

## "Brim Full of Socialism and Anarchy"--- But the Chicago Platform Still Lives

Everyone, of course, remembers the hated "Chicago Platform." It was adopted by the democratic national convention at Chicago in 1896. From the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the lakes to the gulf it was denounced as the product of anarchists, and the candidates who stood upon it and the men who gave them support were pointed to by republican leaders as men who would stain the national honor. One distinguished supporter of the republican ticket characterized the "Chicago Platform" as "a bundle of populist notions saturated brim full of socialism and anarchy."

But the "Chicago Platform" still lives, and it is no exaggeration to say that in its essential principles it stands vindicated in the court of public opinion.

Read your "Chicago Platform" in the light of present day happenings.

The "Chicago Platform" resisted "the tendency of selfish interests toward the centralization of governmental power," and declared for the maintenance of "the integrity of the dual scheme of government established by the founders of this republic of republics." That that declaration is in line with today's public sentiment is indicated by the failure of the well organized effort to pass an insurance law depriving the states of their power over the insurance business within their limits and vesting all authority—even the power of incorporation—in the federal government.

That platform maintained the quantitative theory of money and during the ensuing campaign that theory was bitterly denounced by republican speakers and republican editors. But those who vigorously condemned the theory in 1896 are today making plain, if not humble, confession of their error. The theory so bitterly assailed ten years ago is not now denied by men claiming to be well informed.

That platform denounced the extraordinary privileges conferred upon national banks, and throughout the country today there is an ever increasing protest along this line—and the protest comes from men of all political parties.

That platform denounced the republican high tariff as "a prolific breeder of trusts and monopolies" which "enriches the few at the expense of the many, restricts trade, and deprives the producers of the great American staples of access to their natural markets." So thoroughly recognized are these facts today that a revolt is on among the rank and file of the republican party, and although the republican congress is heedless of the demand for relief, republicans in every state in the union are demanding the destruction of the shelter which the trusts find in the republican tariff.

That platform declared in favor of an income tax, and today that plan finds ardent champions among men who ten years ago vigorously opposed it. Even the president elected as a republican recently delivered a speech in which he made statements that are interpreted by his friends as meaning an inheritance tax—statements which if they mean anything at all may also be fairly interpreted as favoring an income tax.

That platform declared it to be the duty of congress to use all of its constitutional powers "so that the burdens of taxation may be equally and impartially laid, to the end that wealth may bear its due proportion of the expenses of the government." Demands to that effect have become quite popular these days, coming as they do from the mass of the people regardless of party affiliation.

That platform declared in favor of prohibiting importation of foreign pauper labor to compete with American labor in the home market; and although an organized effort has been made by representatives of special interests to throw down the bars to the cheap labor of the Orient, public sentiment has so crystallized along the lines laid down by the "Chicago Platform" that the republican leaders have, so far, been restrained from going to the limit in carrying out these plans.

That platform declared for the arbitration of differences between employers and employes and recommended legislation to that effect. While the republican party has not given that legislation, so strong is public sentiment on this point that the president elected as a republican carried the principle into practical operation in the coal strike, and through that plan the American peo-

ple avoided a coal famine.

That platform demanded the enlargement of the powers of the interstate commerce commission and such restrictions and guarantees in the control of railroads as will protect the people from robbery and oppression. Public sentiment has recently been so stirred along this line that the president elected as a republican entered upon a campaign to carry out the recommendation of the "Chicago Platform" in this respect, while the republican congress is engaged in the enactment of some form of railway rate legislation which, while giving heed to the popular demand, will not seriously interfere with the corporation's extraordinary privileges.

That platform demanded economy in the public expenditures, and the town meetings throughout the country are today echoing that demand, even though republican officials fail to heed it.

That platform objected to government by injunction as "a new and highly dangerous form of oppression by which federal judges in contempt of the laws of the states and the rights of citizens, become at once legislators, judges and executioners;" and today the evils of the injunction system are generally recognized, the practice is rapidly falling into disrepute among lawyers, while it no longer has the sanction of free men.

That platform made bold to express its disapproval of a court decision. Republicans pretended to be particularly wrought up because of that feature of the platform, but it is true that the president of the United States, elected as a republican, has recently and publicly criticised a court decision, while it is no longer contended among intelligent men that judges are, by reason of their exalted position, to be exempt from criticism, or to be above the common rules of conduct to which public sentiment holds the ordinary man.

Aside from the vindication of these general principles, the man who, standing on the "Chicago Platform," was denounced as an anarchist, has lived to see many of the policies he favored warmly advocated by those who, a few years ago, as warmly opposed them. He has favored the election of senators by the people, and today men of all parties are committed to that plan. He has denounced the free pass as a great and growing evil, and today men of all political parties condemn the free pass system. He has advised that public sentiment set itself rigidly against campaign contributions by corporations, and today that question occupies a conspicuous place in the attention of the American people. He has urged the enforcement of the criminal clause of the Sherman anti-trust law, and—after many years of waiting—the government's law officers, acting under the president's instructions, caused the arrest and prosecution of the members of the beef trust. He has advised that corporations be required to show clean hands before being permitted to do business outside of the state of their origin, and that before such corporations could engage in interstate business they be required to obtain a federal license. The republican administration is now squarely on record in favor of that plan.

The New York Tribune expressed the general opinion of republicans in 1896 when, referring to the "Chicago Platform" it said: "The thing was conceived in iniquity and was brought forth in sin. It had its origin in a malicious conspiracy against the honor and integrity of the nation. It gained such monstrous growth as it enjoyed from an assiduous culture of the basest passions of the least worthy members of the community. It has been defeated and destroyed because right is right and God is God."

They know better now. They know that the "Chicago Platform" was conceived in righteousness and brought forth in the purest patriotism. They know that instead of being "a malicious conspiracy against the honor and integrity of the nation" it was an organized defense of the republic as the fathers founded it. They know that instead of gaining its growth from "an assiduous culture of the basest passions" it owed its progress to the cultivation of high motives and the awakening of lofty sentiments. They know now, what they did not know then, that the most conspicuous of those who in that campaign posed as "defenders of national honor" were engaged in roguery upon an enormous scale and that they

had no more concern for the honor of the nation than they had for their own honor. They know now, what they did not know then, that the movement represented in that campaign by the New York Tribune was an organized conspiracy against the very lives of the people. They know now that the men who in that campaign posed as monopolists in honor, patriotism and intelligence were seeking a monopoly in the wealth of the country, in the right to frame its laws, in the privilege of fixing prices—seeking, indeed, as complete an authority in public and in private affairs as was ever dreamed of by the most imaginative of monarchs. They know now that the movement represented by the "Chicago Platform" was defeated not "because right is right and God is God," but because the corporation managers, already enjoying undue favors and seeking new privileges, contributed other people's money to the republican campaign fund and thus made possible the purchase of the election.

### THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that, according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear, honest and straight-forward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write to The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 14.

T. W. Sutherland, Kansas City, Kan.—You will please find enclosed primary pledge which I have gotten up during my leisure moments. I haven't time to do much work outside of my business, although I realize this is very important and I believe it to be the duty of every democrat to put forth some effort for this undertaking.

W. J. Weeks, Jacks Creek, Tenn.—Enclosed you will find fifty-two signatures to the primary pledge.

D. B. Collums, Editor Stilwell Standard, Stilwell, I. T.—I am glad to endorse any policy the object of which is to bring the democratic party back to the right paths—those trod by Jefferson, Jackson and Bryan.

Amariah Conklin, Cedar Run, N. J.—I enclose two primary pledge petitions, one filled out with 35 names, and the other with 10, making in all 45 signatures.

T. C. Hart, Caney, Kan.—Enclosed is my primary pledge which I agree to keep faithfully.

A. C. Hendrix, Elbridge, Tenn.—I promise to attend all the primaries of my party between now and the next democratic national convention.

F. E. Keith, St. Paul, Minn.—Enclosed please find primary pledge, also order for subscription cards, which I will endeavor to secure in near future.

James H. Dege, Tacoma, Wash.—Please find enclosed my primary pledge; also for my partner, Mr. William W. Milner. We both are William J. Bryan democrats and supported him in 1896 and 1900. The democratic party is growing stronger with the people every day. I take The Commoner and read it very carefully and enjoy everything contained in it.

Dr. Edward J. Brown, Minneapolis, Minn.—I send a few pledges, most of which have been secured by one of the signers, Mr. E. H. Rotschka. Am sorry to send so small a list, but most of my acquaintances are more or less in the dark. My own pledge was sent in long ago.

Joe Jullan, Kime, Mo.—Enclosed find primary pledge signed by myself and 15 others.

E. E. White, Van, W. Va., sends primary pledge with 21 signatures.

T. C. Briggs, Sidney, Neb., sends primary pledge bearing 33 signatures.

Dr. T. J. Dunbar, Portsmouth, Ohio—I enclose 37 more signatures to the primary pledge, making 369 in all. Please send some more blanks, as I want to do all I can for the cause.