

# The Independent.

VOL. XV.

LINCOLN NEB., AUGUST 20, 1903.

No. 13.

## SENATOR ALLEN REPLIES

Regrets That the Commoner Should Undertake to Undo the Work of the Denver Conference

Editor Independent: In The Commoner of the 14th inst. a rather caustic comment is made on the Denver conference address and on the determination of the populists to put a presidential ticket in the field in 1904, and for declaring itself "unqualifiedly in favor of national political action." It is assumed that the conference did not have authority to speak for the party. But whether that is true or not, it is questionable (because The Commoner is not a populist journal) whether it is in a situation to raise the point of regularity of the conference's work.

Complaint is made that fusion populists have surrendered to the middle-of-the-road populists and it is stated that the latter supported the republican ticket in 1900.

A general onslaught is made on the middle-of-the-roads, they are characterized as unreasonable, and it is said they gave aid and comfort to the republican party; and other charges are made against them.

It is finally urged that an appeal be made from the regular populist organization, "to the members of the populist party," to undo the work of the Denver conference. It is to be regretted that The Commoner, as well as some other democratic papers, takes the view it does of the situation.

The tenor of the article is that the populist party must be disciplined for not subordinating its will to the wishes of the democratic party. In other words, that the populist party must be destroyed unless it agrees to subordinate its wishes and platforms to the democratic party's wishes and platforms.

Complaint is made that the action of the Denver conference will have a tendency to weaken respect for the Chicago and Kansas City democratic platforms.

Let us examine the situation and see what the duty of the populists is. The party was organized in 1890 as a protest against both the republican and democratic parties and to accomplish reforms that neither of them had the disposition or power to accomplish. The party has held three national conventions and promulgated three national platforms. It nominated General Weaver for the presidency on its first and on the others it nominated Mr. Bryan, although Mr. Bryan is not a populist.

A majority of the party supported Mr. Bryan in 1896 and 1900 and would support him again if he were a candidate, because they believe that by his election some of the reforms which they advocate would be sooner made practicable. But Mr. Bryan, to the regret of the reformers everywhere, failed of an election.

Populists did not fuse with the democrats in supporting Mr. Bryan, but made an independent nomination. At no time had they any intentions to abandon their party or to become democrats, but simply co-operated with the liberal wing of the democratic party to secure Mr. Bryan's election.

In the mean time it is doubtful if the republican party did more to disorganize the populist party and to absorb its membership than the democratic party did. Repeated protests of populists, that the democrats should not try to disorganize the party, but let it work out its own problems in its own way, were ignored and the work of proselyting went steadily on.

The attitude of The Commoner makes plain what many populists believe, namely, that it was the intention of the democratic party to absorb the populists; and now that independent action has been determined on, this assault is made on our party; and it is evident that if we refuse to further march in the rear of the democratic column or under its flag we are to be repudiated and disciplined.

Populists nowhere owe any allegiance to either the Chicago or Kansas City platforms. It is a matter of indifference to them whether these documents "are voted up or voted down." Their faith lies prescribed by the Omaha and subsequent platforms. These are the tests of party fealty. The Commoner article makes no reference to these platforms, or to the duty of populists to support them, but seems to think that we should desert our platforms and make common

cause with the democrats in upholding the Chicago and Kansas City platforms. Why so?

I am quite certain that the assertions that the middle-of-the-road populists are dishonest, is as a rule a mistake. There are dishonest men in all parties and doubtless there are some in the middle-of-the-road wing of the populist party; but I am confident that the majority of them were honest, though mistaken in their action of 1896 and 1900.

The assertion that "the most noteworthy part of the new platform is its failure to deal with several vital issues of the day," is a total misconception of the aim and purpose of the Denver conference. It was distinctly understood that we had no authority to promulgate a platform and that the vital issues are continued in the Omaha platform of July 4, 1892.

We do repeat in substance the address, the cardinal doctrines of populism; but it must be said with a due degree of modesty that The Commoner, not being a populist, does not stand in a position to tell populists what they shall put in or take out of their platform or address.

I have been and am yet a firm and loyal supporter of Mr. Bryan. I would vote for him for president in a convention or out of it, and confidently believe that the time will come when he will reach the goal of his ambition and where, in consequence of his great ability, he can be of incalculable service to the nation.

But we did not support Mr. Bryan because he was a populist or because he accepted the doctrines of our platforms; nor are we prepared to say that, Mr. Bryan himself not being in the race, he has any right to furnish us a candidate for the presidency or to direct us as to the course we shall pursue. If there was the slightest hope of Mr. Bryan controlling the national convention of his party and receiving the nomination; if it were not apparent that the reactionary element of his party will dominate its next convention, there might be some reason for populists to hesitate before issuing an address to the people.

Respecting "fusion," or more properly speaking co-operation in the state it will be observed that the opposition extends only to national political action. It was directly understood in the conference that each state should be left to control its own local affairs; that the policy of fusion or of independent action should be determined by parties of the respective states, and I feel confident that no member of the conference had the slightest intention to refuse honorable co-operation locally as long as that can be done to the advancement of our cause.

That Judge Sullivan will receive the nomination of the populists of this state and their hearty support for the great office he has filled with such signal ability, is a foregone conclusion. But assaults on populists and their motives, and carping criticism will not have a tendency to induce them to give their full strength to democratic nominees. It would, in my judgment, be the part of wisdom for democrats and populists to work in harmony on issues held in common; and neither should make any attempt at disorganizing the other, but appeal to the intelligence of the people to support the party that challenges their enlightened judgment.

The populist party is a national entity in spite of protest or bitter criticism. It will pursue the course it thinks wise and best and will continue to exist and grow. It has no intention of dying.

It is going to considerable length for democrats to say that the populist party should disband and be absorbed by the democratic party. With equal propriety populists can say that the democratic party should disband and be absorbed by the populist party which in my judgment would be the wiser thing to do.

If indirectly lending assistance to the republican party is a thing to be avoided, and I think it is, this can be as easily accomplished by the democrats becoming populists as by populists becoming democrats.

By all means let us have perfect harmony in our local action that we may accomplish needed reforms; and let those who are sneering at and questioning each other's motives, cease for the common good.

WM. V. ALLEN,  
Madison, Neb.

## POPULISM

ERIC JOHNSON HAPPY.

We publish in another column the result of the conference of the representative men from all parts of the Union of the people's party, that met in Denver on the 27th ult. They hung to the breeze anew the good old tried and true populist banner. Populists, read it. It has the true ring. Yes, it will do your heart good. Fusion with other parties is at an end. Now let the populist convention at Grand Island be consistent. Let it go ahead and nominate a ticket without reference to any other party on earth. This will not preclude it from nominating Judge Sullivan, if it so decides. His excellent record on the bench during his first term, his faithful adherence to populist and reform ideas makes it perfectly proper and consistent for the populists to nominate him. There is ample precedence for such a course. The populist national convention at Sioux City, in 1900, went outside of the party for both of its candidates. Nominate, however, for regents an entire new set of candidates—the old ones betrayed the trust reposed in them. We trust further that the democrats will not nominate the same candidates for regents. What of it if we do not elect them; it will be worth more to have it definitely settled as to the relative strength of the populist and democratic parties in the state and the several counties. Besides the republicans will not have the opportunity to truthfully taunt the populists with inconsistency in fusing.—Eric Johnson, in Waho (Neb.) New Era.

The Lincoln Daily Post (dem.) echoes Mr. Bryan's protest in a short editorial.

### THE COMMONER'S VIEW.

The last issue of The Commoner contains a caustic criticism of the Denver conference by the editor, Mr. Bryan, and, with a fatherly sympathy offers gratuitously a lot of second-hand advice to the "few misguided reformers" who composed that conference. After quoting the address sent out by the conference, he proceeds to dissect it as follows: (Quoting from The Commoner.)

This criticism will no doubt sound strange to such members of the conference as ex-Senator Allen, Attorney General Calderhead, Editor Tibbles of The Independent, and others who in the last campaign were firm friends of Bryan and the fusion movement. These men were honest when they advocated fusion. They are honest now when they say they see no hope for reform in either of the old parties. They are reformers first, before being partisans. To say the least of it, it is unkind in Mr. Bryan to charge them with being secret allies of the republicans.

An alliance in one campaign does not signify an alliance permanent. To oppose the reorganized democracy does not imply an alliance with the republicans.

The Denver conference did not assume the authority to promulgate a platform, nor did it in any way encroach upon the regular organization of the party. What it did was wholly advisory and simply indicates to the honest voters of these United States that there will be a ticket in the field in 1904, standing on a platform built without the aid of either of the old parties, which any believer in the Kansas City platform or the Omaha demands, can heartily support without compromising his principles or stultifying his intelligence.—Col. Milton Park, in Southern Mercury, Dallas, Tex.

George E. Brown of the Public Journal (pop.) Hastings, Neb., prints the Denver "manifesto" in full.

### A SQUARE FLOP.

Populists will be surprised who read the quotation from the St. Paul (Neb.) Phonograph-Press of July 31 (Independent, Aug. 13, p. 14), wherein Editor Manuel said:

"The Denver conference has decided that all reformers should unite under one head and work for the principles promulgated in the Omaha platform. This has been our idea of the situa-

Editorial and Other Comment on the Denver Conference and Mr. Bryan's Protest.

tion for a long time. Several parties are advocating nearly the same doctrine, but can never accomplish the needed reform. But when they unite under one banner they will then be able to carry their principles into effect."

Because in the two weeks from July 31 to August 14, Mr. Manuel made a square flop, doubtless scared into it by Mr. Bryan's protest against "the populist manifesto." In the latest issue of the Phonograph-Press (Aug. 14) Editor Manuel says:

"There are a few men in the United States who imagine that they are the whole populist party. They had a meeting in Denver, July 27, and united with the mid-roads. It is a significant fact that some of the most prominent leaders were men who have been honored by the reform forces. Conspicuous among them was ex-Senator W. V. Allen. It seemed that fusion was good enough when it could swing an office his way, but now since there is no emolument in sight—well, he won't fuse any more. We are a populist and believe in populist principles. We also believe in the reform element of the democratic party, for have they not adopted most of the principles for which the populists have been contending? It remains to be seen what effect this surrender to the mid-roads will have."

Cliff Frank of the York (Neb.) Teller, who recently entered the democratic party from the republican, via populism, wants to "take it all in good humor, but it does annoy a body to see a fellow kick his parents or the party that made him." Rich isn't it! How many votes did the silver democratic candidate for supreme judge get in 1895 when he helped defeat Judge Maxwell?

### NOT OFFENDED.

Fusion between populists and democrats seems to be the order in the various Nebraska counties. This is the wise conclusion of the rank and file; it is also a distinct snub to the Allen-Poynter aggregation, who imagine that party name is all, principle nothing.—Wahluist Bros., in Democrat, Hastings, Neb.

The "Allen-Poynter aggregation" are by no means offended by the "snub." Populists and democrats in the various counties can take care of their own affairs. If they want to fuse or not, that is their business. What the "Allen-Poynter aggregation" do remember, however,—and thousands of populists with them—is the "distinct snub" which was administered by the democratic national convention at Kansas City when Charlie Towne was turned down, and they are simply paving the way to prevent its repetition in 1904.

The Long Island (Kas.) Leader (soc.) thinks the "whole affair" was up-hill business and there were unmistakable signs pointing to a strong feeling in favor of socialism." Wrong again. There was no strong feeling in favor of socialism. The men present, except one or two, were populists.

### THE POPULIST MANIFESTO.

On another page this week the Herald publishes Bryan's opinion of the action by the recent conference of populists in Denver. Bryan is pleased to show his displeasure by calling the conference address a "manifesto" and criticising it as if it were a platform. The fact is it was neither one nor the other. It was simply a notice to the rank and file of both branches of the populist party that, whereas the results of the last two national campaigns show that fusion failed to accomplish the desired ends, in the opinion of the committees it is folly and party suicide to continue to conduct campaigns on that basis. The great majority of the democratic party, with Bryan as their leader, are populists at heart and will refuse to be led into the plutocratic camp if the eastern wing succeeds in getting control of the democratic party organization, which now is within the range of probability. In such an event, what will Bryan do and what will his followers do? Will they bolt and form an independent democratic party, and thus become "assistant re-