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THE REVIVAL OF POPULISM Denver Meetings July 27-9, 1903.

DENVER MEETINGS.

Headquarters, St. James Hotel.
Conference of Reformers, July 27-29.
Allied People's Party National Committee Meeting, July 27.
People's Party National Committee Meeting, July 29.

All progress is spiral. Or, to change the figure, there are periods of apparent rest—even reaction—in every vital progressive movement, just as in the movement of a wagon wheel as the vehicle moves forward. That part of the wheel in contact with the ground is at rest; immediately behind there is an apparent backward movement; while at the top the forward movement is most rapid; yet notwithstanding these seeming contradictions, the whole wheel is moving forward.

Populism was nearing the top of the wheel of political progress in the years 1890 to 1896; it was moving downward from 1896 to 1900; the years 1901 and 1902 represent the contact with Mother Earth and the apparent reactionary movement; and the years 1903 and 1904 will undoubtedly show a return to the conditions beginning with 1890.

For several years The Independent has been calling attention to the difference between the growth of a party and the spread of its principles, and citing the people's party as an example of party disintegration at the very time when its principles were being accepted by millions of people, many of whom hardly knew of the existence of such a party—or, knowing it, held prejudices against it because of the persistent lying of the plutocratic press.

Populists have never been divided upon the three great fundamental reforms of money, land, and transportation. Hence, populist principles have found acceptance far and wide. One energetic populist in a community is the leaven for the whole lump. But populists have been seriously divided upon the question of party policy—and that alone. Schisms in the republican and democratic parties are fundamental and can never be wholly healed. The populist schism can be—and it will be.

As an educational factor the populist movement has more than paid for the money and time expended in its organization, ever if it should wholly cease to exist as a party. It is difficult to speculate on what might have been had a different party policy been followed—in fact, no man knows, but can only guess. It cannot be proven that fusion destroyed the organization, because the only vital people's party organization in America today is in Nebraska, where fusion (or more properly cooperation) has been followed since 1894 with the exception of one year. Yet it is doubtless true that where fusion with the democratic party was practiced, the tendency was for the greater organization to absorb the lesser.

However, our duty today is to look to the future. The question is, Is there room for a political party representing the small home-owners, independent business men, farmers and other producers of the country, who have not been absorbed in the great trust-building movement of the past few years?

Logically the republican party represents the great aggregations of capital (and wind and water) known as trusts. Every supporter of that party is either (a) a trust magnate who knows where his interests lie; or (b) a misguided wage-worker or small business man or farmer who foolishly imagines that his interests are identical with those of the beneficiaries of special privileges.

Just as logically the democratic party ought to represent the small home-owners, etc., mentioned above;

and since 1896 it has represented those. If it shall continue to do so hereafter, there is no room for the people's party. But among the so-called leaders of the democratic party are men whose interests really lie with the republican party. They are republicans of the Mark Hanna brand, but affiliate with the democrats in order to keep up the appearance of an opposition party and thus prevent a union of all those whose interests are opposed to those of the beneficiaries of special privileges. This false "opposition" was kept up without a break since the rebellion until in 1896 populism compelled the democratic party to get back where it belongs.

Indications are by no means lacking to show that among the trust magnate leaders of democracy, now that the people's party is apparently disintegrated, there is a disposition to return to the old-time tactics and to continue the old fight of Tweedledum against Tweedledee—"tariff for revenue only" against "tariff for protection to labor" (God save the mark!) The recent Iowa democratic convention is a case in point. And these indications point to the necessity for a

revival of populism, or, to be more accurate, a revival of the people's party, standing upon ground which the democratic party should logically occupy—"equal rights to all, special privileges to none."

As to the wage-workers, the various socialist factions claim to furnish the only political home for those who are "class-conscious" proletarians—with "nothing to sell but their labor-power." The Independent has no quarrel with these socialist factions. Every "class-conscious" convert represents that much of a loss for plutocracy, and makes it possible for the "middle class" to finally win—because plutocracy could not stand for a day without the support of those it preys upon. But a great many of the wage-workers are also small home-owners, and producers in a small way of something else than mere "labor-power;" and their interests lie with those who compose the mass of the democratic party. So if the democratic party return to the leadership of trust magnates, these wage-workers properly belong to the people's party.

Such is the political situation today.

The republican party consistently representing the interests of a comparatively small, but financially powerful, class who live by the toll of others, robbing the great mass of small producers through special privileges in the way of "protective tariffs;" franchises to build, own and operate public utilities and to tax the public at their own sweet will for the use of these; an illegally granted power to issue money; and in numerous other, but smaller ways. The democratic party struggling to prevent the trust magnates from making it a mere echo of the republican organization—and thus far showing an inability to expel the traitors from its ranks. The socialists, divided and quarrelling, trying to educate the proletariat into "class consciousness," and receiving aid from the republicans in order to divert attention from populist demands. Was there ever a better time to repair the broken-down populist organization and be ready for emergencies next year?

This issue of The Independent contains three calls for meetings to be held in Denver, July 27 to 29, 1903, as follows:

Call by J. A. Edgerton, secretary of the people's party national committee, for an unofficial and informal conference of reformers, to discuss how to provide a political home for the large army of American voters who "are not Mark Hanna republicans, Cleveland democrats, or Karl Marx socialists."

Call by Jo A. Parker, chairman of the allied people's party, for a meeting of the national executive and central committees of that party.

Call by J. H. Edmisten, vice chairman of the people's party national committee, for a meeting of the national and executive committees of that party.

In addition to these, a number of communications are printed, together with excerpts from letters printed in former issues of The Independent.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

(Excerpts from "A Call to Arms," p. 1, Independent, June 18.)

The immediate thing is to get together. For that purpose, I make the following proposition:

A conference at Denver on Monday, July 27, at 2 p. m.

You are hereby cordially invited to be present at such conference. This means every reformer in the United States who loves God and the common people more than he does any party whatsoever.

The conference will be unofficial and informal. It will have no walls about it. I have faith that only those who belong will come. I want fusionists, mid-readers, advanced democrats, single taxers, lovers of liberty. We will have an old-fashioned love feast. It matters not how many or how few come, important results cannot but flow from our meeting.

The reason that Denver is chosen is that it is convenient to the populist strongholds of Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, the mountain states and the Pacific coast. From all points east there are half-rates to Denver all summer.

The reason that July 27 is chosen is that it is the natural time for a vacation. Denver is the coolest and most delightful spot on the continent for you to take that vacation. To those attending the conference free trips will be arranged into the mountains.

Come and let us have a reunion, south and north. Come and let us talk about next year and the future.

This letter will go to national, state, county and precinct committeemen throughout the country. The doors are open and the invitation is general. Yet we are sure that the most representative men will come.

Those who propose coming write me. Those who cannot, write your

The American Commons.

(Original Poem read by Dr. Howard S. Taylor of Chicago at the Fairview Fourth of July Celebration.)

When Liberty, wounded, betrayed and oppressed
By the insolent, tyrannous kings of the world,
Fled over the sea to the ultimate West
And, here, in her refuge her banner unfurled;
When the hopes of mankind in the balances lay,
And the unborn, wondering centuries stood
To witness America's Passover Day
And the sign of her door-lintels sprinkled with blood,
Then Liberty, menaced by envy and hate,
From the seats of the mighty, the thrones of the great;
With tocsin and summons
Called forward her commons
And marshaled and made them her Pillars of State.

They were men from the mines, from the shops, from the farms;
They were hunters and herdsman and fishermen, bold;
They were homespun minute-men, springing to arms,
With a faith that could neither be bought nor be sold—
And these were the paladins, nobles and knights
Who conquered King George and his hireling host;
Who penned with their weapons our charter of rights,
And made our republic humanity's boast.
Who gave to posterity riches untold—
A heritage greater than mountains of gold.
It is no man's nor woman's,
It was won by the commons,
For them and their children to have and to hold.

A blend of all races, in many creeds bred,
They were fused in the white-heated furnace of war.
United, they followed where Liberty led
As the wise men once followed the Bethlehem star.
Go question the flag—it will tell in a breath
How its tri-color hues by their spirit were planned;
That the white is their honor, the blue is their faith,
And the red is their valor on ocean and land.
Go search through the myths of the ancients in quest
Of their builders of empire, their bravest and best;
But Grecians and Romans
Are dwarfed by the commons
Who founded the Great Commonwealth of the West.

The fathers are gone—has their faith perished, too?
Has the spirit that moved them declined and decayed?
Have their lofty ideals grown dim and untrue
In the hurrying scramble of pleasure and trade?
Have the fanes of our patriot altars and graves
Sunken downward to mix with insensible clouds?
Are we parting our race into masters and slaves
With only fierce Mammon and Moloch for gods?
Ah, no. By our bells and our jublant guns,
By the stars and the stripes where our proud story runs!
By a score of good omens
We still have our commons!
And the hearts of our Fathers still throb in their Sons!