

“The National Liberty Party now confronts the people of the United States claiming their consideration for the first time, but though the organization is in its infancy, the principles for which it stands are fundamental to our republican form of government. In fact, we are struggling to revive the well-nigh deserted principles of the grand old Whig Party (the mother of the Republican party), which declared for “popular rights,” government of all the people, for all the people, and by all the people.

When the founders of this republic were called upon to frame the Declaration of Independence and a Constitution for the further guidance, protection and foundation rock of the government, through their inspired wisdom they drafted ordinances declaring their independence, and guaranteeing protection, equal privileges, equal opportunity and equal rights to all citizens of the government. It was at that time clear to them that upon no other premises could the American people hope to secure their freedom and independence, and maintain a popular government. And the history of the past 127 years proves the correctness of their judgment, that to depart from these fundamental principles is to endanger the very perpetuity of our government.

The National Liberty Party calls the attention of the people of the United States to the bold fact that these fundamental principles are fast being covered up, ignored, disregarded, and practically nullified by the administrative power, the national governing
forces of both the Republican and Democratic parties, and the controlling political forces of at least six states of the Union which have recently by state constitutional amendment, actually disfranchised over 2,000,000 American born citizens.

Practically all of these disfranchised people are Negroes, and it is also a fact that, under the Federal Constitution and Laws, we are as emphatically recognized as citizens as are the most aristocratic Caucasians. Why not?

The history of the National Liberty Party is very brief. It is the direct outgrowth of the Civil and Personal Liberty Leagues, which for years have thrived among the Negroes of the South, and portions of the East. Through the efforts of Stanley P. Mitchell (the head of the Liberty Leagues) of Memphis, Tenn., and his associates, the first National Convention of the National Liberty Party was held in the auditorium of the Douglas Hotel in the city of St. Louis, on the 5th and 6th days of July last, when a permanent and complete organization of the party was effected. Thirty-six states were represented in the convention.

We religiously adhere to the sacredness of our form of government, and subscribe to its every tenet, law and claim. We believe that the tendency of the dominant parties is to dissipate these tenets, laws, and demands, and that it is our duty and the duty of every sober-minded citizen to join us in the arrest of this wholesale dissipation, in the interests of good government, the maintenance of federal power and the perpetuity of our system of government, which the popular statement of the world pronounces the most beneficent the world has ever known.
It must be clear to all unprejudiced students of history that whenever a government fails to secure for all its subjects or citizens at home, as well as abroad, that which it guarantees, that such government is nearing dangerous ground -- it matters not whether said neglected citizens belong to or represent a popular or unpopular class. For, in such neglect, a fundamental principle of government is abused, distorted, abandoned, and like a cancer it will continue to grow and spread until finally it gnaws in twain the very vital cords. The Negro who now suffers most directly, by reason of this neglect (disenfranchisement) is not in fact the only sufferer, for his immediate calamity is the beginning of the end of the downfall of the producing element of the races who comprise the vast common working classes of this great republic. The Negro of the United States is distinctively a factor in the great and grand army of American working men, and whatever enhances, strengthens, retards or impedes his progress, happiness, manhood, or citizenship rights, proportionately affects all the citizens of his class and standing. Hence, the interest that all common people of every race or nationality in the United States should have in this government. Does the question “Am I my black brother’s keeper?” arise in the minds of the common (white) people? If so, I refer to the history of the world from the days of Cain and Abel for your answer. Judas betrayed the Christ only to earn for himself eternal reproach and an ignominious death. Napoleon, through intrigue, captured and starved to death in a dungeon, that gallant statesman and warrior, Toussaint l’Ouverture, and as a reward, died the death of an exile; the Spaniards, through deception and cunning, assassinated General Maceo, the greatest Negro soldier and general of modern times, and soon afterwards were subjected to banishment and disgraceful defeat.
as their reward. In short, the history of the world proves the ultimate defeat of wrong and the establishment of right.

It is the purpose of the National Liberty Party to point out some of the dangerous errors in our present system of government and work their correction, and we shall not cease until this end shall have been accomplished, for it appears to us to be patriotically obligatory.

As to the independence of the National Liberty Party, I do not hesitate to state that, in every sense of the word, we are, and propose to remain, purely independent, for the principles for which we stand are not now germane to the platform of principles of any other political party. If they were, there would be no room or occasion for the existence of this party. The National Liberty Party is purely a creature of necessity.

Never before in the history of American Negro citizenship has the time been so opportune for an independent political movement on the part of the race. And never before has there been a time when such a movement could draw materially from the race. But now in the light of the history of the past four years, with a Republican president in the executive chair, and both branches of Congress and a majority of the Supreme Court of the same political faith, we are confronted with the amazing fact that more than one-fifth of the race are actually disfranchised, robbed of all the rights, powers and benefits of true citizenship, we are forced to lay aside our prejudices, indeed, our personal wishes, and consult with the higher demands of our manhood, the true interests of the country and our posterity, and act while we yet live, ere the time when it shall be too late. No other race of our strength would have quietly submitted to what we have during the past four years without a rebellion, a revolution, or an uprising.
We, too, propose a rebellion, a revolution, an uprising, not by physical force, but by the ballot, through the promulgation of the National Liberty Party. Our education, our civilization and our natural disposition, all incline us to this course as the only rational, consistent, effective method of attaining the desired end, viz.: representation \textit{as well as} taxation; the full exercise of our constitutional rights as citizens. The only truly effective way for the common people to correct a national evil lies in their power at the ballot box, if they will but exercise it judiciously.

Whenever the race and their co-laborers shall array themselves in one grand independent political phalanx, the very foundations of the two dominant political parties will be shaken and the leaders of both will be brought to a realization of the danger which threatens their organization, and \textit{“the rights of the people”} will again be considered by them instead of that of special classes, as is the present rule.

It is the intention of the committee of the National Liberty Party to perfect all necessary arrangements to have placed upon the ballots of the several states, presidential electors, and in many instances to nominate by petition and otherwise, congressional candidates. Should we fail to complete the organization in all the states this year, we shall continue the work after the election. Our greatest strength, of course, lies in the Southern states, which have not as yet adopted disfranchisement amendments. We expect to make a good showing in Kansas, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, W. Virginia, Tennessee, Iowa, Texas and many other states. It is conservative to estimate that at least sixty per cent of the Negroes of the states in which we secure a place upon the ballot for our candidates will vote for us. It is also fair to presume that a goodly number of the white independents
in these states will support the movement. Why not? We stand for the text and the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution; for universal suffrage; for the pensioning of all veterans of the war of the rebellion; for the establishment of a National Arbitration Board with power to adjust all differences that may arise between employer and employee; for the abolition of polygamy; for the nullification and repeal of all class legislation; for unsubsidized competition in all lines of commerce, and industry, which means the abolishment of all trusts and combines; for the pensioning of ex-slaves . . . and for a reduction of the tariff. We do not consider the money standard an issue of any merit in this campaign.

Every Negro who is loyal to his race and the powers that made him a free man, must join with us in heart, if not in action, in this effort to emphasize the fact that the Constitution of the United States is no respecter of persons, but that all American citizens are entitled to exercise all the rights of citizenship regardless of race or color.

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1 *Iowa State Bystander*, Des Moines, Iowa, 1 June 1900, p8, mentioned that the National Colored Personal Liberty League was schedule to meet in Philadelphia on 19-20 June 1900.