

# Republican Party Poisoned to Death by Privilege

A few days before the Baltimore convention the Cleveland (Ohio) Press printed the following editorial:

"The republican party, born in glory fifty-six years ago, died from poison administered by privilege at Chicago last week. The nomination of Taft and Sherman and the adoption of a reactionary platform written by the crooked and conscienceless bosses is a fitting climax to the latter day record of perfidy and dishonor of this once great political organization.

"Now that the smoke of battle which somewhat obscured the vision during the wild days of the convention has cleared away, this tremendous naked fact stands out in bold relief:

"That in absolute and utter defiance of the efforts of those men in the party who would have saved it from itself by making it respond in at least some measure to the progressive spirit of the times, privilege as represented by the corrupt bosses showed that its grip on the party vitals is not to be loosened.

"Root, corrupt business's ablest and craftiest tool, Barnes of New York, Penrose of Pennsylvania, Crane of Massachusetts, Guggenheim of Colorado, Bradley of Kentucky—these men and others of like type have put privilege's stamp of approval on Taft, and presented him to the country as the republican candidate on a platform more reactionary than any party has had the temerity to be sponsor for since Bryan vitalized the progressive movement nearly a score of years ago.

"It seems inconceivable that any of these men can not see that it is impossible for even such a wonderful political organization to survive after this dose of poison.

"The overwhelming defeat of Taft and the permanent elimination from public life of the

whole foul brood that poisoned their party in order to force his nomination is as certain as that the election will occur next November.

"The mask has at last been torn away, revealing to the gaze of every man who will see, the hideous features that have so long been hidden. The republican party has finally been forced to declare itself as between progress and reaction, as between men and dollars, and its declaration having boldly been made in favor of reaction and dollars, that is the end of the republican party.

"For the mass of the people of this country are no longer the slaves to party names and emblems that they once were. They have at last seen and grasped the great truth that political parties are merely means to an end, that end being social and economic justice.

"Whether the immediate future hope of the nation lies in the democratic party, which faces its crisis at Baltimore this week, or in the new national progressive party, which was born at Orchestra hall, Chicago, Saturday night, remains to be seen. Certain it is that the same evil influences which did the republican party to death at Chicago last week will attempt the same thing with the democratic party at Baltimore this week.

"If they succeed in spite of the heroic efforts to save it which are being made by William J. Bryan and Woodrow Wilson, nothing short of a cataclysm can prevent a third party, made up of the progressives of the two old parties, from sweeping the country."

But the machine did not rule at Baltimore, that is not after the first round or two. The democratic party, under Governor Wilson is to be clearly progressive—although democrats understand that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

## Practical Tariff Talks

When the republican orators take the stump this fall to defend the republican tariff bill—if any of them will be so hardy—the wheat and cotton farmers of the country ought to ask them to explain why the republican party finds it necessary to protect the bagging trust. All of the covering used for cotton bales and most of the bags that are necessary in the marketing of stock foods, fertilizers and the like are made of jute. The jute or jute butts used in the manufacture of these coverings must all be imported, since none can be grown in this country. They all come in free as raw materials for the gunny cloth and burlap manufacturers, but these men demand a 27 per cent tariff protection. The republican party has given it to them. The result has been to build up a trust which furnishes about four-fifths of the entire domestic need for bagging.

Believing that these duties had annoyed and burdened farmers long enough the democratic house passed a measure which placed bagging on the free list. It also included all other coverings and materials for making coverings that are essential to the transportation of agricultural products to their markets. This bill was vetoed by the president, being among those "hasty and ill-considered pieces of legislation" that he does not approve of. The same bill included cotton ties. A cotton tie is a band or hoop of iron and steel which holds together the compressed cotton after it is baled. The present duty is so high that the law as it now exists has placed the great cotton industry of the country under tribute to the steel trust. This great corporation, as proven by testimony of the experts, needs no protection whatever, being able to make steel and iron cheaper than is possible in any other country, and has for years sold its products, including these ties, cheaper abroad than it does at home.

This democratic bill also proposed to place sewing machines on the free list. The sewing machine is a prime necessity in every home and ought to be purchasable at prices at least as favorable as those given foreign buyers. The sewing machine business of the country is in a

comparatively few hands, and their product is manufactured here as cheaply as any other country can possibly make them. They are also sold abroad at much lower prices than they can be purchased for here. Yet the bill did not become a law because of the opposition of the republican executive. This bill also placed on the free list that great necessity, salt. Under the existing tariff law the American is protected from the pauper salt of Europe by a 50 per cent tariff. The domestic supply is dependent upon a limited number of natural deposits, and putting a heavy tariff upon it results in placing an added value to the holdings of those who own these deposits. This is following out a republican policy of not only giving the fortunate owner of mineral and other deposits the sole right to what he has found, but to give greater value to it by protective duties.

Whether there is a salt trust or not is a matter of dispute. Several cautious gentlemen speak of it as a gradual concentration of producing interests. One bold witness before the house ways and means committee in 1909, when the Payne-Aldrich bill was in the making, said that the International Salt company of New Jersey controls the salt made in this country, and that it raises the price at will. He further stated that the company has made its selling price as high for its lowest quotation as the price of foreign salt landed at a United States port plus the tariff, and that the system of making, preparing and marketing the company's product permits it to sell salt in competition with foreign salt without the protection of the tariff, but that it takes over the tariff intended for the government merely by absorbing it into its selling prices. There is, however, some salt that comes in duty free. The New England crowd in the senate and house secured the exemption of that salt used in curing fish, while the meat trust pays no duty on salt used in curing meats in the United States, having that duty remitted upon the exportation of those meats.

In order to share in the profits of protection a state or other governmental subdivision must possess political power; that is, it must be able to have a number of votes in congress to trade on any proposition. The experience of Porto Rico proves that protection isn't given as a matter of right, but as a matter of trade and barter

in legislation. For a number of years Porto Rico has been trying to induce the republican in congress to levy a duty of 5 or 6 cents a pound on coffee. The planters have been presenting splendid protection arguments, but they have not been able to convince the protectionists, largely because of the fact that they are only little brown brothers without political influence.

When the republicans were preparing the present law they were petitioned by various chambers of commerce and business men of Porto Rico to place a tax on coffee. The Porto Ricans put the protectionists in the deepest kind of a hole for every argument they presented in favor of their proposition was identical with those that Aldrich and the other spokesmen for the big interests that thrive on special tariff privileges brought forth. They didn't get it because there is no senator from Porto Rico and only one representative—but democrats will enjoy the story of their struggle. Coffee in Porto Rico is the poor man's crop. Anybody with an acre of ground can plant coffee and get ready cash for it while sugar and tobacco can profitably be raised only on large plantations. When Porto Rico became a part of the United States sugar and tobacco production largely increased because of the tariff but the absence of any tariff on coffee hit that industry a staggering blow.

Here were the arguments presented to congress by the Porto Rican coffee planters' representatives and note how thoroughly they cover the defense invariably raised by protectionists to justify their exactions: That since becoming a part of the United States the natives must feed and clothe themselves with American products, since the tariff will not permit otherwise; that they are compelled to purchase these things at domestic prices, which means the advanced prices the tariff allows, the import duty being so calculated as to prevent outside competition. If they had to pay more to the big white brother up in Massachusetts, who runs the textile mills, for what they wore, in order that the big white brother might prosper, why should not they, it was argued, be given the same right, through a tariff law, to ask the big white brother to contribute to their prosperity? They insisted that if a six cent a pound duty was levied upon coffee they would be able, within a brief period, to produce all of the coffee consumed in America. The same argument was advanced with respect to rice and other food products used in Porto Rico, the rice coming from Texas and Louisiana.

To the argument that the great body of coffee consumers ought not to be burdened in order to favor those few inhabitants who produce coffee under the flag, it was pointed out that when the first sugar duty was put on the statute books Louisiana was producing but a small proportion of the sugar consumed. To the argument that it was burdening the poor man's breakfast table, it was answered that he was paying on sugar, salt, meat, rice and almost everything else, why not on coffee, especially when free coffee was nullified, so far as price is concerned, by Brazil's act in levying an export tax on its product. It was pointed out that Porto Ricans can no longer, since coming under the flag, buy the machinery they need in England, Belgium or France, as they did before, but must buy from the American manufacturer, to whom he has to pay a much higher price than any of the neighboring islanders have to pay to the same factory, because the American manufacturer has to lower his price for these neighbors or they will buy elsewhere.

The same argument was presented in behalf of Hawaii and the Philippines, but coffee was kept on the free list. Why? Every argument that won protection for sugar, wool, cotton goods, silk goods and the like was presented on behalf of coffee. Why did they not succeed? There is but one answer, and it shows the hollowness of the pretense that tariffs are made according to any rule of mathematics or logic—the colonies have no voting strength in both houses.

C. Q. D.

### A GOOD CAMPAIGN CLUB

J. D. Smith, jr., Florida: Being interested in The Commoner myself, I have worked among my friends for just a few hours, with the result that I am enclosing you herewith my check to pay for 26 yearly subscriptions.