

**THE WHIG PARTY; ITS OBJECTS-ITS  
PRINCIPLES-ITS CANDIDATES-ITS DUTIES-AND  
ITS PROSPECTS. AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE  
OF RHODE-ISLAND, PUBLISHED IN THE  
PROVIDENCE JOURNAL, IN A SERIES OF  
ARTICLES DURING THE MONTHS OF  
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1844**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649193219

The Whig party; its objects-its principles-its candidates-its duties-and its prospects. An address to the people of Rhode-Island, published in the Providence Journal, in a series of articles during the months of September and October, 1844 by Hamilton

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Cover @ 2017

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# HAMILTON

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# AN ADDRESS

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF RHODE-ISLAND,

PUBLISHED IN THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL,

IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES DURING THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER  
AND OCTOBER, 1844.

BY HAMILTON.

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"If Truth has not lost her sway, Reason her force, and Public Justice is not silent, I shall stand vindicated before the American People."

*Henry Clay—1827.*

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PROVIDENCE:  
KNOWLES AND VOSE, PRINTERS.  
1844.

TO THE  
PEOPLE OF RHODE-ISLAND.

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THE WHIG PARTY,  
AND ITS OBJECTS.

FELLOW CITIZENS :

We are again in the midst of another Presidential contest. The Great Whig Council Fires are again lit up and burning brightly through the land. A spirit of patriotic ardor animates every true Whig bosom. The same feeling of generous enthusiasm—the same fiery energy which bore upward and onward, the Whig banner in triumph and secured to the Whig cause a glorious victory in 1840, blazes from the eye and bursts from the tongue of every true Whig now. The notes of preparation for the approaching Presidential election are every where sounded. The loud bugle blasts from the Whig Press are every where summoning the victorious Whig army of 1840 to the same OLD BATTLE-FIELD of Whig principles. The Whig who falters now, is either a coward or a traitor to the Whig cause.

The Whig party, at all times and in all lands, has raised high the banner of Freedom. Under its broad, bright folds patriots have ever battled bravely against the abuses, the encroachments and the tyranny of power—whether wielded by a monarch on his throne, or a ferocious and despotic party in the halls of legislation. It is a glorious party—the party of the free—the liberal—the patriotic every where. I am proud to belong to it. It has been consecrated by the best blood of both hemispheres. It is the party in which Hampden, Russell, Sydney and their noble compatriots, in the despotic reign of the second Charles, toiled, and suffered and died. It is the party which fought the battles of the American Revolution. The first American blood, which was shed in that great struggle, was as true Whig blood as ever warmed the heart, or coursed through the veins of mortal man. The majestic monument, which rises in simple grandeur from the heights of Charlestown, marks the spot where HE fell, who was the first to advocate resistance to British power, and the first to die a martyr to the Whig cause. Every man who fought the battles of American Independence, from Washington down to the poor but brave, famishing, half clad

soldier, who imprinted the frozen ground with his bleeding feet, as he marched firmly forward to meet the enemies of his country, was a Whig—every inch a Whig. And if the freedom which was won by Whig valor—if the noble Constitution and the liberal Republican Government, which were framed and established by Whig wisdom, are to be preserved to us and our children, and transmitted to future ages unimpaired, it must be done by the beneficent operation of pure Whig principles, by a firm and patriotic adherence to the Whig cause.

The first great interest of every civilized community is the security of life, liberty and property, by a government of laws. Whatever else may be desirable, this is paramount and indispensable. It lies at the very foundation of every thing which men hold dear and sacred. Without this security all other blessings are mere mockeries—all other good sinks into valueless insignificance. Every man in society should feel that the invasion of established authority, resistance to public law, is an attack upon the palladium of individual and public safety. He should feel that with the battering down of this strong bulwark, falls all that is worth possessing.—Whenever popular commotion shall rise so high, and its towering waves dash with such wild fury, that the solid defences of public law shall give way, all our rights, public and private, civil, social, political and religious, will go down—ingulfed in one wide 'submerging maelstrom' of anarchy and blood.

Our Government is in form the freest and the best which it ever fell to the lot man to enjoy. It has during a trial of more than half a century, proved itself, if wisely administered, capable of accomplishing all the high objects of our Federal Union. But its freedom makes the support of general intelligence and virtue in the people, who, through their chosen agents, administer it, the more necessary. Its administration, which does much to give character and tone to public feeling, should be watched with the sternest scrutiny and its purity guarded with more than vestal vigilance.

It must be apparent to the most careless observer, that our free institutions are passing through an ordeal most searching and severe. The elements of disorganization are every where active. The wild spirit of insubordination to established authority—of determined disobedience to public law is every where so manifest and alarming as to awaken serious apprehensions in the minds of all considerate and patriotic men. And what is most lamentable in the matter is, that those who have had control of the government have been the first to commence this career of violence and disorganization.—When Andrew Jackson struck down the appointed agent of the law, and driving from his post the sentinel of the General Treasury, laid violent hands upon the public money deposited in the custody where the pledged faith of the government had placed it, a blow was given which inflicted a vital wound upon our free institutions, from which they have not yet recovered. That bold and desperate act, followed as it has been by the irregular and informal admission of Michigan into the Union—the repudiation of State debts by the people of Mississippi—the rejection of the properly accredited Representatives from the State of New Jersey, and the admission of members from four States, at the last session, elected in direct and acknowledged violation of an existing law passed by the previous Congress—the sacking of flour stores in New York—the Naturalization frauds all over the country—the Mormon difficulties in Illinois—the murder, in cold blood, of defenceless men in prison, on account of differences in religious faith—the infamous and atrocious Dora rebellion in the State of Rhode Island, and the secret and stealthy attempt, by stock jobbers, land jobbers, flesh jobbers and office jobbers, to involve the country in a causeless and

disgraceful war, by the annexation of a portion of the territory of a sister Republic to this Union: these and other like acts of a disorganizing and lawless character, which have followed in regular but rapid succession, together with the efforts which have been and are now being made, with too much success, it is to be feared in some instances, to array, in most unnatural hostility, the poor against the rich—the laborer against the employer—the mechanic against the merchant—the farmer against the manufacturer, and the fierce and ferocious war whoop which has been raised against state banks, small bills, chartered corporations, capitalists and credit—all of which constitute the history of one political party, and flow directly and necessarily from the principles, professions and practices of that party, call loudly upon all men who value good government to rally to its rescue and engage heart and hand in the great work of political Reform. I concur, most entirely, in the opinion expressed by JOHN C. CALHOUN, in 1836, that *"the foe is in the bosom of the country and in possession of the government. A powerful faction, (party it cannot be called,) held together by the hopes of public plunder, and marching under a banner whereon is written, 'to the victors belong the spoils,' has made successful war on our institutions, and converted all the power and influence of the government into instruments of gain. It is this powerful and corrupt combination in actual possession of the government, (in 1836) against which the honest and patriotic have now to wage war."* And Mr. M'Duffie but proclaimed a melancholy truth, when, in a public letter, dated July 4th, 1837, he said—*"The Federal Government has been for eight years past administered upon principles of corruption, scarcely disguised, if not openly avowed; and the effects have exceeded anything recorded in the annals of national degeneracy."*

Our institutions have fortunately so far survived these assaults of a powerful and desperate faction. The sound, conservative, patriotic portion, it is to be hoped, is still the majority of the people. Public opinion has not yet been sufficiently corrupted to embrace all the wild and hideous radicalism of the French Revolution, though much of its destructive spirit is active amongst us. How much longer our institutions could hold out against these repeated assaults of Locofocoism is a problem which, I trust, will never be solved. The result of the present canvass will, I have no doubt, interpose an effectual corrective of these political evils, and give to the friends of republican government, all over the world, assurances of the stability and permanency of free institutions in this Union.

The administration of Washington is the *model* administration of the Whigs; an administration true to its own dignity and the national honor—just, pure and patriotic—free from violence—free from proscription—dispensing good to all impartially, and like the air we breathe, felt only in the benefits which it confers upon us. If the Whig party shall succeed in reforming the abuses which have taken deep root in our political system, and in restoring the high reputation which our country once enjoyed throughout the world for good faith, integrity and honor; if they shall succeed in purifying the government of the bad influences and practices which have for so many years corrupted its administration, and revive a lofty, comprehensive national spirit among the people; if looking only to the public good and the perpetuity of free, republican institutions, they shall succeed in elevating the minds of men to nobler sentiments of their duties as American citizens—to the practice of broad, patriotic, conservative principles; if the spirit, temper and wisdom, which so eminently distinguished the *FIRST* Whig President, shall hereafter guide and govern our public councils—then will the Whig party have accomplished the high objects of political reform which they now propose to themselves and the country.



## Principles of the Whig Party.

The political principles and measures upon which the Whigs plant themselves in the present Presidential contest, and are willing to stand or fall, are—

1st. A Revenue Tariff, discriminating for the protection of American labor, by which a sufficient amount of revenue shall be collected for an economical administration of the government, without the receipts from the land sales.

2d. A sound National Currency, regulated by the will and authority of the nation.

3d. An equitable distribution of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands among all the States of the Union.

4th. A single Presidential term.

Upon these topics, which now command so large a share of the public attention, and a correct decision upon which is so VITAL to the public welfare, I propose to submit a few remarks for the consideration of the people. And first in order and in importance is

### THE TARIFF.

There is little difference of opinion among the mass of the American people in respect to the policy of raising the amount of revenue necessary to an economical administration of the government by means of a tariff of duties upon foreign imports; a few only of the more radical of the Loco-foco party advocate the expensive and unpopular mode of direct taxation. The two great political parties differ mainly and widely in relation to the principle upon which the tariff shall be adjusted. Mr. Polk and the party which supports him contend for a tariff, *discriminating only for revenue*, or which shall collect the largest possible amount of revenue, capable of being collected, from the articles of foreign production upon which it is levied, without any reference to its effect and operation upon the interests of American labor. Mr. Clay, and the party which supports him, contend that in raising the necessary amount of revenue, the tariff of duties should be so laid as to *discriminate for the protection of the industry of our own country*. In proof of these positions, I shall first adduce the declarations of the candidates themselves, and then give the statements of the grounds upon which they are supported, as set forth by their respective friends.

On the 11th of March, 1830, Mr. Polk, in a debate, in the House of Representatives, said that "*he was in principle opposed to the whole system of the protecting policy, called the tariff.*"

On the 14th of December, 1832, Mr. Polk advocated the reduction of duty on wool and woolens, and said, "The wool growers consider the duty upon foreign wool as important to their prosperity. This opinion is founded in error. *My opinion is that wool should be duty free.*"

On the 3d of April, 1843—no longer ago than the last year—in a pamphlet written out by Mr. Polk himself for publication, he said, "He was in favor of *reducing the duties to the rates of the Compromise Act, where the Whigs found them on the 30th of June, 1842*. The South, and he with them, had voted for the act of 1832, because it was a reduction of the rates of the act of 1828, though by no means so low as he would have desired it to be; still it was the greatest reduction which could be attained at the

time of its passage." He adds, "*The difference between the course of the political party with which he (Mr. Milton Brown, a Tennessee Whig) acts, and myself, is, whilst they are the advocates of distribution and a protective tariff—measures which I consider ruinous to the interests of the country, and especially to the interests of the planting States—I HAVE STEADILY AND AT ALL TIMES OPPOSED BOTH.*"

In a letter dated May 17, 1843, Mr. Polk says "*All who have observed my course know that I have at all times been opposed to the protective policy. I am for laying such moderate duties on imports as will raise revenue enough, when added to the income from the sales of lands, and other incidental sources, to defray the expenses of government, economically administered. I am in favor of a tariff for revenue, and opposed to a tariff for protection.*"

In May of the last year, Mr. Polk published the following letter :

WINCHESTER, MAY 29, 1843.

*To the people of Tennessee :*

The object which I had in proposing to Governor Jones, at Carrollville, on the 12th of April last, that we should each write out and publish our views and opinions on the subject of the tariff, was, that our *respective positions might be distinctly known and understood by the people.* That my opinions were already fully and distinctly known, I could not doubt. I HAD STEADILY DURING THE PERIOD I WAS A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS BEEN OPPOSED TO A PROTECTIVE POLICY, AS MY RECORDED VOTES AND PUBLISHED SPEECHES PROVE. Since I retired from Congress I had held the same opinions. In the present canvass for Governor I HAD AVOWED MY OPPOSITION TO THE TARIFF ACT OF THE LAST WHIG CONGRESS, as being highly *protective* in its character, and not designed by its authors as a *revenue measure.* I had avowed my opinion in my public speeches that the interests of the country and especially of the producing and exporting States—**RUQUIRED ITS REPEAL**, and the restoration of the principles of the compromise act of 1833.

JAMES K. POLK.

Mr. Clay's opinions upon this great question are so well known, and have been so long, so consistently, and ably maintained through his whole public life, that it seems almost a work of supererogation to state them. So early and so ably, so firmly and so eloquently has he always, from his first entrance into public life up to this hour, advocated a protective tariff and the interests of American labor, that he was, at a period when the protective policy was imperfectly understood by the mass of the people, sneeringly called, by its opponents, "the father of the American system." Now the policy of protection is strong and popular in all the free and in some of the slave States, these same opponents are attempting to persuade the people that Mr. Clay has deserted his own offspring! But that there may be no chance for cavil, the following unequivocal declaration, made by Mr. Clay in a public letter, dated June 29, 1844, is inserted:—

"My opinions, such as they are, have been recently quite as freely expressed at the South, as I ever uttered them at the North. I have every where maintained that *in adjusting a tariff for revenue DISCRIMINATION OUGHT TO BE MADE FOR PROTECTION.*"

We are fortunate enough, not only to be able to give the published opinions of Mr. Polk upon the question of protection, but to give a comparison, drawn by himself, of the relative positions occupied by himself and Mr. Clay upon this very question. In a published address dated April 3, 1839, speaking of General Jackson's administration, and particularly of his course

in reference to the tariff policy, with which he admits himself to have been perfectly identified by a community of sentiment and a thorough support, he says :

"On the coming in of General Jackson's administration, all the odious doctrines and principles, and the ultra-federal tendencies of the Administration which preceded it, were suddenly arrested and reversed. The great results of General Jackson's administration belong to the history of the country, and can be but briefly sketched or alluded to in an address like this. In repeated instances he recommended modifications and reductions of the tariff, with a view to the final abandonment of the odious and unjust system. So effectual were these recommendations, and so rapid the change of public opinion, that the FRIENDS OF THE TARIFF, and even Mr. Clay, its IMPUTED FATHER, seized on a favorable moment to save the whole from destruction, by a timely compromise. It was the defence of Mr. Clay with his friends at the North, that by yielding a part, he prevented the destruction of the whole; and in their continued and devoted support of him, the Northern capitalists have shown that they are grateful for the fortunate rescue."

The most skeptical can surely desire no statement more distinct and unequivocal than this declaration, by Mr. Polk himself, of his views upon the subject of protection :—

"In repeated instances he (General Jackson) recommended modifications and reductions of the tariff, with a view to the final abandonment of that odious and unjust system." And "so effectual were these recommendations, and so rapid the change of public opinion, that the friends of the tariff, and even Mr. Clay, its imputed father, seized on a favorable moment to save the whole from destruction by a timely compromise."

Mr. Polk seems really to regret that he and General Jackson were prevented from destroying the whole tariff policy, by "Mr. Clay, its imputed father, who seized on a favorable moment to save the whole from destruction by a timely compromise." This language would seem to prove that Mr. Polk would, if he dared, not only wage war against protection, but against the whole tariff policy, "with a view to the final abandonment of the odious and unjust system;" and that he is at heart, what his Southern disunion friends say he is—an ultra, out and out, "free trade man," and will, "if elected, endeavor to subvert the whole system of protection." If it were necessary to produce additional evidence of Mr. Polk's rancorous hostility to protection, thousands of witnesses in his own State, who have heard his stump harangues against a protective tariff, might be brought to testify to his uniform declarations of opposition to the protective policy. The testimony of the present gallant and distinguished governor of Tennessee, who at the last two gubernatorial elections in that State beat Mr. Polk by very decisive majorities, after a full and fair canvass of every county in company, shall suffice. The following is Governor Jones's statement of Mr. Polk's tariff views, repeated on a hundred stumps to the people of Tennessee :

NASHVILLE, JULY 25, 1844.

Charles Gibbons, Esq.—Dear Sir: By the mail I enclose you two publications of Col. Polk's during the last summer's canvass, on the subject of the tariff, &c. From these publications you will perceive that the Colonel is *dead* out against protection, and particularly opposed to the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands; because, he says, it is a tariff measure. It sounds strangely to us who have been accustomed to hear him, to hear it stated that he is a tariff man, or in favor of protection. I have met him on more than one hundred and fifty fields, and I never heard him make a speech in my