STATE PLATFORMS OF THE TWO DOMINANT POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIANA, 1850-1900

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1850—1900

COMPILED BY

W. E. HENRY, STATE LIBRARIAN

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Together with the growing interest in matters historical relating to our State there is a corresponding demand for ready access to all documents relating to our State's history.

Many requests for statements of doctrine set forth in the State platforms of the two dominant political parties have convinced me that the publication of these documents in a compact form will be of great service to all who are interested in the history of politics in Indiana. Therefore this publication.

In every instance except three the text from which each document is printed is that found in the State organ of the party represented. The Democratic platforms for 1856, 1866 and 1868 are copied from a Republican paper, as I have been unable to find copies of the Sentinel for those dates.

This publication covers fifty years, and includes all the platforms of the two parties from 1850 to 1900; but the first conventions after January 1, 1850, occurred in 1852, and provided for the first election under the new Constitution adopted in 1851.

The arrangement of the platforms is chronological, and is also alphabetical following the order in which they stand on our State ballot.

W. E. HENRY.

February, 1902.

STATE PLATFORMS

OF THE

TWO DOMINANT POLITICAL PARTIES

DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM, 1852.

(Indiana State Sentinel, February 26.)

Resolved, That the good old Democratic principles, to wit: a strict construction of the Constitution and no assumption of doubtful powers; no encroachment by the General Government on the proper rights of the States; no connection between the General or State Governments and Banks; no connection between Church and State; no tariff beyond what is strictly necessary for revenue purposes; no vast system of internal improvements either by the General Government or by States; no public debt, either by the General Government or by the States, except for purposes of urgent necessity; no grants of exclusive chartered privileges, by special legislation, to banks; no proscription for honest opinions; a simple and frugal government, securing life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness with the least possible amount of legislation; fostering aid to public education; are, and must ever remain, the true watch-words of the Democratic party; with which inscribed upon our banners, we have often marched to victory; with which embodied in the legislation of our country, she has reached her present power and prosperity; and that we receive and recognize as members of the great Democratic family, all men, no matter what their creed or country, who acknowledge in theory and carry out in practice, these unchanging principles; the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this convention, the common sentiment of the people of Indiana, sustains and endorses, in their general tenor and intention, each and all of that series of Acts of Congress, commonly known as the Compromise measures; that it recognizes, in their success, an earnest of security and perpetuity to our glorious Union; and that it regards our present tranquility, after dangerous sectional heart-burnings, as the best evidence of the wisdom and prudence of these measures, and the best proof, that they should, under no pretence, be disturbed.

Resolved, That, according to the soundest principles of international law sometimes violated but not the less universally recognized by the civilized world, each nation has an inalienable right to regulate its internal policy, and establish such form of government as it pleases; and that no nation may lawfully interfere with the domestic concerns of another.

Resolved, That if, in violation of the acknowledged code which governs the family of nations, one nation, interfering by force of arms, seek to con-

trol, or dictate, the internal policy of another, the aggressing nation places herself without the pale of international law; and any third nation may lawfully resent and resist such interference, either without war, as by breaking off all diplomatic relations, or by going into the field, and repelling force with force.

Resolved, That while we protest, as every free people most rightfully may, against the recent outrage committed by Russia, alike upon the rights of humanity and the law of nations; while we declare, as every republican people most earnestly should, our heartfelt sympathy with the cause of popular freedom and equal rights, as well in Hungaria as in all other nations throughout the earth; while, with no stinted hospitality but as brethren in a great and good cause, we welcome to our homes and our hearts, those who have fought Freedom's battles in other lands, and have been driven by the iron hand of Despotism, to seek refuge on our shores; we deem it contrary to sound policy for the United States Government in exercise of an undoubted right, at this time, to pledge our people either to interfere, or not to interfere, as the armed champions of violated international law, among the distant nations of Europe. We believe it to be in accordance with the dictates of wisdom and of prudence, that we remain, for the present, uncommitted but deeply interested spectators; ready, in fitting season, to act as the contingencies of the World's Future (fraught, as it may be, with national convulsions, unexampled in history), may hereafter demand, at our hands.

Resolved, That we approve and endorse the administration of our present Governor, Joseph A. Wright, and that we pledge to him, as nominee for re-election, in the approaching contest, our hearty support.

Resolved, That we have undiminished confidence in the undeviating and well tried democracy of our distinguished and able Senators in Congress, James Whitcomb and Jesse D. Bright, and that we fully endorse their senatorial actions.

Resolved, That Joseph Lane, the State Legislator, the gallant General, the Territorial Governor, tried in the Council Chamber, tried in the tented fields, tried in the executive chair, and never found wanting, is, of the People of Indiana, the first choice for the Presidency. While we repose entire confidence alike in his administrative capacity, in his firmness, in his honesty of purpose and in his unswerving devotion to Democratic principles, at the same time desiring above all things union and harmony in the support of the nominee of the National Convention, let the choice of the majority fall as it will, and fully trusting the judgment and devotion to principle of our Delegates to that Convention—

Resolved further, That we leave said Delegates untrammeled by instructions as to persons to act as their convictions of right and propriety at the time, may dictate.

Resolved however, That in casting the vote of the State for President, the said Delegates be instructed to give it, throughout, as a unit and not by separate districts; the name of the person so voted for, to be, at all times, determined by the majority of the votes of said Delegates.

Resolved, That if General Joseph Lane be the Democratic nominee for President of the National Convention, we pledge to him the vote of Indiana,—of that State the honor of whose sons he has so nobly vindicated,—by a majority, as we confidently hope and truly believe, of 25,000 votes.

WHIG PLATFORM, 1852.

(Weekly Indiana State Journal, March 6.)

1. Resolved, That while we pledge ourselves to support the nominees of the Whig National Convention, we know that the Whigs of Indiana are in favor of the nomination of Gen. Winfield Scott as the Whig candidate for the Presidency; and that, therefore, we hereby instruct our delegates to such Convention to cast the united vote of this State in favor of the nomination of that renowned hero and patriot.

2. That the Whigs of Indiana have the utmost confidence in the ability, patriotism and integrity of John J. Crittenden, that his opposition to everything tending to disunion, his long known and tried fidelity to the best interest of the whole country recommend him as a suitable candidate for Vice-President, and we hereby instruct our delegates to cast the vote of Indiana in favor of the nomination of that distinguished statesman for that office.

3. That we have unabated confidence in the patriotism and integrity of Millard Fillmore, President of the United States, and in his devotion to what he believes will promote the prosperity of the country.

4. That in relation to our sympathy for Republicanism and free principles in Europe, we re-affirm the resolution of the Whig State Convention of January, 1849, which is as follows:

Resolved, That we sympathize warmly with the Republican movements of the Old World, where the flag of freedom has been unfurled, after a long night of political and social gloom; that while the Patriots of that good old land have united, the league of Tyrants has been formed—that while the voice of the people, unaided by wealth, has gone up for the political regeneration of Europe, the Despotism of centuries, strong in the elements of carnage and desolation, has put forth its mighty power to crush constitutional freedom—that while all looks dark and gloomy for the cause of Liberty, we still have an unshaken reliance that Heaven will, in its own good time "bring light out of darkness," and prepare men and nations for the universal brotherhood of Republican Institutions. To our down-trodden brethren in the Old World we would say—

"Bide your time—the morn is breaking,
  Bright with FREEDOM'S blessed ray—
Millions from their trance awaking,
  Soon shall stand in stern array.
Man shall fetter man no longer,
  Liberty shalt march sublime;
Every moment makes you stronger—
  Firm, unshrinking bide your time."

Resolved, That while Europe is thus convulsed, and her patriots scattered and sent into exile—while the sons who would regenerate and build up the dead and expiring liberties of her people, are banished from their native land—while the so-called christian Powers of Europe look on, with cold indifference, at the expatriation of the pure of heart and the bold of