

The Independent.

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THE DENVER CONFERENCE

St. James Hotel, 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.

"THE BALANCING PARTY."

It will be remembered that The Independent has frequently called attention to the illogical action of a number of populist senators and representatives in abandoning their own organization and taking part in the democratic caucus. In its issue of November 20, 1902, in an editorial headed, "Harris, Heitfeld, Patterson," The Independent said:

"No organization was ever so betrayed by its leaders as the people's party has been, and only the undying love of liberty and devotion to principle of the rank and file has preserved it from disintegration. . . . These three (Harris, Heitfeld, and Patterson) did not desert their principles as did the others (excepting Senator Allen, who remains a populist), but did what was almost as bad—they forsook their party and asked admission to the democratic caucus of the senate. . . . When the three or four populist senators were accustomed to hold their party caucus in the elevator, as the reporters were in the habit of saying, they were an influence that had to be reckoned with in the senate. When they went over lag and baggage into the democratic party instead of having more influence on legislation, they had less."

The reason for caucusing by themselves, regardless of how few or how many, was that by so doing they held the "balance of power" and neither democrats nor republicans could dominate them. Just as soon as they became democrats their identity was swallowed up in the caucus and they became mere ciphers. Harris and

Heitfeld failed of re-election and it is probable that Patterson also would have failed had he been a candidate last year.

An application of this idea, of being a true "balancing party," to nominations has been suggested by Mark Foster of Washington in several issues of The Independent (May 28, p. 10; July 9, pp. 3 and 4), and National Committeeman Elmer E. Thomas, in The Independent of May 21 (p. 2) showed how an application of the idea to Omaha politics had resulted in almost a sweeping victory for the populists, although they cast only about 1,800 votes.

Mr. Foster, unable to be present at the Denver conference, has written Secretary Edgerton a letter from which the following excerpts are considered pertinent at this time. The keynote is that wherever the populists are not strong enough to elect their man, they are to refrain from any entangling alliances and pick from the old party tickets the men most nearly populists in belief—and nominate them and elect them:

Washington, D. C., July 1, 1903.—Mr. J. A. Edgerton, Sec., care Rocky Mountain News, Denver.—Dear Sir: . . . Populistic principles are now held by probably a majority of the people; yet it is utterly hopeless to get all these into one party. Tenacious affection for the dear old party forbids; and still more subtly hindersome the inertia created by doubt as to just what is best. Before the doubt is resolved, issues change. We can never down the old parties in time to do any good.

But we do not need to break them down; instead, we can make use of them. We can make their strength our strength; their popularity, our popularity; their political skill, and adaptation, ours—by adopting balance of power tactics.

I, this I mean: to pick out the candidates of the old parties who are individually most favorable to populist ideas or least opposed, and make these our candidates. We should take from both old parties equally, so as not to be "assistants." But there will

be no agreement necessary with either of the old parties; the selecting will be in the interests of the people's party alone. The result will be the election, not of populists in name, but of populist republicans and democrats, everywhere. Everywhere in this connection means wherever there are two strong parties now. This includes nearly all of the north and west, and even some of the southern states.

Wherever the populist is the leading opposition party, as in the southern states, it can run its own candidates; and this may be the case in some localities elsewhere. But generally speaking, it would be better to balance, and thereby gain access to the ears of both parties, and avoid much of the otherwise bitter opposition. Neither old party then will regard the people's party as its special enemy; but each will view it as a dangerous ally that must be placated.

The split ticket suggested above is available for executive officers, as there are always several of these in the same political division. For legislative candidates, pledging and questioning can be used. As there is only one legislative candidate in a district, the ticket cannot be split; but taking a whole state together, the balancing party can be practically impartial even with this class of candidates. . . .

It should be remembered that it takes a great many voters to make a majority; but it takes only a few to hold the balance of power. Yet the latter can always get what they ask for.

MARK FOSTER.

AN ANALYSIS.

Editor Independent: In view of the fact that an informal meeting of the reform forces of the United States has been called to meet in Denver some time this month, it may not be amiss to present to the readers of The Independent a short analysis of the aims and principles of the various reform parties as they are expressed in their platforms and teachings at the present time.

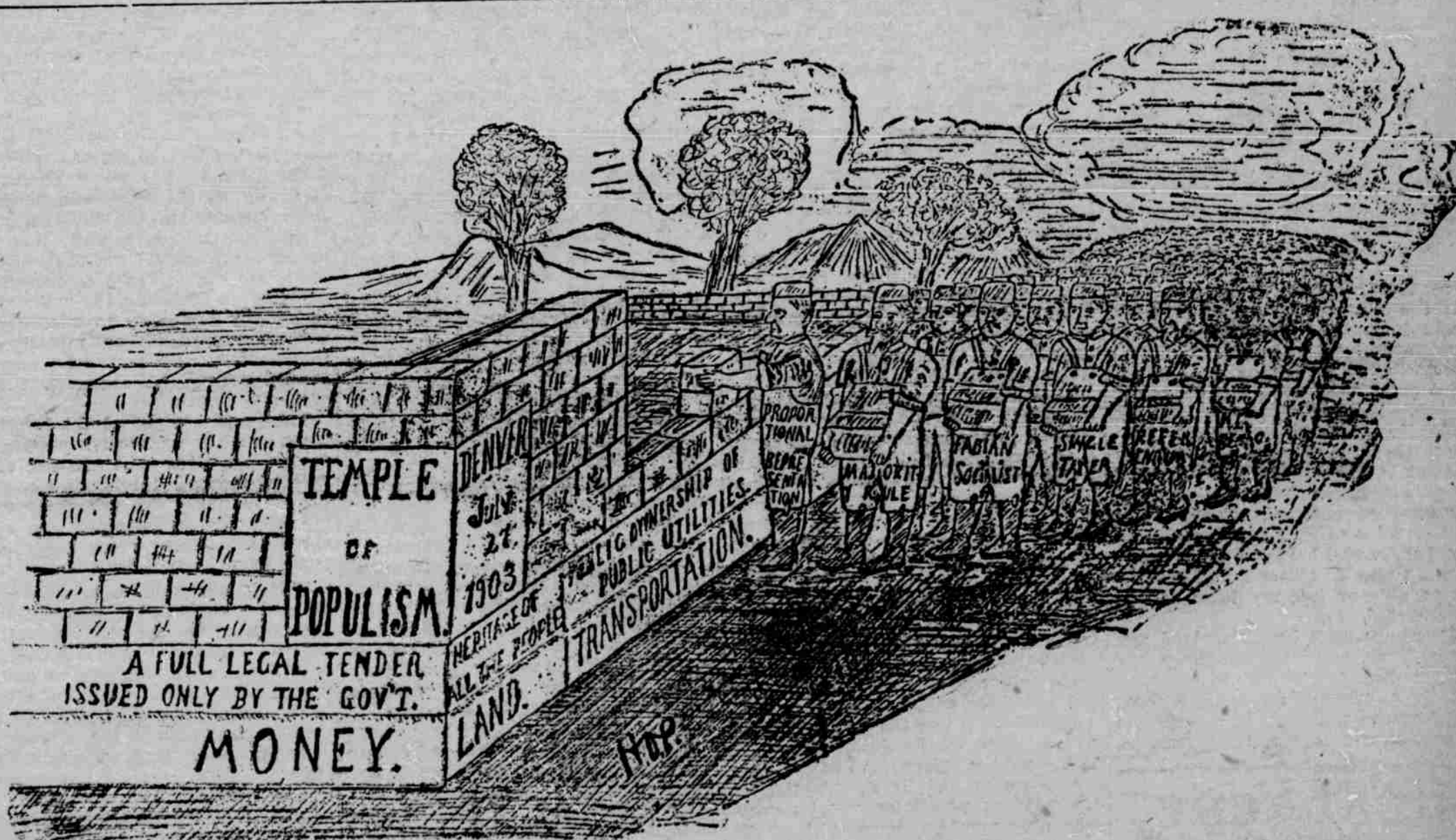
The socialist party, which has made such a phenomenal growth in the last

few years in the United States, holds to the philosophy of Ferdinand Lasalle and Karl Marx, that all the means of production and distribution should be owned by the state. This demand being necessitated by the iron law of wages, as conceived by these gentlemen. If the state owns all means of production and distribution, then it follows that the state must also have the power to assign to each individual the place or station or occupation he is to assume in this communistic society. For if it was left to the choice of the individual, very few would choose the hard, the dirty, the dangerous and disagreeable tasks of life.

Would the man who delves in the mines, the stoker in heated bowels of ships, the longshoreman, the deck hand, he who wearily tramps knee deep in muddy feed yards for months of the year or picks corn from snowy and frosty fields, he who chops timber in the pineries, or works in the quarries and blast furnaces, be willing to share the products of his toil equally with him who follows the lighter and more pleasant occupation, the lawyer, doctor, preacher, professor, artist, etc.? And if the state distributed the product of the common toil equally among all the members composing it, would the toilers willingly and cheerfully submit or would they forcibly protest?

And if the state made use of its power to make them submit (and it must have that power or that state of society could not exist and would terminate in anarchy) would it not be the most tyrannical government ever conceived? This state of society might be possible 1,000 years hence, if we started now to breed specific classes, like we breed domestic animals for specific purposes; we might breed beings who could not do anything but the thing they were bred for and would be content to do it, but would that be a desirable state of society?

The followers of Ferdinand Lasalle and Karl Marx do not see the fundamental and fatal error of their philosophy: the destruction of individuality, a thing impossible of accom-



The Hosts of Populism and Their Work to be Done at Denver.