CHAPTER XXVIII

DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION UNDER ROOSEVELT
1901-1909


The history of the Democratic Party from 1896 to the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 is mostly internal. Not once in all that period did it have the Executive or Senate and only the last two years did it have a majority in the House. Luke E. Wright of Tennessee, and Jacob McGavock Dickinson, who said that he "had never voted a Republican ticket and never would," were made Secretaries of War in the Roosevelt and Taft cabinets, and were the only Democrat holding high executive positions during the whole period.

Yet there were some noble and able men in the Democratic ranks in both Houses of Congress, men who, if ever a Congressional history of the United States is written, will figure conspicuously. There was Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama, made chairman of the canal committee by a Republican Senate, who for twenty years hammered the idea of an isthmian canal into the American mind, and is accounted by many the father of our canal policy. Newlands of Nevada was the pioneer in irrigation and reclamation legislation, and John Sharp Williams was as sound and broad a scholar, as clear-headed and honest-minded a statesman as ever sat in either House, and the most famous of all minority leaders. It would be a long list that contained the names of all deserving distinguished mention.

The Eighteenth Democratic National Convention met at Kansas City July 4, 1900. The call was addressed to all Democratic, conservative, reform, citizens irrespective of past political
assessments who could unite for a pure, economical, constitutional government and who favored a Republic and opposed an Empire.

Called to order by Chairman of the National Committee James E. Jones, Charles S. Thomas of Colorado was named as temporary chairman and James D. Richardson of Tennessee permanent president. As it was well known that the convention would only register the will of Bryan and his followers, who completely dominated the party, the Democratic war horses in great numbers remained at home, allowing to less distinguished party men the honor of being delegates.

The rules of the preceding convention were adopted and a committee of conference was appointed to confer with the Silver Republican and Populist conventions then being held in the city. This committee later reported the nomination of Bryan by the Silver Republicans. The platform was adopted without debate, with enthusiasm and by acclamation. Some of the resolutions committee suggested a modification of the money plank, but Bryan insisted that there should be no retreat from the 1896 position. The clause declaring imperialism the burning and paramount issue was popular and its re-reading demanded.

William Jennings Bryan was nominated and seconded by delegates from practically every state; the enthusiasm for him seemed less wild than four years previous but deeper.

Adai Stevenson of Illinois, Charles A. Towne of Minnesota (a Populist), Charles S. Thomas of Colorado, David Bennett Hill of New York, James Hamilton Lewis of Washington, John Waite Smith of Maryland, Julian C. Carr of North Carolina and Abraham W. Patrick of Ohio were placed in nomination for Vice-President. Hill and Lewis withdrew themselves from the contest.

Despite his withdrawal Hill received 207 votes; Towne received 99 and Stevenson, 565; states changed before the vote was announced and Stevenson was named unanimously.

Milton Turner, a colored Democrat, representing the Negro Democratic League, addressed the convention and announced that 300,000 of his race would support Bryan.

Among the new members of the National Committee were James Clarke of Arkansas, Homer S. Cummings of Connecticut, Thomas Taggart of Indiana, Senator Stone of Missouri, Norman E. Mack of New York, J. M. Gaffey of Pennsylvania and John T. McGraw of West Virginia. James K. Jones was re-elected chairman, and Willis J. Abbott placed at Chicago headquarters; Clark Howell was head of the press committee.
ROOSEVELTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION

It is to be noted that the Democratic platform modified the advanced tariff position lately assumed by the party. There is no hint of tariff for revenue only; the tariff is opposed on account of its monopolistic, trust-breeding effect.

The campaign was a mild edition of the preceding one. Both the leading candidates had grown in public estimation. By promptly getting Secretary of War Alger out of his cabinet McKinley had rid himself of the onus of the embalmed beef served the army, nor was he blamed for the corruption and mismanagement which had developed. His lovable character stood him in good stead.

Bryan was better understood, better liked and more admired. No one now really believed him revolutionary or anarchistic; but he was still thought radical and the conservatism of the country, the "let well enough alone" feeling, was almost solidly against him again except that many conservative Democrats came back into the party notwithstanding their objections to Bryan's radicalism or progressivism. Anti-imperialism, too, brought some extreme conservative support.

Manifest destiny, manifest prosperity, Mark Hanna and his own strength enabled McKinley to win a decisive victory. His was the first purely party victory since 1888, for the Independents had elected Cleveland in 1892 and they and bolting Democrats had elected McKinley in 1896. Bryan's vote, however, in practically every state was respectable in size and character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular Vote</th>
<th>Electoral Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>7,208,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>6,274,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibition</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Democrat</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-of-Road Populist</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Labor</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McKinley's majority over all was near half a million, and his vote exceeded Bryan's by more than 800,000.

The Republicans took the election to be a mandate from the people to the government to do all it could for expansion, territorial and in the interest of business. Morgan proceeded to organize the iron and steel industry as he had the railroads and banks, and he had many large and small imitators. The current literature of the time was filled with stories of the trusts, Ida M. Tarbell's History of Standard Oil, Ray Stannard Baker's articles, Upton Sinclair's Jungle, Frank Norris' Octopus, Lincoln Steffens'
those from the Philippines barred, as according to Democratic principles the latter were not part of the United States.

The personnel of this convention is of interest as showing how strong was Bryan’s influence over the party in the various states at this juncture. There had been a great effort to discard obsolete issues and get together on the tariff and other settled Democratic policies and on the new issues so distinctly before the people. This 1904 convention is notable for the number of distinguished members. Especially did the South exert itself in this particular; some of the “Big Fours” from those states were made up of their most distinguished men, though not all followed this policy. Nevertheless, Senators and Senators-to-be, Governors and ex-Governors and Governors-to-be were plentiful. Bryan was a delegate, and John W. Davis.

The speech of Champ Clark of Missouri, the permanent chairman, was heard with the tariff and the trusts. He mentioned national free silver. The new party put its best foot forward in selecting the committees on resolutions. Senator Daniel of Virginia was chairman; among its members were Clarke, Arkansas, Thomas, Colorado, Saulsbury, Delaware, Delaware, Idaho, Shively, Indiana, Weaver, Iowa, Beckham, Kentucky, Williams, Mississippi, Bryan, Nebraska, Hill, New York, Patton, Pennsylvania, and Tillman, South Carolina.

There was quite a fight in the committee over a proposed financial plank, one taken from the Mississippi state convention’s resolution, to the effect that the recent great influx of gold removed the money standard issue from the field of political convention. This was vigorously opposed by Bryan and others. And an income tax plank was both omitted under the compromise, the compromise carrying by a vote of 35 to 15. The platform as reported was adopted without discussion or dissent, and apparently without any wild enthusiasm.

For a year or more there had been diligent Democratic searching for a suitable candidate and many men discussed in the newspapers. Cleveland and Bryan were the most desired and the most talked about, but both were recognized as impossible candidates to reunite the party. William Randolph Hearst and his friends worked up quite a boom for him and several state conventions instructed delegates for him.

It seems to have been conceded that the West had had the nomination the last two times without winning, it should go elsewhere, and that it was inadvisable to take a Southern man. The North after sober deliberation settled on Judge Alton B. Parker.
of New York, which selection was accepted by the party all over the country. Tammany's candidate was McClellan but it readily acquiesced in the selection of Parker. Bryan was opposed to Parker, but the opposition could not center on any candidate.

Parker's nomination was seconded by delegates from half of the states. Hearst, Gray of Delaware, General Nelson Miles, Senator Cockrell of Missouri, Richard Olney, Edward C. Wall of Wisconsin and John Sharp Williams were placed in nomination.

It was in his speech seconding Cockrell's nomination that Bryan said: "I came to-night to this convention to return my commission. You may dispute whether I have fought a good fight, you may dispute whether I have finished my course, but you cannot deny that I have kept the faith." Stating that the platform did not altogether suit those of the West, he agreed to stand on it. "Give us," he said, "a pilot who will guide the Democratic ship away from the Sylis of militarism without wrecking her on the Charybdis of commercialism."

There was only one-ballot, Parker receiving 679 votes, Hearst, Gray, 12, Miles, 3, Cockrell, 42, Olney, 38, Wall, 27, Williams, 19, scattering 10. The nomination was made unanimous. Henry Gassaway Davis of West Virginia, long a Senator and a veteran Democrat, was named for Vice-President on first ballot.

Immediately upon hearing of his nomination, Judge Parker sent the following telegram to the convention:

"I regard the gold standard as firmly and irrevocably established, and shall act accordingly, if the action of the convention to-day shall be ratified by the people. As the platform is silent on the subject, my view should be known to the convention, and if it is proved to be unsatisfactory to the majority, I request you to decline the nomination for me at once, so that another may be nominated before adjournment.

ALFRED B. PARKER."

Williams of Mississippi stated that every one in the convention well knew that Judge Parker had always been a gold standard man and that he had never concealed the fact, though always loyally supporting the Democratic candidates, and offered for adoption an asseenting reply to Parker. Bryan opposed this and advocated that the convention consider the insertion of a gold plank in the platform, which, of course, he would resist. After a sharp debate Williams' telegram was ordered sent by a vote of 794 to 141, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri and the silver-producing states voting nay. The telegram read:

"The platform adopted by this convention is silent upon the question of the monetary standard because it is not regarded by

ROOSEVELTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION

us as a possible issue in this campaign, and only campaign issues are mentioned in the platform. Therefore there is nothing in the views expressed by you in the telegram just received which would prevent me from accepting a nomination on said platform."

Among the new members of the National Committee were Roger Sullivan, Illinois, and Josephus Daniels, North Carolina. Thomas Taggart of Indiana was elected chairman, W. F. Sheahan chairman of the executive committee.

Parker's letter of acceptance stated the issues of the campaign as tariff reform, imperialism, economical administration and honesty in public service. He placed himself squarely on the platform. In strong contrast to the forbidding eloquence of the candidate of 1892 was the almost judicial severity and precision of the utterances of the Democratic candidate of 1904.

The People's party nominated Thomas E. Watson of Georgia and Thomas H. Tibbeles of Nebraska on a platform reaffirming the Omaha platform of 1892 and subsequent party declarations. The Socialist party named Eugene V. Debs of Illinois on a Socialistic platform, a lengthy exposition of the meaning, aim and purposes of Socialism. The Socialist-Labor Party named Charles H. Corrigan of New York on a Soviet platform. The United Christian Party, the National Liberal Party and the Continental Party, a new beginner, all held conventions and named candidates.

The Prohibition party nominated Silas C. Swallow of Pennsylvania and George W. Carroll of Texas. In addition to its liquor plank the platform had only a declaration of general principles on other questions.

The Republican convention of 1904 was largely a cut-and-dried affair. Hanna's death in February, 1904, left Roosevelt's way clear. Roosevelt's kind attitude toward the tariff, his "conservatism" in other vital matters, made him endurable to the stand-patters, while his popularity with the rank and file was already great—a fact the old Hanna crowd in the party acknowledged and bowed to. There had been previous to the convention a desultory contest over the second place on the ticket. Roosevelt was nominated without opposition, receiving every vote in the convention, as was Charles W. Fairbanks of Indiana for second place. This convention was described in the papers of the day as "most peace for dullness and tameness.”

The Democratic platform called for justice to labor and capital and for observance of constitutional guarantees; no government contracts with trusts; also the enlargement of the powers of
the Interstate Commerce Commission and the reclamation of arid lands in the West (two things they enabled Roosevelt to put through). They declared for direct election of Senators.

The Republicans pointed with pride to many things. They asserted that combinations of capital and of labor when for lawful purposes are entitled to protection of, but must not infringe, the laws.

Imperialism and the tariff were the live issues.

**Democratic Platform, 1904**

Imperialism. "We insist that we ought to do for the Filipinos what we have done for the Cubans, and it is our duty to make that promise now and upon suitable guarantees of protection to our citizens and others there at the time of withdrawal, set the Filipino people upon their feet, free and independent to work out their own destiny."

**Republican Platform, 1904**

Imperialism. "In the Philippines we have suppressed insurrection, established order and given to life and property a security never known there before. We have organized effective, strong civil government and conferred upon the people there the largest civil liberty they have ever enjoyed."

The Tariff. Protection which guards and develops our industries is a cardinal policy of the Republican Party. Protection should at least equal the difference in the cost of production at home and abroad. Rates should be readjusted only when conditions have so changed that public interest demands their alteration, which change should be intrusted to Republicans; to intrust it to Democrats is to invite disaster. A Democratic tariff has always been followed by disaster.

The Democratic tariff plank is more conservative than the bare "tariff for revenue only" and harks back to the Democratic position in the 1880's.

Judge Parker proved not a vote-getter, although he had carried his state by 60,000 plurality for Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals. In a time of crisis his conservatism might have carried him through, but 1904 was not an anxious time. Never was a cartoonist such an easy job. A laughing philosopher kept the nation in a grin; but the suspicion lingers that, like Gil Blas' friend Laura, the American people would not have laughed half so much or rather not half so much had they laughed as they knew that. Mr. Dooley's tales were tinted with the base ingredient of veracity.

George B. Cortelyou, Secretary of Commerce and Labor, was manager of the Republican campaign. This was regarded as a sinister fact since in his department was the Bureau of Corporations, the depository of all the facts collected concerning the trusts and big business. Late in the campaign Parker charged that the trusts were contributing to the Republican campaign fund. Roosevelt asserted that the statement was atrociously and unqualifiedly false. Years later, under investigations, the facts partly came out; the directors of the big insurance companies contributed large sums and charged them to their companies. The Morgans gave $350,000; the Standard Oil $100,000, Deew and his New York Central associates a like amount and George J. Gould the same, and E. H. Harriman the same or more, while various parties through George W. Perkins contributed $450,000.

One thing must be said of these contributions so far as the Republican candidate was concerned—there is no evidence that he gave any promises in exchange for them. It seems that they were contributions to the party and were induced more by fear than hope, by transactions partaking more of the nature of blackmail than bribery.

A request from the head of the Bureau of Corporations was freighted with all the emphasis of a highwayman's polite demand at the point of a pistol.

Running on the Republican platform, his own war record, the Ten Commandments and the Square Deal and riding a bucking bronco, Roosevelt romped home far in the lead. Parker carried the South, but not Missouri nor Delaware.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular Vote</th>
<th>Electoral Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>7,521,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>5,098,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>386,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibition</td>
<td>254,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Populist</td>
<td>117,267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The night of his election Roosevelt gave out the statement—"The wise custom which limits the President to two terms remains in being, substance and not the form, and under no circumstances will I be a candidate or accept another nomination." He supplemented this in December, 1907, with the statement—"I have not changed and shall not change the decision thus announced." H. H. Kohlhaas says Roosevelt, after the Taft-Roosevelt estrangement, told him he could cut his right hand off to recall his renunciation.

To the Democratic minority rather than to the Republican majority in Congress are due the good measures passed during Roosevelt's second administration. Roosevelt's progressive measures were Democratic measures. The reclamation of arid lands...
time to dissuade him from the step, but without avail. Later, seeing that so advanced a step was unpopular, he stated that he did not think it an immediate issue, but that if regulation proved ineffective it might be the ultimate solution. But his budding reputation for conservatism was severely checked and the hope of his obtaining the conservative independent vote much lessened.

The convention chose Theodore Belt of California as temporary, H. D. Clayton of Alabama as permanent chairman. Both keynote speeches dwelt on the evil of organized wealth, the Republican failure to pass the law requiring publicity for campaign contributions, and the inequities of the tariff.

The platform committee had among its members Clarke of Arkansas, Saulsbury of Delaware, Dubois of Idaho, Beckham of Kentucky, Stone of Missouri, Walsh of Montana, Alton B. Parker, New York, Simmons, North Carolina, W. H. King, Utah, and Daniel, Virginia. Their work was unanimously adopted.

Bryan, Gray and Johnson were placed in nomination; Bryan's nomination was seconded by some one from practically every delegation. There was only one ballot—Bryan, 888, Johnson, 45, Gray, 60. Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey and Pennsylvania nominated Gray's vote; Minnesota, Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island contributed to Johnson's.

John W. Kern of Indiana (nominated by Thomas R. Marshall), Charles A. Towne, Archibald McNeel and Clark Howell of Georgia were placed in nomination for Vice-President. Before the ballot was taken all except Kern withdrew and he was unanimously chosen.

Tomlinson of Alabama, Alva Adams of Colorado, Willard Saulsbury of Delaware, Robert Ewing of Louisiana, Fred B. Lynch of Minnesota, and Bruce Kremer of Montana were among the members of the national committee. Norman E. Mack of New York was elected chairman.

In an address before the committee Bryan advised and the committee adopted a resolution that no contributions from corporations should be received, and no individual contribution greater than $10,000, and that all contributions over $100 should be published.

"Shall the people rule" was the keynote of Bryan's speech of acceptance. The powers of organized wealth in politics, the trusts, the direct election of Senators, random in the lower House of Congress were the subjects most dealt with; reformation, not revolution, was the purpose of the Democratic Party, he said.

The People's Party nominated Thomas B. Watson of Georgia on a Populist platform. Eugene V. Debs was again named by
the Socialist Party on a Socialist platform. The Socialist-Labor Party nominated Martin H. Preston of Nevada on a Soviet declaration of principles. The Independent Party, an organization formed by W. R. Hearst and other followers to supersede the Democratic Party, nominated Thomas L. Higgin of Massachusetts and John Temple Graves of Georgia on a platform demanding direct nominations, the initiative, referendum and recall, a neutral government, rights of labor, public ownership, national health bureau, good roads, postal post, anti-bucket-shop law, and popular election of Senators and Judges.


The Republican convention promptly carried out Roosevelt's mandate and nominated William H. Taft. There had been little attempt by Roosevelt's enemies in his party to name Hughes or Fairbanks, or somebody else, but it was Taft or Roosevelt so they accepted Taft with hardly a struggle. What opposition survived was ironed out by Frank Hitchcock's steam roller at the convention. Great pressure had been brought upon Roosevelt to run again. The nomination of James Schoolcraft Sherman of New York for Vice-President was in the nature of a concession to the anti-Roosevelt wing of the party.

**Democratic Platform, 1908**

- Publicity of campaign contributions, states rights, tariff revision, trust regulation including interlocking directorates, railroad regulation, banking reform including guarantee of deposits, income tax, restrictions on injunctions and jury trials for contempt of court, merchant marine, adequate navy, civil service, health bureau, extension of agricultural and mechanical education, popular election of Senators, development of waterways, economy in government and decrease in number of officers, conservation and development of natural resources, regulation of telegraph and telephone.

**Republican Platform, 1908**

- Republicanism under Roosevelt and general prosperity under Republican administration praised.
- Adkins-Yeend Currency law approved.
- Stronger anti-trust law promised.
- Erie Railroad Rate Act approved, and Employers' Liability Act favored.
- Liberal labor law promised.
- Modification of court procedure in injunctions favored.
- Government with pride what the Republican Party had done for the farmer.
- Equal rights to the negro and enforcement of the 15th and 16th Amendments demanded.
- Denounced the Indian trust system.

**Rooseveltian Democratic Legislation, 1908**

- Missions of patronage, arbitrary power of Speaker of the House and imperialism in the Philippines condemned.

- Tariff. "Articles entering into competition with trust-controlled products should be placed on free list, and material reductions made in the tariff on the necessities of life, especially upon articles competing with American manufactures as are sold abroad more cheaply than at home. Graduated reductions should be made in other schedules to restore the tariff to a revenue basis. We demand an immediate repeal of the tariff on pulp, print paper, lumber, timber and logs."

- For the first time profit to the protected industries was specificallyavored in the Republican platform as one of the purposes of the tariff.

- Rooseveltism, that is, executive usurpation of power, jingoism, militarism, roughriding, was one of the issues of the campaign, scorned in the House, extravagance, trusts and the tariff, money in politics, publicity as to campaign funds and popular election of Senators, were others. The Republicans fought Bryanism, alleged Democratic inefficiency and tariff revision by unfriendly hands.

The Democratic candidate never had a real chance of success in 1908, although the Cleveland Democracy and Tammany gave him loyal support. The reactionary wing of the Republican Party knew their party's candidate. As Roosevelt's subordinate he had carried out Roosevelt's policies ably and thoroughly; as the Republican Party's President he would carry out the party's policies equally loyally, and they knew who would dictate those policies. Besides, for them there was no other choice. Thus Taft had the conservatism of his party back of him, while Roosevelt threw to him all the progressive and reform elements in the party, and the great mass of reformers and it, and it, went among them. Roosevelt took an active personal part in the campaign.

The support of organized labor under Samuel Gompers' active efforts was supposed to be for Bryan, but the election returned