly.") "But," continued the associate, "we will still have a choice, because the democrats will probably adopt a socialistic platform." "Well," replied the Lincoln man, "I believe we will try socialism a whirl. I am against it, but I'm only one and don't count. Nevertheless we are going that road very rapidly; we'll try it, I'm thinking, and then if we don't like it, we'll try something else."

Down at New York last week was held a convention on municipal ownership and public franchises. The question of municipal ownership of electric lighting plants was up and the affirmative was defended by Dr. Victor Rosewater of the Omaha Bee. Think of that, you down-in-the-mouth populists who are quite sure that populism is dead." The negative was upheld by Lieutenant Cahoon, secretary of the national electric light association—a very natural position for him to take.

The Independent is pleased to present to its readers the Bee's press report of the views of Victor Rosewater, populist:

"In Mr. Rosewater's paper the futility of competition as a regulative force to repress the inevitable tendency of monopoly in electric lighting and to prevent extortionate charges was clearly pointed out. From statistics compiled by the commissioner of labor for the federal government he showed that the financial saving resulting from municipal ownership was substantial and verified by the experience of many American cities. While admitting that the statistics at hand are not all that is desired, the superiority of the municipally owned plants over the private corporations in the matter of cheap and efficient service, both to the public and to private consumers of electric lighting, is supported by all the facts and figures. As to the contention that municipal ownership would drag the electric lighting service into politics, he asked how the subject could be dragged further into politics than it now is under the system of private franchise grants. In all the disclosures of municipal corruption in various cities throughout the country during the last few years the most flagrant cases of bribe-giving have arisen out of attempts to purchase franchises from venal public officials, while no important example of dishonesty has been uncovered in any municipal lighting plant once installed. The question is no longer between municipal ownership and competitive private enterprise, but between municipal ownership and municipal control; but the best terms enforceable under municipal control are less effective and less satisfactory than under municipal ownership."

Learn the truth and be ready to combat error. Join the Independent School of Political Economy. Write a postal card today.

The old way in which our great men grew up and became powerful in legislation was first to take an interest in public affairs. They usually began by attending conventions, taking part in primaries, engaging in campaign work, mingling with the common people, becoming a member of the legislature, perhaps running for congress

or advocating measures that were for the benefit of the people. The new way is to become a stenographer and private secretary to some great man and by the influence of his employer whom he has served steps from there to a cabinet position or some other high office. The Independent likes the old way the best.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

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The Independent's motto is "The Truth About Everything." Of course that does not mean that it must necessarily mention everything; but that whatever it does mention shall be told with strict adherence to facts. It has no space for sensational news, the sickening details of murders, suicides, the doings of royalty and plutocracy, and such like, except where mere reference may be useful in teaching a lesson.

The Independent's mission as a newspaper is to teach the lessons of political economy as outlined in the Declaration of Independence, the constitution, and the national platforms of the people's party. It is a partisan paper only to the extent that at present the people's party is the only one occupying the middle ground between extreme individualism, or anarchism on the one hand and socialism and communism on the other. The Independent cares nothing for party names, however; its only mission is to assist in securing such legislation as will insure "equal rights to all, special privileges to none," with all that that implies. Roughly speaking, political economy is the science of getting a living; or "the science that treats of the nature of wealth, and the laws of its production and distribution." Henry George says: "Men may honestly confess an ignorance of astronomy, of chemistry, of geology, of philology, and really feel their ignorance. But few men honestly confess an ignorance of political economy. Though they may admit or even proclaim ignorance, they do not really feel it. There are many who say that they know nothing of political economy—many, indeed, who do not know what the term means. Yet these very men hold at the same time and with the utmost confidence opinions upon matters that belong to political economy, such as the causes which affect wages and prices and profits, the effects of tariffs, the influence of labor-saving machinery, the function and proper substance of money, the reason of "hard times" or "good times," and so on. For men living in society, which is the natural way for men to live, must have some sort of politico-economic theories—good or bad, right or wrong." (Science of Political Economy, page xxxvi.; Doubleday & McClure Co., New York, 1898.)

In the very nature of things it is a practical impossibility for The Independent every week to cover the ground necessary to a tolerably clear knowledge of the fundamentals upon which the true science of political economy rests. At the very best it can only show the relation of daily occurrences to those fundamentals. This, of course, assumes that its readers have read books which give them a clear understanding of the applications made. Many of its readers are thorough political economists—some of them teaching the science in the great colleges and universities—but many of them have not had the advantage of a proper course of reading on the subject, and much of the real point is lost on them. To one who has never read the Bible, much of many a really fine sermon would be difficult to understand; and analogously this is true of well written editorials and communications on political economy.

In the old days of the farmers' alliance, that organization did a grand work of primary education in political economy. The members of the different local organizations held frequent meetings, read and discussed

books on the subject, debated the questions, and became well fortified with facts to sustain their argument against those who opposed them. With the abandonment of this organization, real progress in the study of political economy (outside of schools and colleges) ceased. And barring the fact that a few of the old alliance men have conceived the erroneous idea that they have learned all there is to know of political economy, they are the best equipped and most appreciative readers The Independent has.

Without any idea of making invidious comparisons, The Independent feels free to say that the west is fully ten years ahead of the east in learning the true science of political economy. This is due to the farmers' alliance in great measure. But today the east is more wide-awake and anxious to learn than any other section of the country. The great truths that alliance men learned in the eighties and early nineties are just now making a start in the east. And now is the time to see that the truth and not sophisms is given the people, hungry to learn.

The National Economic League, with its plutocratic college professors, bank presidents, trust magnates, and Grover Cleverlands, has already started on a campaign of "education." Populists and old alliance men, better than any others, know that that "education" is simply pettifogging and "special pleading" for the privileged few—an extension of Mark Hanna's "let well enough alone" cry. A counter organization—or a dozen of them—is necessary, and for this reason The Independent proposes the

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL —of— POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Every subscriber to The Independent is eligible to membership and entitled to draw books from the traveling library.

Where five or more subscribers living near to each other desire, they can organize a local class, with by-laws, membership fees and dues if they choose, and elect officers, and hold meetings for the purpose of reading and discussion of economic questions.

A department in The Independent will be devoted to news of the various classes, book reviews, outlines for reading, and questions for discussion. One feature will be debates by mail between classes in different localities.

For the present The Independent will not attempt the publication of any books, but will buy from the publishing houses such works as will give the classes an unattached members a clear insight into the various branches of political economy.

Only a nominal charge will be made to cover wear of the books sent out; but members may buy and retain any book at the lowest price The Independent can secure from the publishers.

Full details of the plan have not been worked out, and cannot be until The Independent learns whether its subscribers really want an opportunity of reading and studying the valuable and costly works on political economy (or, at least, those written in understandable English) at merely a nominal rental for the books.

How many favor the plan? Write a postal card today. The question is up to you. Address,

THE INDEPENDENT,
Lincoln, Neb.
Political Economy.

VENEZUELA AND THE ALLIES

Mr. Anthony Shows the Connection Between Past Events and the Debt—Collecting Blockade

Editor Independent: The attack of the British and German empires upon the little republic of Venezuela in the throes of a civil war, encouraged if not instigated by England, to collect a paltry sum of gold, seems a squalid and sordid affair. The expense of collection will probably exceed the debt. The seizing of her navy so she cannot intercept supplies to her rebels, the wanton destruction of the lives and property of her citizens, the blockade of her ports so she can get no revenue with which to pay, seem to indicate some ulterior purpose on the part of England and some present facts may disclose this ulterior purpose.

In the spring of 1837 Louis Napoleon, afterward emperor of France, passed three months in the United States. It was just after his fruitless escapade at Strassburg. Every facility was afforded him to become acquainted with the resources of this republic. Subsequent events show he feared its future greatness would menace the continued commercial and political supremacy of Europe. On August 6, 1840, he made his second attempt to secure the throne of France at Bologna. He was captured and imprisoned in the fortress of Ham from which, disguised as a workman, he escaped on May 25, 1846. While in confinement at the fortress he made "labor and economic" questions his especial study. His many articles on these subjects were published in the French newspapers and periodicals and attracted general attention. In his work, "Le Canal de Nicaragua," he advocated the creation by emigration from Europe of a powerful maritime state—"a second Carthage"—in Central America which in connection with Latin Mexico should curb the growing power of this republic and prevent its aggression from the north.

During his confinement at Ham the Central American states sent M. Chattillon as special ambassador to France to secure the construction of this canal. Failing in his mission at the court of Louis Philippe, with his permission he visited the prince at the fortress. Later Senor de Montenegro, the minister of foreign affairs for the Central American states, sent the prince a communication conferring upon his exclusive powers for organizing in Europe a company to build the canal, informing him that by a decree of the states the name of the canal should be "Canal Napoleon de Nicaragua." In 1847 after his escape to England he organized there a company with a capital of twenty millions to build the canal and create a strong maritime power under the control of Europe.

The revolution of 1848 which exiled Louis Philippe and made Napoleon emperor of France diverted him from this project. The building of the long canal, perhaps the greatest achievement of the French nation during his exile, further distracted his attention from Nicaragua (Century, July, 1902). During our civil war he made three attempts to induce England jointly with France to aid the south with their united armies and navies. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation and Russia's announcement of aid to the north prevented England's open interference. We all know how effectively her sailing class aided the south by building war ships in her so-called neutral waters, by money, by blockade runner, sheltered in her islands off our coasts, and in every covert manner possible.

We all know of Emperor Napoleon's Latin monarchy fate. In 1869, two years after his death, the historian M. Charles Hericault partly states the attempt to set up a stable Latin government in Mexico was "to prepare a bare of resistance in the future struggle which must precipitate Europe and America one upon the other."

Demosthenes well says, "Kings from their nature are hostile to republics." They claim all good descends from them to the people. The fact is all things ascend from the people, even the sufferance of kings. England under Gladstone bombarded Alexandria, captured and exiled Aribi Pasha to Ceylon, ostensibly to collect interest on her bonds, with a promise to evac-