

**THE DENVER CONFERENCE**

**Mr. Long Criticizes the Middle of the Road Populists and Glorifies the "Purged" Democracy**

Editor Independent: The comments we have seen in republican papers on the Denver conference would indicate that the republican party is not only gratified at the action taken by the populist party, but is interested in the same. Such comments are to be viewed in the light of those made by the same paper in behalf of the statesmanship of Grover Cleveland.

The reform element must learn that if it wishes to accomplish anything it must not allow itself to be cut up into opposing and warring factions. This has always been the tactics of the privileged few when the people demanded a reform in governmental affairs giving equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

In 1896, when the reform forces were uniting for the greatest contest ever witnessed between the masses and the classes, the middle-of-the-road populists voted with the republicans while "old line democrats" voted the Palmer-Buckner ticket, and thus was lost to the cause the strength that was gained from other reform sources. This division of forces was planned by the money power and executed by the republican party and gold democrats.

Ever since the reformation of the democratic party in 1896, there has been an effort upon the part of the gold democrats to gain control of the party organization and make the democratic party so much like the republican party that to the privileged few it will make little or no difference which party wins. In this the gold democrats are being aided by republicans. And now, lest their attempts should prove futile, the middle-of-the-road populists have been induced to come out from among the republican party where they have been hiding and panting, and issue "a call to arms" of all former populists. No one can question their right in this matter, but their motives surely are not above suspicion. The call, coming at a time when the democratic party is attempting to prevent its organization from being captured by the political bandits of American politics, has for its evident intention the disorganization of the democratic party, and the promotion of the schemes of the reorganizers with the hope of founding a great party out of the wreckage. But this is a delusive hope. The democratic party is not wrecked, nor does its strength depend upon middle-of-the-road populists. Neither will the democratic party be reorganized.

The democratic party as it was purged, cleansed and purified in 1896 is the greatest reform element with which organized greed has to contend and is stronger today than ever before. The sentiments voiced in the Chicago and Kansas City platforms, together with a nominee whom money could not corrupt or buy, made it the party of all true reformers and such it is today. The action of the Denver conference will not weaken the cause of democracy, but will stimulate every voter within its ranks to increased watchfulness, and in the contest of 1908 the middle-of-the-road populists will present the humiliating spectacle of again voting the republican ticket while all sincere reformers will be found a component part of the Bryan democracy. J. MARION LONG.

Versailles, O.

(Evidently Mr. Long's knowledge regarding the Denver conference was gained by reading the republican papers he mentions. He has certainly not kept in touch with the movement by reading populist papers, or he would have known that the "Call to Arms" was issued by J. A. Edgerton secretary of the people's party national committee appointed at the Sioux Falls convention, which nominated Bryan and Towne; he would have known that the majority of those present were what are known as "fusion populists"—that is to say, populists who threw their heartiest support to Mr. Bryan both in 1896 and 1900. Both the editor and the associate editor of The Independent were there and participated in the conference. Nothing but Mr. Long's ignorance of the facts prevents these men from resenting the statement that "they have been hiding and pouting" within the ranks of the republican party—but, of course, they cannot feel resentment toward a man who babbles ignorantly of something he does not know.

Doubtless if Mr. Long really understood the fundamental reasons which give rise to a political movement, he would have a clearer insight into the history of third parties and he would know why the populists who assembled at Denver said in their address that

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"we believe the time is now at hand when the united people's party should declare itself emphatically opposed to any affiliation with either of those parties (republican and democratic) and unqualifiedly in favor of independent national political action." Perhaps The Independent might help him to learn:

Stripped of the high-sounding phrases in their platforms, intended to hoodwink the great mass of voters who never really have anything to say as to how their government shall be administered, every political party represents primarily the economic well-being of men engaged in certain industries. Beginning at least with Grant's election, the republican party has persistently represented the well-being of the great capitalists engaged in manufacturing, banking, transportation, and allied industries, usually known as "plutocrats"—but never the agriculturist or land-owner. The test of this is to observe the primary and final effect of all republican legislation and administration—always in the interest of the plutocrats. Of course, the farmer and the wage-worker were led to believe they would be benefited indirectly by making presents to the manufacturers and bankers and transportation corporations; and the republican party been kept in power by the votes of men who are robbed by its policies.

There is no room for the democratic party as a representative of the plutocratic classes mentioned—yet these interests have found it to their advantage to keep control of the party in order to be safe in the event that a sufficiently large number of the farmers and wage-workers should decide to desert the republican party and

to throw their strength to the democratic candidates and elect them, hoping for relief from republican robbery. Logically the democratic party should represent the great mass of people engaged in agriculture and kindred industries. It can have no other mission and be true to the great majority of men who form its support.

Strange to say however, until 1896 the democratic party never did truly represent the well-being of the vast majority of its followers. True, the campaign of 1868 may be counted as an exception to this—but the people then did not understand the real science of politics as well as they do now. Horatio Seymour stood upon a platform—somewhat vague, to be sure—which meant benefits to the agriculturists, and, if elected, he would have been true to the platform. It may interest Mr. Long to know that the chairman of the democratic national committee that year, August Belmont, was the American agent for European holders of our government bonds—and Seymour's election would have prevented those bondholders from robbing the American farmers of half a billion dollars. So Belmont, aided by Manton Marble, editor of the New York World, defeated Seymour. The story is too long to tell here, but Mr. Long can find it in Alexander Del Mar's "History of Monetary Crimes."

Beginning with the close of the war there were a number of men who saw clearly the drift of affairs and who knew what a political party should stand for. Seymour's defeat in 1868, caused by a most damnable conspiracy in his own party, showed them that they need expect no relief from either old party—and the greenback, union

labor, grange, farmers' alliance, and finally the populist movement, resulted. At no time in the history of any of these movements (in reality all one and the same), would the great majority of their followers have refused to vote the democratic ticket had they been assured they could secure through it the relief they wanted. Most of them cared nothing for party names, but they knew what they wanted in the way of legislation and administration.

So when Bryan was nominated in 1896 on a platform that was sufficiently populist for all except the most extreme, he drew to him the support of practically all who had been engaged in third party movements. They believed in him—and they do yet. But they cannot agree now with Mr. Long that "the democratic party is purged, cleansed and purified"—which means nothing else than that it is rid of the representatives of the great manufacturing, banking and transportation companies who want to build up themselves at the expense of others and use the democratic party as a republican echo. The fact that Mr. Bryan is right now making the fight of his life to control his own party, ought to convince any clear-minded man that the democratic party lacks several degrees of being "purged, cleansed and purified." It will never truly represent the agricultural interests of America until every representative of the manufacturing, banking, and transportation interests is "thrown over the transom" and deprived of any chance to control the policy of the party. When that is done in good earnest, the populist party's mission is at an end. And until it is done, the populist party has a reason for its