

Readers Discuss Issues and Leaders for 1920

In response to a recent request made by The Commoner for democrats to suggest upon what issues the next national campaign should be fought and to also make suggestions as to available democratic presidential candidates, we reproduce below as many of the letters received as space in this issue will permit.

Boyce House, Arkansas.—I am taking the liberty as one who has at heart the interests of his party and his country, to address you on a matter of the greatest importance.

There is a strong sentiment in this part of the country in favor of placing the party standard in the next presidential campaign in your hands. Your name has the potency and magic which it first aroused in the days of '96 and there are many Democrats who consider that you are the logical choice of the party for the presidency next year.

The reasons are manifold. You are the foremost advocate in America of the prohibition cause which has been crowned with victory. You are one of the ablest and most active protagonists of woman's suffrage which is on the eve of national triumph. Your stand on the League of Nations is broad-visioned and patriotic and the arbitration treaties which you as secretary of state negotiated make you a leading figure in the effort to establish world peace.

The nation has not forgotten that it was you who brought about the nomination of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 when victory for the democrats was inevitable and that it was you who turned the tide in his favor in 1916 by your efforts in the middlewest. For the great achievements of the present administration—apart from those which you yourself as secretary of state accomplished—your friends may rightly claim for you a large share of the glory.

You have always stood for the rights of all the people as opposed to the selfish interests of any class and in all the long period that you have been a national figure there has been nothing which the most malignant foe of the party could bring forward to assail your character. As Governor Brough characterized you in a recent address here, you probably are the greatest moral force in the United States today.

Added to all these splendid qualifications is your ability as an orator and reasoner which would enable you to cope with any man that the Republican party might name.

B. B. Krammes, Ohio.—I am glad to note that Mr. Bryan will again be himself, in that he will feel free to express himself on the great questions of the day. It will be a great day when we will once more have free speech in this country, when we will not be cowed down as we have been for the past two or more years. I have voted for Mr. Bryan every time he was nominated, and I would deem it a high privilege to vote for him again. Personally I would like to see him nominated.

J. A. Alexander, Illinois.—The Commoner for October contains a good platform for the democratic party for the campaign of 1920, adding a few additional touches that can be gained from recent experiences and local elections. I would particularly mention the initiative and referendum. We have had an election on this proposition in Illinois, whether or not it was to become a fundamental law of this state, and it won out by a big margin. Then, I think the democratic party should go on record in clear terms relative to law and order, so that both the big monied men, the profiteering gang, and the lawless end of the labor element will both understand that the institutions of this country are not formulated for the benefit of any particular class. Mr. Bryan would know exactly how to write this so that it could not be construed as a double-header, and since party lines are broken down I want to emphasize the fact that a good democratic platform will bring a big vote from both the republican and labor parties. But it necessarily must be a positive platform. Then we should have a plank in the platform relative to the guarantee of bank deposits.

Considering all of these matters and the reforms that have been brought about through the leadership of William Jennings Bryan, I will go on record as indorsing his candidacy for the presidency of the United States on the next national democratic platform formulated on purely

democratic lines. Mr. Bryan is the logical candidate, considering the great national issues at stake, including the League of Nations, which is a peace proposition, national prohibition, equal suffrage, reduction of taxes on the masses and placing it on the profiteering class that has milked the government and the people during the war period. And the democratic national platform should make it clear to the people that we want stable industrial conditions. I would like to say much more, but again I mention the October Commoner and other editions of The Commoner, from which a splendid national democratic platform could be extracted.

P. A. Lovelock, New York.—I have been reading and listening to public speakers for about twenty years about the trusts and corporations exploiting the people. Is it possible that the trusts and corporations are bigger than our government? You will find small grocerymen prosecuted for getting one cent a pound more than he should, but you do not find the big business man being prosecuted for stealing millions. Surely our laws read the same for all. I believe that trusts and corporations, through profiteering, are responsible for all the unrest there is in the country. If profiteering is stopped prices will go down and the people of the United States will find it easier to live, and by finding it easier to live, will be more satisfied. Dissatisfaction is bolshevism, and when the people of any country become dissatisfied they rebel, especially if they find a law where the big fellow is immune and the little fellow is sent to jail. Why can not a government that can take my boy away from me, send him 3,000 miles away and perhaps be killed, stop the trusts from doing to the people what they have been doing for twenty years? Stop the trusts and unrest and bolshevism, which means the same, will stop. I have been reading The Commoner for about fifteen years, and beyond a doubt it has done a lot for the people.

C. E. Sugg, Kentucky.—I note that in discussion of who is to be chosen as democratic leader in the senate the names of Underwood and Hitchcock are the only ones mentioned. May I ask, does the democratic senate leader necessarily have to be a wet? If so, why? I should like to see this discussed by The Commoner.

When Stanley, a wet, was the democratic nominee for senator from Kentucky the most active assistance was rendered him by the president, but this fall, when Black, a dry, was a candidate for governor, there was never a sign that the president knew that an election was to be held in Kentucky. Democrats, thousands of them in Kentucky, notice these things. Is the president an ultra wet? I was an original Wilson supporter in the convention and in the election of 1912, and every time there was a chance to support him to this good day, but I have always been a dry and many things have happened to make me wonder if I have been a follower of the wet leader.

J. C. Hendrickson, Indiana.—In reply to the article, "Attention, Democrats," in the October Commoner, as county chairman will say, taking all things in consideration, I believe we favor Governor Smith of New York as our leader for the 1920 campaign, and I look on the labor question as being the paramount issue.

M. L. Misenheimer, Texas.—In spite of all that has been said and done, I still consider Mr. Bryan by far the ablest and straightest statesman in America and the entire world today, and will support him for the democratic nomination in preference to any other man. And, taking into consideration the entire mess in the middle of which we now find ourselves, and looking the situation squarely in the face just as it is, my candid opinion is that Mr. Bryan is the only man in the party who has a ghost of a show of leading the party to anything except an ignominious defeat. Of course, I don't know whether Mr. Bryan wants the nomination or would have it, but our prediction is that the politicians will be begging him to take it within the next few months.

W. E. Moody, California.—In answer to your inquiry as to choice for president, will say I am of the same opinion I was in 1896, only more confirmed in my judgment and opinion

that you are today the only man who fits the place perfectly, and who can poll the largest vote of any man in the United States, for good reasons. First, you have always been the poor man's friend; second, you are the author of more reforms in the interest of the masses than all other public men; third, your war record is clean as a sheet; fourth, you were the one who bore the burden and stood patiently all the jeers, slurs and epithets that could possibly have been heaped on a human being regarding the liquor traffic, and did more than any person to carry national prohibition; then, finally, you have the united support of the friends of prohibition and woman suffrage. Then, too, the laboring man and his organization forces will support you, and your record is unquestionably correct on the great interests, trusts and combines in restraint of trade. I could write all day and tell why you are the logical man and the strongest man, but let this suffice for the present. More than all, your integrity is supremely above all question.

T. E. Elgin, M. A., Alabama.—My prayer is that you may be our next president. It seems to me that this should be the prayer of all praying people; I truly believe that this would be the world's greatest blessing at this time. For years, as a Baptist preacher and school worker, I have followed your career and learned to love you, considering you the greatest champion of human rights that the world has known for years. I trust and pray that you have many years in which to carry out your noble ideals, and that strength may ever be yours in your fight for humanity and for God on earth.

M. G. Oakley, Oregon.—If ever this country and the world needed a big, broad-minded and unselfish leader it needs one today. We should have a man who is absolutely free from "entangling alliances" with any political party. He should be as far above "party loyalty" as a mountain is above a mole hill. Not that I would in any way condemn President Wilson or his administration, I believe him the greatest man in the world today, the greatest and best president since Lincoln, and that he will be spoken of in history as the first great world leader of modern times. No one will deny that he has made mistakes. We need a man who will profit by his mistakes without trying to destroy the great good he has done. In my opinion, we have such a man in Herbert Hoover. Before half the world knew that there was such a man as Mr. Hoover he was neck-deep in the work of succoring humanity and helping to win the war. Although a republican in politics, he supported the president in every way he could. He supported the president in his request for a democratic congress. This request was a mistake on the part of the president; he should have asked for a congress that would work in harmony with the administration. Mr. Hoover doubtless saw this mistake, but did what he could to rectify it instead of all he could to magnify it like many of the party politicians did. Let us have Hoover nominated on an independent ticket; and if the democrats show good sense they will indorse him.

R. G. Hill, Texas.—I have never taken any real active part in political campaigns, but have always been a follower of William Jennings Bryan and expect to see him elected president next year. I am certain that there is no man in public life who could get as many votes as he, and none who could serve the people more faithfully. I am for Brother Bryan against the field, first, last, and all the time. May God bless him and continue to give him health and strength to fight the people's battles in the future as he has in the past.

L. F. Weidenbacher, Illinois.—There are a great many good democrats, but I believe the one that should be nominated in 1920 is a man that has expounded democracy, manhood and Christianity one year after another since his boyhood days, and the fifteen million women voters which will be the deciding factor in 1920 I say, and several millions will think that W. J. Bryan is the logical candidate.

John M. O'Brien, Iowa.—In the approaching national campaign the issue should be "Let the people rule." All our officials should be elected