

What Shall Populists Do?

A Referendum Ballot to Determine the Future Course of the People's Party

The People's Party is committed to the principle of the Initiative and Referendum. It is a sound doctrine and can not be applied too frequently in a republican form of government. The will and wishes of the people should be law. The same principles should control in the government of a political party. The will and wishes of the rank and file in the party should be the party law.

The National election just closed has developed new conditions and new problems. "What of the future" is the question that is being asked on every hand. What will become of the democratic party? Can it retain its membership in the face of a crushing defeat? What was the cause? What is the meaning and explanation of the overwhelming majorities given to President Roosevelt? Was it an endorsement of his administration or was it a protest against the treachery and treason to democratic principles perpetrated by the democratic national convention at St. Louis? In all parts of the country the "leaders" are holding, or preparing to hold, "conferences" to discuss plans and methods of organization for building up the cause of reform. "What of the future?" is the problem. Will a new alignment of political parties be necessary? What should populists do? What should Bryan democrats do? What should the followers of Folk, La Follette and other reform leaders do to succeed in bringing about reform in national affairs as they have succeeded in Missouri and Wisconsin? "Leaders" are in consultation over these subjects everywhere. To determine the will and wishes of populists, The Independent will take a referendum vote. It will submit the following question to its subscribers and hopes that every one of them will send in an answer:

Should the People's Party maintain its national organization independent

and separate from all other political organizations, or should it abandon its organization and join with Mr. Bryan and other reform democrats in an effort to capture the democratic organization as a basis for building a reform party for the campaign of 1908?

When sending your answer cut out and use the Referendum Ballot prepared and found on this page. Votes will be received and recorded until midnight of December 31. Only subscribers to The Independent will be allowed to vote upon this question. Other populists who wish to vote may do so by becoming subscribers.

As the referendum question implies the forces of reform at the present time are divided into several camps the principal of which are Bryan democrats and populists. Apparently neither can succeed without the other. Can the two organizations be brought together? Mr. Bryan, by his course since the democratic national convention at St. Louis, has made it very plain that he intends to remain inside the democratic party to do his battling for reform. He will not bolt. He contends that no reform can be secured except with the aid of the democratic organization. He insists that it is easier for reformers to capture the democratic machinery and then use that organization and machinery to secure control of the government, than it would be to build up an entirely new organization with sufficient strength to secure the election of a majority in congress and the president.

For the next seven weeks The Independent invites communications from its readers covering this subject and the referendum question. An equal amount of space will be given to both sides. Those who favor maintaining the People's Party will be given about six columns, and those who favor co-operation with Bryan democrats inside the democratic party, will be given the same amount of space.

People's Party Referendum Ballot

Question:—Should the People's Party maintain its national organization independent and separate from all other organizations, or should it abandon its organization and join with Mr. Bryan and other reform democrats in an effort to capture the democratic organization as a basis for building a reform party for the campaign of 1908?

Answer

For People's Party organization put X here

For Co-operation with Democrats put X here

Name.....

P. O.

Rural Route..... State.....

Box or Street.....

After filling out mail to THE INDEPENDENT, Lincoln, Nebr.

The Bee's Logic

The Bee tries to be facetious over Tom Watson's declaration of Jeffersonian principles. It says:

Jefferson, who illuminated his mansion with tallow dips and wax candles, never dreamed of a railroad, telegraph, telephone or electric motor, and had no more conception of the conditions under which a conglomerated nation of more than 80,000,000 of people should conduct self-government than he had about a modern printing press, photography, a stereopticon, wireless telegraphy, submarine torpedo boats or ironclad cruisers.

The editor of the Bee is quite a believer in Moses, but Moses knew no more about these things than Jefferson did and besides that, Moses thought that the world stood still and the sun went whirling around it every twenty-four hours. If that argument is good, then the ten commandments and all the great fundamental principles laid down by Moses 4,000 years ago, should no longer receive any consideration. The fact is that most of the great principles of government and human conduct, and upon which civilization is based, were worked out by men of thought long before the age of electricity and railroads, and strange as it may seem to the editor of the Bee, they were accepted by mankind even before he began to write editorials.

Reorganizers and Re-reorganizers

Mr. Bryan says that he is going into the reorganizer business himself. That is he is to be a re-reorganizer. But Tom Taggart, who went to New York the next day after the election and consulted the present democratic leaders there, don't take to the notion of re-reorganization at all. Neither do H. W. Yates nor Jim Boyd of Omaha. Tom Taggart gave out an interview in which he said:

The utmost harmony exists among the members of the committee, and there is no need for reorganization. There are no heartburnings, no recriminations, excepting the general regret for the defeat of our candidate. I have no intention of resigning. The national headquarters will be at Indianapolis.

There is no doubt that the "utmost harmony exists among the members of the committee." Every one of them either voted for McKinley or knifed in some way their own candidate in 1900. They are all of one kind. They will fight the Bryan wing with just as much vindictiveness as they ever did, and the Bryan wing will fight them. It is a lovely prospect. There is just about as much probability that they will ever grow into a homogenous political organization and carry the country as that the Zulus will turn out some day and drive the English from South Africa.

A Final Study

The Springfield Republican remarks that "the vote for the two leading candidates should, in fact, be finally studied with reference to the votes polled by the populist and socialist tickets, in order to gain a perfectly correct impression as to the present political thinking of the American people." That final study will have to be postponed for some weeks as the Associated Press will not let us know what the vote for Tom Watson and Debs was.

A Hot Time in Washington

It is announced from Washington that in making appointments hereafter, Roosevelt will not be influenced by senators and representatives. It is added:

It is clearly realized by Mr. Roosevelt that in ignoring the recommendations of politicians in appointing men to office and distributing federal patronage he may antagonize the senate and experience difficulty.

If Roosevelt undertakes anything of that sort there will be the hottest time in Washington that that town ever experienced.

The democrats now say that all that they need to win is a "cohesive coalition."

The extent of the "landslide" in Illinois and the completeness of the surprise is shown in the result in the Twenty-first congressional district, which has always been democratic, the present incumbent who has held the district for a long time, Ben Caldwell, being one of the most popular men in the state. The republican nomination

was given to a young lawyer by the name of Rives, because no prominent republican in the district desired to make a hopeless race. Even Rives made no campaign and no money was expended, yet when the votes were counted it was found that Rives was elected by 1,200 majority. Every congressman but one from Illinois will be republican.

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