

THE PEOPLE'S PILOT.

FOR THE FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER AND GOLD AT THE PARITY RATIO OF SIXTEEN TO ONE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ANY OTHER NATION ON EARTH.

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The Political Blunder.

BY C. C. POST OF FLORIDA.

FRIEND CRAIG: Yours asking my opinion etc., is received.

We are in a most unfortunate and embarrassing position, but to me there appears but one way open to us and that is to stand squarely by the action of our convention. If, as someone has said, a political blunder is a political crime, then in my opinion the failure of our national committee to call an early convention, and of our party to put a straight ticket in the field at such early convention, taken in connection with what has followed, constitutes the political crime of the age.

To have builded up a party through long years of patient work in educating the people upon economic questions until it held the balance of power in the senate, and had become the second party in voting strength in many, and the first in a few states; to have so aroused public sentiment as to frighten its bitterest enemies into regarding it with fear and trembling, to have compelled the party in possession of the government with all its powers of effecting public opinion through federal patronage and the great daily press, to steal our platform in order to keep from sinking beneath the rising tide of public condemnation—to have done all this and then to throw away the staff from which our banner floated and pin our flag to that of our opponents because they suddenly professed conversion, leaving staff and banner alike in their hands, was, I say, the greatest political blunder of this or any other century.

That those men, who are primarily responsible for the final act in the drama, anticipated any such result I am entirely unwilling to believe, but the result none the less emphasizes the fact, so often before demonstrated in the history of the movement, that the road to success is smoothest in the middle.

What has been done however is done, and Florida, in her state convention on the 5th and 6th, declared by a perfectly unanimous vote that she would abide by the action of the St. Louis convention. If any were in favor of rejecting either Bryan or Watson, and a half dozen of each there may have been, (though I think but two favored Sewall) they were not numerous enough to count, and the convention put Bryan and Watson electors, and a straight middle-of-the-road state ticket in the field, and will make the best fight for an increased vote possible under the circumstances, and not without expectation of doing so.

For the immediate future more is dependent upon the west than upon the south, for while we have an undoubted majority of the votes in Georgia and Alabama, and have a strong footing in most of the southern states, yet it is not us that the democrats fear, since public sentiment will not yet sustain the defrauded majority in forceful means of compelling a fair count, and nothing less than this will prevent counting the vote in these states as the Democratic leaders command it to be done.

The crime sought to be consummated at St. Louis by the endorsement of the entire democratic ticket consists, in part at least, in thus seeking to compel us to surrender our organization and either abandon the fight or follow the leadership of the Democratic party as at present constituted, the leadership of

men to whom the ballot has no sacredness, principles no meaning; who would have supported Hill upon a gold platform as greedily as Bryan upon a populist platform, provided only that office lay at the end of either.

The Western Populists can not appreciate our situation, and we are in danger of being harshly judged because of the action we have taken and that we must maintain. In many western states the Democrats are the minority party, the populists being in the lead and might possibly hold a controlling influence in any reorganizations of party machinery growing out of a surrender of our own organization. In most southern states to surrender means to do so unconditionally, and to leave all power in the hands of the men who have no regard whatever for the rights of the people, and in this state they are the generally recognized agents of corporations; the rail road companies especially.

We are told that if elected Mr.

people stuck in the mud or lost in the scrub away back in the rear, is at the least problematical. In all probability the voice of the people would scarcely be heard, their true situations and needs never known to the dispenser of public patronage, and if it were done, it would still be a victory for one man power and a precedent for its use by succeeding administrations not in sympathy with good government, as we honestly believe Mr. Bryan to be.

What then would our western brothers expect us to do? What ask of us? Or what ought we to expect or ask of them?

At our state convention held on the 5th and 6th, of the present month I twice charged in open convention that the delegates from Florida had not properly understood the wishes of our people, and that they alone of the entire delegation present, representing nearly all the counties in the state and numbering 162 on roll call, delivered the nomination of anything but

of free silver. Already the public mind is becoming confused over it and we are being classed simply as free silverites. The greater issues are being overlooked and forgotten, and even our own speakers, because of the prominence which we have permitted it to receive through our connection with the silver Republicans and the Democratic party, have, not infrequently of late, themselves almost forgotten that it was not the main issue and have said little about anything else. If a halt in this direction is not called, by the time Bryan is in the presidential chair, if elected, the assertion will be made and generally accepted that free silver was the only thing really promised, or earnestly demanded, and that will be the extent of monetary reform that will be granted. I do not say that this assuredly will be so, but that there is grave danger of it, and that it is an added reason why we should be careful now not to yield further of the power to direct pub-

in 1900 if unsuccessful in Nov., 1896.

If the Democrats are really and earnestly in favor of the reforms demanded in their own platform they will, rather than prevent a satisfactory union of forces accept Watson. If they are not in earnest and honest then we cannot accept more of them.

Upon no possible theory or basis can we be asked to yield more; and by no argument can it be shown that we can safely do so. If we would preserve our organization we must stand by the action of the convention and that means Watson quite as sincerely, honestly, and earnestly as it means Bryan. Neither does it mean that we may make a show of standing by Watson while giving him away as Kansas has unwisely done. Kansas alone could have compelled the putting of Watson on the ticket and Indiana can do it yet, for without Kansas and Indiana, Bryan's election would be seriously jeopardized. They do not risk, and do not feel that they risk the ultimate carrying out of the reforms demanded by conceding the vice-presidency to us. We do feel that in surrendering everything to them we would

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established by the accomplishment in part at least (and so far as could reasonably be expected of the next congress and a Demo-Populist President or Vice-president) of the reforms demanded.

Naturally the fusion of the two parties in 1896 would be perfect, they would properly and unavoidably merge in one and that one would in all probability retain the name of Democrat or possibly the new democracy. Whoever will look at the situation calmly unaffected by the clamor of the unthinking or angry partisans on either side, cannot fail of recognizing the fact that the placing of Mr. Watson upon the ticket instead of Mr. Sewall means if success follows at the polls, the final absorption of the Populist party and the revolutionizing of the Democratic party against which we have so long contended and at the hands of which we have suffered everything except death.

1. We demand the election of President, Vice President and United States Senators by a direct vote of the people.

2. We tender to the patriotic people of Cuba our deepest sympathy in their heroic struggle for political freedom and independence, and we believe the time has come when the United States, the great republic of the world, should recognize that Cuba is, and of right ought to be a free and independent State.

3. We favor home rule in the Territories and the District of Columbia and the early admission of the Territories as States.

4. All public salaries should be made to correspond to the price of labor and its products.

5. In times of great industrial depression idle labor should be employed on public works as far as practicable.

6. The arbitrary course of the courts in assuming to imprison citizens for indirect contempt and ruling them by injunction should be prevented by proper legislation.

7. We favor just pensions for our disabled Union soldiers.

8. Believing that the elective franchise and untrammeled ballot are essential to a government for and by the people, the People's party condemn the wholesale system of disfranchisement adopted in some of the States as unrepresentative and undemocratic, and we declare it to be the duty of the several State Legislatures to take such action as will secure a full, free and fair ballot and an honest count.

9. While the foregoing propositions constitute the platform on which our party stands, and for the vindication of which its organization will be maintained, we recognize that the great and pressing issue of the pending campaign upon which the present presidential election will turn is the financial question. And upon this great and specific issue between the parties we cordially invite the aid and co-operation of all organizations and citizens agreeing with us as a party.

This communication which is intended to go to your readers, if you wish it, is already long, but not longer than the necessity of making my position clear and complete, and I have still left some points untouched, one of which I wish yet to notice as an argument to our friends the Democrats.

I have said that a complete union such as is meant by Watson in place of Sewall means victory for the national ticket now and restoration is power in '98 of the Democratic party in the south and west. It will not be just the same Democratic party that has held power in the past, but it will be the Democratic party in name with new leadership—the Democratic party of Jefferson and Jackson breathing the spirit of the patriotism of those men and of such Republicans as Abraham Lincoln and Thaddeus Stevens.

To you as Democrats will be left your pride in party name, and with you through the administration of Mr. Bryan, will remain the Federal patronage. To us populists, way-worn and scarred with the battles of twenty years, will remain the consciousness of a victory won by your later conversion, and the joy of seeing our country freed from the grasp of the money power. That only, but it is enough we are content that it shall be so since it is the logical result of events now passing or which we hope to bring to pass. But if you in your pride of power given you through the action of delegates which, if Florida be a fair example, wholly and totally misinterpreted the party, if you refuse us the little we ask and thereby weakening still further our confidence in your honesty of purpose to secure the

The People's Party Platform of 1896.

The peoples party, assembled in National convention, reaffirms its allegiance to the principles declared by the founders of the republic, and also to the fundamental principles of just government, as enunciated in the platform of the party in 1892. We recognize that through the connivance of the present and preceding Administrations the country has reached a crisis in its national life, as predicted in our declaration four years ago, and that prompt and patriotic action is the supreme duty of the hour. We realize that while we have political independence our financial and industrial independence is yet to be attained by restoring to our country the constitutional control and exercise of the functions necessary to a people's government, which functions have been easily surrendered by our public servants to corporate monopolies. The influence of European money changers has been more potent in shaping legislation than the voice of the American people. Executive power and patronage have been used to corrupt our Legislatures and defeat the will of the people and plutocracy has thereby been enthroned upon the ruins of democracy. To restore the Government intended by the fathers, and for the welfare and prosperity of this and future generations we demand the establishment of an economic and financial system which shall make us masters of our own affairs, and independent of European control by the adoption of the following declaration of principles.

FINANCE.

1. We demand a national money, safe and sound, issued by the general Government only, without the intervention of banks of issue, to be a full legal tender for all debts, public and private; a just, equitable and efficient means of distribution direct, to the people and through the lawful disbursement of the Government.

2. We demand the free and unrestricted coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1, without waiting for the consent of foreign nations.

3. We demand the volume of circulating medium be speedily increased to an amount sufficient to meet the demands of the business and population of this country, and to restore the just level of prices of labor and production.

4. We denounce the sale of bonds and the increase of the public interest-bearing debt made by the present Administration as unnecessary and without authority of law, and that no more bonds be issued except by specific act of Congress.

5. We demand such legislation as will prevent the demonetization of the lawful money of the United States by private contract.

6. We demand that the Government, in its payment of its obligations, shall use in option as to the kind of lawful money in which they are to be paid, and we denounce the present and preceding Administrations for surrendering this option to the holders of Government obligations.

7. We demand a graduated income tax, to the end that aggregated wealth shall bear its just proportion of taxation, and we regard the recent decision of the Supreme Court, relative to the income tax law as a misinterpretation of the Constitution and an invasion of the rightful powers of Congress over the subject of taxation.

8. We demand that postal savings banks be established by the Government for the safe deposit of the savings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

TRANSPORTATION.

1. Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the Government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people and on a nonpartisan basis, to the end that all may be accorded the same treatment in transportation, and that the tyranny and political power now exercised by the great railroad corporations, which result in the impairment, if not the destruction, of the political rights and personal liberties of the citizens, may be destroyed. Such ownership is to be accomplished gradually in a manner consistent with sound public policy.

2. The interest of the United States, in the public highways built with public moneys and the proceeds of extensive grants of land to the Pacific railroads, should never be alienated, mortgaged or sold, but guarded and protected for the general welfare, as provided by the laws organizing such railroads. The foreclosure of existing liens of the United

States on these roads should at once follow default in the payment thereof by the debtor companies; and at the foreclosure sales of said roads the Government shall purchase the same if it becomes necessary to protect its interests therein, or if they can be purchased at a reasonable price; and the Government shall operate said railroads as public highways for the benefit of the whole people and not in the interest of the few under suitable provisions for protection of life and property, giving to all transportation interests equal privileges and equal rates for fares and freight.

3. We denounce the present infamous schemes for refunding these debts, and demand that the laws now applicable thereto be executed and administered according to their true intent and spirit.

DIRECT LEGISLATION.

We favor a system of direct legislation through the initiative and referendum under open constitutional safeguards.

GENERAL PROPOSITIONS.

1. We demand the election of President, Vice President and United States Senators by a direct vote of the people.

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Bryan will use the power of federal patronage to break the power of political rings and cliques which are antagonistic to the true interests of the people, but to men educated in the spirit of a true democracy, or an honest republicanism, this appears dangerous if true. As men claiming to be patriots, seeking to restore the government to the control of the people though the peaceful exercise of the electoral franchise, we are not over much pleased to be told that it will be done through the power of federal patronage after we shall have surrendered our party organization through acceptance of Mr. Sewall.

That public patronage so long as it remains in the gift of the president should be used to assist in preserving the rights and liberties of the people, rather than as now in strengthening their enemies all concede, but to what extent it would or could be done with the corporation agents in the saddle in our several states, the entire press of the country misrepresenting the facts, they on horseback in front and the

lic thought which organization gives.

But again, what ought the western populists to do. You ask my opinion and I am now ready to give a direct answer, having at such length reviewed the situation that my answer might rest upon the facts and arguments thus advanced and not be thought to be dictated by a stubborn pride of opinion, or an unpatriotic adherence to party.

My opinion is, and there lingers in my mind not the faintest shadow of doubt, that your true and only safe course is to stand by the action of the St. Louis convention, put forth a full electoral ticket for Bryan and Watson and unless Sewall is withdrawn and Watson substituted vote for it to a man.

Until Sewall is withdrawn and Watson substituted we have no evidence of the sincerity of the Democratic party that should induce us to fuse with them on state or county tickets, no not so much as on constable.

Even when that is done I hold it would be better for us to run straight state and local tickets, since only so can we maintain the organization which will give us most influence with the administration if success crowns the effort, or line up for the fight

risk, all that we have contended for, therefore, they and not we are responsible for failure to elect Bryan, if it fails through not making the union of forces perfect by putting Watson in place of Sewall. In doing it they yield only a portion of partisan pride. We have given that much already, and would give more but that with it we must give to those we would, but cannot, wholly trust, the power to crush our hopes of seeing our country torn from the grasp of the plutocracy.

If the Democratic party was really wise in its leadership it would wish us to have the tail of the ticket and to make the union of our forces as close and as perfect as possible, for such a union on the national ticket in 1896 will, if it have the result which must logically be presumed to follow, restore the Democratic party, purged and purified of its corruptionist leaders and influences, to power in every western as well as southern state in 1898, and insure its continuance in power for many years in the nation. For it would be impossible as it would be undesirable, and undesirable as impossible to continue separate organizations of Populists and Democrats when once confidence was firmly

when once confidence was firmly