

The Tri-Weekly Constitution.
Republican National Platform.
Declaration of Principles.
ADOPTED JUNE 18, 1876.

1. The United States of America is a nation not a league; by the combined workings of the National and State Governments, under their respective constitutions, the rights of every citizen are secured at home and protected abroad, and the common welfare promoted.

2. The Republican party has preserved these governments to the hundredth anniversary of the nation's birth, and they are now embodiments of the great truths spoken at its cradle, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that for the attainment of these ends, governments have been instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Until these truths are cheerfully obeyed, or, if need be, rigorously enforced, the work of the Republican party is unfinished.

3. The permanent pacification of the Southern section of the Union and complete protection of all citizens in the free enjoyment of all their rights, are duties to which the Republican party stands sacredly pledged. The power to provide for the enforcement of the principles embodied in the recent constitutional amendments is vested by those amendments in the Congress of the United States, and we declare it to be the solemn obligation of the legislative and executive departments of the Government to put into immediate and vigorous exercise all their constitutional powers for removing any just cause of discontent on the part of any class, and for securing to every American citizen complete liberty and exact equality in the exercise of all civil, political and public rights. To this end we imperatively demand a Congress and a chief executive whose courage and fidelity to these duties shall not falter until these results are placed beyond dispute or recall.

4. In the first act of Congress signed by President Grant, the National Government assumed to remove any doubt of its purpose to discharge all just obligations to the public creditors, and solemnly pledged its faith to make provision at the earliest practicable period for the redemption of the United States notes in coin. Commercial prosperity, public morals and national credit demand that this promise be fulfilled by a continuous and steady progress to specie payment.

5. Under the Constitution, the President and heads of departments are to make nominations for office; the Senate is to advise and consent to the appointments, and the House of Representatives is to accuse and prosecute faithless officers. The best interests of the public service demand that these distinctions be respected, that Senators and Representatives who may be judges or accusers should not dictate appointments to office. The invariable rule for appointments should have reference to the honesty, fidelity, and capacity of the appointees, giving to the party in power those places where harmony and vigor of administration require its policy to be represented, but permitting all others to be filled by persons selected with sole reference to the efficiency of the public service, and the right of all citizens to share in the honor of rendering faithful service to their country.

6. We rejoice in the quickened conscience of the people concerning political affairs; will hold all public officers to a rigid responsibility and engage that the prosecution and punishment of all who betray official trusts shall be speedy, thorough and unsparring.

7. The public school system of the several States is the bulwark of the

American Republic, and with a view to its security and permanence we recommend an amendment to the Constitution of the United States forbidding the application of any public funds or property for the benefit of any schools or institutions under certain control.

8. The revenue necessary for current expenditures and the obligations of the public debt must be largely derived from duties upon importations which, so far as possible, should be adjusted to promote the interests of American labor and advance the prosperity of the whole country.

9. We reaffirm our opposition to further grants of the public lands to corporations and monopolies, and demand that the national domain be devoted to free homes for the people.

10. It is the imperative duty of the Government to modify the existing treaties with European governments that the same protection that shall be afforded to the adopted American citizen that is given to the native-born, and that all necessary laws should be passed to protect emigrants in the absence of power in the State for that purpose.

11. It is the immediate duty of Congress to fully investigate the effect of the immigration and importation of Mongolians upon the moral and material interests of the country.

12. The Republican party recognizes with approval the substantial advance recently made toward the establishment of equal rights for women by the many important amendments effected by Republican Legislatures in the laws which concern the personal and property relations of wives, mothers and widows, and by the appointment and election of women to the superintendency of education, charities, and other public trusts. The honest demands of this class of citizens for additional rights and privileges and immunities should be treated with respectful consideration.

13. The Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign power over the Territories of the United States for their government; and in the exercise of this power it is the right and the duty of Congress to prohibit and extirpate in the Territories that relic of barbarism, polygamy; and we demand such legislation as shall secure this end and the supremacy of American institutions in all the Territories.

14. The pledges which the nation has given to our soldiers and sailors must be fulfilled. The grateful people will always hold those who periled their lives for the country's preservation in the kindest remembrance.

15. We sincerely deprecate all sectional feeling and tendencies; we therefore note with deep solicitude that the Democratic party counts, as its chief hope of success, upon the electoral vote of a united South, secured through the efforts of those who were recently arrayed against the nation. We invoke the earnest attention of the country to the grave truth that a success thus achieved would reopen sectional strife and imperil the national honor and human rights.

16. We charge the Democratic party as being the same in character and spirit as when it sympathized with treason; with making its control of the House of Representatives the triumph and the opportunity of the nation's recent foes; with reasserting and applauding in the National Capitol the sentiment of unrepresented rebellion, with sending Union soldiers to the rear and promoting Confederate soldiers to the front; with deliberately proposing to repudiate the plighted faith of the government; with being equally false and imbecile upon the overshadowing financial question; with thwarting the ends of justice by its partisan mismanagement and obstruction of investigation; with proving itself through the period of its ascendancy in the Lower House of Congress utterly incompetent to administer the Government. We warn the country against trusting a party that is alike unworthy, recreant, and incapable.

17. The National Administration merits commendation for its honorable work in the management of domestic and foreign affairs, and President Grant deserves the continued and hearty gratitude of the American people for his patriotism and his immense service in war and in peace.

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Protest.

AN ADDRESS
TO THE
PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

By the Republican members of the late Constitutional Convention.

We, the undersigned, under a sense of the responsibility due from us as representatives of the will of the people of North Carolina, feel called upon to warn the yet free citizens of our beloved State, of the danger which imminently threatens them from the despotic and aristocratic tendencies of the Democratic party, so glaringly displayed in the amendments passed by that body in the Convention which was lately held in Raleigh.

A Convention called to establish the principles which shall govern and give vitality to the business relations of men and define the limits of the privilege to be exercised by the people, offers an unerring test of the opinions and feelings of those engaged in the responsible work. No less is it an absolute standard by which to judge of the tendencies of a party, when that party controls the body. Then, if ever, will men show their true political opinions and struggle to embody in permanent form, their fixed convictions. Governments are classified into free and despotic, at a glance, by an examination of their constitutions, whether written or moulded by the practices and tradition of their history. When representatives respect and consult the will of the people, whilst dealing with their interests and privileges, free government prevails, whatever its advantages and inconveniences. When that will, expressed by majorities, fairly ascertained, is disregarded by the framers of laws, and rights are taken away, against the solemn protest of the citizen, whatever the other attributes may be, the government ceases to be one of popular consent.

The application of this simple rule, fixes forever, in alarming reality, the character of North Carolina's last and worst Convention.

A large majority of the votes of the State, was given against its call, and the will of the people thus expressed should have controlled the delegates elected; a due regard to that will demanded that the present Constitution should be returned to them unaltered in a single principle, by which the rights of the people were defined and guaranteed, and their duties described and enjoined. Not respecting the voice of the people, contemptuous of their twice expressed opinion, but only upon party rule and the substitution of the way of a faction for the will of the majority, the Legislature of 1874-'5, by a party vote, violated the primary idea of the polity they had sworn to maintain, and called this body without consultation with the people, and in breach of the declaration made all over the State in the canvass of 1874. No denial can be hazarded by any one, of this plain fact, that a deliberate disregard of the will of a majority continued willfully, makes popular government impossible. This Convention is a bold declaration against the popular will and is, in itself, by the very fact of its existence, a revolution.

It is an anomaly in our history, and stands a solitary example of a body, called for the good of the people, usurping their rights, and seizing their powers, against their expressed will. But four years since, the people were called upon to express their wish upon a change of the Constitution; they answered that they wished no change. Two years ago many amendments of that instrument were submitted against the people; very few were adopted and those were matters of detail going only to the judgment as matters of expediency, and not touching a single right or privilege. In the House of Representatives, in the session of 1874-'75, the dominant party had a majority of two-thirds. This Convention, composed of the same number, elected by the same voters, under the same laws, with no intervening change of circumstances, returns a majority of delegates against the party in power, thus giving a rebuke to its revolutionary spirit, and declaring again in favor of the Constitution they have tried so hard to preserve. By a course unparalleled in the history of political bodies, that true majority is perverted, and the power of party is enthroned upon the trampled rights of a State.

Step by step the dreary drama of tyranny is enacted. The Supreme Court, the bulwark of the people, their fearless champion in many contests with an enraged and usurping Legislature, beneath whose august decree the poor of the land rest secure in enjoyment of homes for themselves and their loved ones, when baffled avarice casts its thirsty gaze upon this tribunal, from its insatiate greed—this tribunal, so fearless and so just, is attacked, and falls before the will of those whose action forebodes evil to every institution and principle dear to freemen.

The election of the Superior Court Judges, now with the people, was coveted, and the purpose contemplated to wrest this privilege from them, and give it where faction can supply ready-made partisans inclined to direct the forms of law, and the principles of justice to the purposes of party. This change was only averted by the adoption of a provision which enables a partisan Legislature to rob the Superior Courts of their jurisdiction, and confer it upon tribunals erected in their place, whose officers shall not be responsible to the people.

Justices of the Peace, the familiar counsel of the people, whose functions have always been to assist them in their common, ordinary disputes; who have been with the people, and of the people since tradition has spoken—these necessary, and almost family functionaries, torn from the people, lest they should continue Democratic in nature, as in office, and an aristocratic complexion is to be forced upon their homely features by rendering them no longer responsible to their neighbors, and by divorcing their sympathies from the humble and

rude poor, whose causes they are to determine.

Not only officers, but institutions, popular and elevating in their nature, are ravished from the masses. The popular county and township governments, established by our present supreme law, carries the idea of responsibility to the people down to every neighborhood. They give the control of every dollar of the money needed for the myriad uses of civilized and progressive communities, into the keeping of those who are under the direct eye of the people; they familiarize every one with the forms of business, and educate the primary divisions of society in the ways of self-reliant and independent manhood.

These tribunals carry the idea of the will of a majority to its ultimate end, and they are the rude, it may be, but healthful nurseries in which the infant steps of freemen are trained to tread in the ways of independent manhood.

But this nurture does not accord with the spirit of democracy revolutionized. That bad genius broods with evil menace over the precious heritage of our fathers, and the shadow of his dark approach, even now mingles ominously with the broad light of our liberty. A strong government is demanded. The divinity of privileged power must hereafter claim our devotions, and the vulgar independence of poor men and ignorant people must be trained to forego its somewhat turbulent conduct, and learn politer manners, and more cultured forms from the example of our very virtuous and model rulers, who are to be supplied to us by that excessively pure medium a modern partisan Legislature!

Thus on by one the rude forms of hereditary privilege are destroyed, and the dainty proportions of an elegant aristocracy are erected, beneath whose iron-hand, though eased in a glove of velvet, no popular right can flourish; and in whose eye, a free people is an eternal fear. All earth is drenched with gore poured out to glut the selfishness, revenge and licentious lusts of Kings and privileged classes. The poor are the universal sacrifice.

The slaughtered millions, whose blood cries to God from the thousand battle-fields, which cover our country like the foul blotches upon the leper's skin, are the human offering which alone can appease the cruelty of an insatiate aristocracy. Even under the mild forms of privilege, which formerly prevailed here, the eternal hate which power always cherishes for freedom, allied itself to the dread demon of rebellion, and its insatiate greed unappased by the holocaust of blood and impoverishment through which we have passed, will never cease whilst man is free.

Under our previous history, the laws regulating elections, were plain and simple, no one ever dreaming that the time would come when the people's will would be disregarded by any legislative body that could be assembled. But the desperation of party exigency, in this Convention, has shown how frail a hold the people have on their own government in North Carolina.

The people of Robeson county, elected to this Convention two delegates, Neil McNeil and R. M. Norment. The judges of election, against whom no fault has been alleged, made their returns as usual, and these returns showed a majority of votes in favor of the gentlemen named. The only duty of the county commissioners was to add those returns, and declare the result. But, usurping powers never granted them, they declare the returns untrue, and in the face of the written record before them, they pronounce that there was no election in four precincts of the county. No law is shown authorizing them to review the judgment of the inspectors of election; none can be shown which entitled them to judge of the qualification of electors. This power is vested by law in the judges of election, and in them alone. If they abuse it and admit unlawful votes, or refuse lawful ones, it is a case for the candidates alone, and the determination of the fact in each case, belongs solely to the body of which the parties are seeking to become members.

This Convention is, or is not, the judge of the election and qualification of its own members. A certificate of election from the proper officers, gives the possessor a *prima facie* right to his seat, until the truthfulness of the certificate is questioned. When this is done, the first thing to do, and the only thing, is to examine the records of the election. If they are in lawful form, the certificate must be given accordingly. If voters are questioned, the duty of approving or disqualifying them, rests with the candidate making the issue, and the facts must be determined upon the evidence adduced. No legislative body, of its own motion, has ever made a contest between members without their own active interposition. All legislative bodies determine the lawfulness of the certificate. When this is done, the burden is thrown upon the contestants. These are rules of law prescribed for the proceedings of contestants, public and of common application. The action of this body is directly contrary to this method. The commissioners of Robeson, have erected themselves into a judicial tribunal; they have, without evidence, and against the record, determined the fact of legal and illegal votes have taken from the judges of election the discretion conferred upon them by law, to be exercised under the obligation of an oath, and against their own written statement to the contrary, have declared that no election at all was held in four precincts of the county. If they have power to disregard the returns from four precincts, they may equally disregard the returns from every precinct, and at their mere will and pleasure, declare no election held in any county. By a combination easy of perfection amongst the county commissioners, an election over the whole State may be nugatory, and the people discarded entirely in the management of public affairs. How is this body to judge of the election of its members, if the county commissioners are empowered to act in a judicial character, and determine who are the members elect? Yet this has been declared the law of the land by the majority of the committee on Privileges and Elections, and that

decision has been sustained. By this judges of election are stricken from our system, there is no one to record the votes of the people; the commissioners though not present, determine the rights of voters without evidence; this body is robbed of the right to determine the election of its members, maintaining only an inferential right of appeal if that, and a complete revolution is accomplished.

The present Convention sat in the Capitol by virtue of this revolution, and has overthrown the government of the people thereby.

By means of two votes, secured in the manner above recited, the constitution is blotted out against the will of the people, and against the laws of the State.

In ordinary cases, where majorities are decided, one way or another, and where the votes of the contesting members can make but little difference in results, a case like this may be passed over and excite but little attention. But this case, upon the determination of which depends the sovereignty of the people, must be made a test case, and the circumstances around it, make it a prominent landmark in the history of government.

The first duty of the Convention was to determine who were the rightful delegates from Robeson, had there been a desire to follow, and obey the voice of the people. The action of this body has postponed the question until revolution is accomplished.

The action of this Convention in its legislative character has corresponded fully with its revolutionary constitution. Measures of vital concern, seasonably prepared in party caucus, have been introduced as a matter of form, simply to obtain the scrawl which stands for a common seal, and under the spur of the previous question, without an opportunity of debate, were impatiently hurried through, as prepared at party dictation. There are grievances of an alarming character, and not the idle clamor of disappointed hopes. We wished for nothing, we hoped for nothing, but to preserve the constitution dear to the people, who have struggled for years to retain the benefits of its admirable provisions. The discipline of party tactics has at last triumphed over the wishes of the people, and has left us no course but to advise the people of the spoliation of rights so fearfully imperiled by this Convention.

We have had an embarrassing choice to make in conducting the people's defense. We hoped that the free discussion of principles amongst gentlemen of intelligence, assembled from all parts of the State, might cause some concession from the rigor of party demands. But the invariable course of procedure in this body has been to prepare in midnight caucus the succeeding day's work; the measure agreed upon is taken up at once; rarely has time or postponement been granted, still more rarely has discussion been allowed, especially in matters on which opinions have been most opposite; and when discussion has been impatiently conceded, we felt the utter hopelessness of speaking to a question which judgment had gone before hand.

The only expedient left us was a resort to ordinary parliamentary rules, to delay for a few moments the pain we endure in seeing the rights and privileges of the people smothered in this Convention. It was the only way we had of protesting against the hasty and unsparing decrees of this body and however unsatisfactory, we were driven to it as to the last ditch in resisting the invasion of the assailants of our rights. Never has any legislative body shown less of concession than this; never has the caucus system been more rigidly and persistently enforced; never has party discipline been more perfect, and never has a minority been less regarded.

The closing scene of the Convention was a fit finale to a body which assembled in opposition to the will of the people, acted and worked by means of a majority purchased by the disfranchisement of a county and the total disregard of law; which has seized all the rights of the people and given them to the Legislature, and ended its revolutionary career by denying to members a right of protest. Never has any one before known, in the history of North Carolina, that a protest, offered in a respectful manner and in substance not offending against propriety should be refused a hearing and a place upon the journals. But this Convention has crowned its life of usurpation by a closing act of tyranny which forbids complaint of grievance and denies the right of petition. So monstrous was the act, that a leading member of the majority rose in his place and rebuked this open outrage. Not even this could bring a blush of shame to the faces of that majority which began life in lawlessness and in their own minds, fastening chains upon the limbs of the people, aptly ended its course by bidding them cease all complaint at the tyranny of this usurping assembly. We say to the people that the intention and aim of the Convention was to enslave you and you are enslaved if you ratify its act.

J. W. Albertson, Jonas Hoffman,
W. H. Wheeler, J. M. Justice,
R. C. Badger, J. R. Page,
J. M. Bateman, J. H. Smyth,
G. B. Bliven, W. W. McCasless,
B. F. Jones, A. McCabe,
J. C. Blocker, A. L. Davis,
W. M. Black, J. O. Crosby,
Wilson Carey, N. B. Hampton,
Allen Jordan, W. J. Munden,
O. H. Dockery, Ralph P. Buxton,
A. McDonald, R. W. King,
W. P. Mabson, I. J. Young,
J. W. Thorne, A. W. Tourgee,
J. Orrin Wilcox, W. T. Faircloth,
G. H. Grantham, J. A. Bullock,
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M. C. Hodge, William Barrow,
A. M. Lowe, Edward W. Taylor,
J. Q. A. Bryan, T. J. Dula,
Jas. E. Boyd, G. Z. French,
Rufus Barringer, S. H. Manning,
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