

Address of the committee from the state of Missouri to President Lincoln.

[Radical union party.

[Washington, 1863]

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Radical union party. Missouri.

ADDRESS
OF THE
Committee from the State of Missouri
TO
PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

MR. PRESIDENT :

On the first day of the present month of September, a Mass Convention of the Radical Union men of Missouri was held at Jefferson City. It was the largest Mass Convention ever held in that State; men from every quarter of the State being present; all actuated by the spirit of unconditional and unwavering loyalty to the Constitution and the Union; all sincerely attached to you as the Chief Magistrate of the Nation; and all earnestly desiring that your Administration should redound to the honor of your own name and the good of our beloved country.

Previous to the assembling of that Convention, public meetings were held in the great majority of the counties of the State, in almost every one of which resolutions were adopted cordially sustaining your Administration, and distinctly endorsing those great features of your policy—the Proclamation of Emancipation, and the employment of negro troops; upon which, in our opinion, the early success of the Government in subduing the rebellion largely depends. The Mass Convention, likewise, emphatically declared its approval of those measures. In marked contrast with the action so taken is the almost utter silence of our opponents, in their meetings, in regard to those great measures and to your Administration. You can judge, Mr. President, from these facts who are your friends in Missouri.

Among the proceedings of that Mass Convention was the appointment of a Committee of one or more from each county of the State there represented, to proceed to the City of

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Washington, and endeavor, by a personal conference with you, to remove from your mind injurious impressions which our opponents have long and industriously sought to create, and to procure, if possible, a change in the governmental policy in reference to Missouri. In pursuance of that appointment, we whose names are hereto subscribed, seventy in number, coming from fifty-seven counties of that State (containing, according to the Census of 1860, more than three-fourths of its entire population,) and representing all the industrial avocations of life, have journeyed more than one thousand miles to perform the duty assigned us, some of us doing so under circumstances of much difficulty and personal danger. We have brought with us a unanimous and confiding faith in your patriotism, generosity, and integrity, and an unquestioning belief in your readiness to do whatever is right in regard to our State, whenever you are fully advised concerning its affairs.

We represent, as we verily believe, a large majority of the people of Missouri, and a still larger majority of its lawful voters.

We come from a loyal people. Through the fiery trials of the last thirty months they have been willing to peril their all for the Union cause; and multitudes of them have not only perilled all, but lost all but their lives in that cause, or in consequence of their known identification with it. No accumulation of wrong and calamity has been sufficient to swerve them for a moment from their devotion to it and to your Administration, in every step you have taken to subdue the rebellion. No doubts or cavils have held them back, no denunciations deterred them, from rendering an open, courageous, and honest support to *all* your measures toward that great end. For ourselves, and on their behalf, we bid you God-speed in every policy tending to re-establish the rightful authority of the nation over every foot of its soil.

The Radical Union men of Missouri, recognizing in the institution of Slavery, the one sole cause and the very life of the rebellion, and believing in their inmost hearts that the continued existence of that institution is utterly inconsistent with the safety of our country, have deliberately planted themselves in a position of hostility to it. They demand its immediate removal from Missouri, not only for her own sake, but as her contribution, for the sake of the Union, toward its entire and final extirpation from American soil. They are opposed to its gradual removal, because at a time when the fate of the country hangs upon the dread arbitrament of a war begun and continued solely for the extension and perpetuation of Slavery, they do not believe that it has any claim to the consideration or forbearance of the true friends of the Union anywhere. They hold the INSTITUTION, more than men interested in it, respon-



sible for all the horrible evils which have afflicted our country for nearly three years; they find in it the only element which could ever have precipitated civil war in this land; they see that all the springs of sectional discord, past, present, or future, are in it; they know, from bitter experience, what wrongs, outrages, and calamities it is capable of inflicting; and they cannot appreciate, and do not believe in, that tenderness toward it or those interested in it, which would prolong its mischievous existence a single day beyond that at which it can be legally destroyed. We rejoice that in your Proclamation of January 1, 1863, you laid the mighty hand of the nation upon that gigantic enemy of American Liberty; and we and our constituents honor you for that wise and noble act. We and they hold that that Proclamation did, in law, by its own force, liberate every slave in the region it covered; that it is irrevocable; and that from the moment of its issue the American people stood in an impregnable position before the world, and the rebellion received its death-blow. If you, Mr. President, felt that duty to your country demanded that you should unshackle the slaves of the rebel States in an hour, we see no earthly reason why the people of Missouri should not, from the same sense of duty, strike down with equal suddenness the traitorous and parricidal institution in their midst.

Such, in brief, are the distinguishing traits of the portion of the people of Missouri, who have come to be called RADICALS. They accept the name, in its true significance in regard to the rebellion and Slavery, and desire no other till both the rebellion and Slavery are extirpated.

We are opposed in Missouri by a party which holds to CONSERVATISM as its fundamental idea. We desire that you should know who compose it. It comprises every disloyal man in the State; every man who denies that Slavery was the cause of the rebellion; every man who desires to uphold Slavery; every man who sympathizes with the rebellion; every man whose hands are red with the blood of Union men; every man who opposed the issue of your Proclamation of Emancipation; every man who holds that Proclamation revocable, and that its revocation would return to slavery the negroes it freed; every man who opposes the enlistment of negroes in our army; every man who carps at the radical policy of your Administration; every man who denounces you; and every man who would embarrass your efforts to save the Union and the Constitution from the assaults of Slavery. With them are associated a small body of Union men, who were so from the outbreak of the rebellion, and a larger body of those who were then openly disloyal, and who have since become professedly Union men, only because they found it dangerous to be any-

thing else, and who are at heart no more patriots now, than when they bitterly denounced you for your early efforts to array the power of the nation for the overthrow of the rebellion.

From a party so constituted, no conservatism could be expected, nor has any been realized, but of the institution of Slavery and the interests connected with it, as the foundation of social organization, but far more as the basis of political power. It was the representatives of that party who, in the State Convention of Missouri, disregarded the loyal sentiment of the State, and passed a so-called Ordinance of Emancipation, which, instead of liberating Missouri at once from the nation's greatest enemy, fastened that enemy upon her absolutely for seven years to come, and, in a modified form, for a quarter of a century after that. And we believe that even that ordinance was passed in the expectation of its repeal before the date fixed for Slavery to cease. Between such a party and that we represent there is, can be, and ought to be no concord, but only antagonism and strife; as there ought to be forever between those who stand by their country against *all* enemies, and those who divide their allegiance between their country and Slavery.

It has so happened that the State Government of Missouri, not by the direct vote of the people, but by the will of a Convention elected in February, 1861, and continuing itself in existence and power until July, 1863, has been entrusted to one whose conservative policy has been a source of great uneasiness and discord. When, in July, 1861, that Convention deposed CLAIBORNE F. JACKSON from the office of Governor, and appointed HAMILTON R. GAMBLE, provisionally, to that office, the latter opened his Administration with a Proclamation to the people of the State, in which he said that his appointment "*would satisfy all that no countenance would be afforded to any scheme or any conduct calculated in any degree to interfere with the institution of Slavery existing in the State, and that to the utmost extent of Executive power that institution would be protected.*" From the day of the publication of that Proclamation to the present, Governor GAMBLE's policy and acts have had a pro-Slavery character, while the Unconditional Unionism of the State has steadily advanced toward its present anti-Slavery attitude. The Radicals of Missouri desired and demanded the election of a new Convention, for the purpose of ridding the State of Slavery immediately. He, while such a proposition was pending in the Legislature, at its adjournment over to the ensuing November, wrested the whole matter from the

hands of the people, by summoning the old Convention—notoriously a pro-Slavery body—to act upon that subject. In that body he opposed immediate Emancipation, and threw all the weight of his influence in favor of the scheme which was finally adopted, not for the purpose of delivering Missouri from that which has cursed her beyond measure, and almost beyond endurance, but with the well-understood intent of continuing it to the latest possible day, and, in the language of a Delegate from one of the strongest pro-Slavery districts in the State, subsequently addressed to a meeting of his constituents, “*in order that something should be done to save slave property from utter waste and spoliation, and give to slaveholders a brief opportunity to make the best disposition in their power of their slaves.*”

Every act of his administration, anywise connected with Slavery, has demonstrated that the position assumed in his inaugural Proclamation has never been abandoned, in fact or in intent, and will not be as long as he continues Governor.

From the antagonism of the Radicals of Missouri to such a policy, have arisen the conflicts which you, Mr. President, have been pleased heretofore to term a “*factional quarrel.*” With all respect, we deny that the Radicals of Missouri have been or are, in any sense, a party to any such quarrel. We are no factionists; but men earnestly intent upon doing our part toward rescuing this great nation from the assaults which Slavery is aiming at its life. We are loyally trying to do that, while Conservatism in Missouri is trying how not to do it, and yet appear loyal. No loyalty such as our constituents have exhibited, ever did or ever will characterize a faction. We oppose our State Executive because his policy is, in our judgment, adverse to true loyalty, and to the vital interests of our State. No factious spirit dictates that opposition. We would rejoice to support his administration if we could, and be faithful to our country; but we cannot and will not, while his pro-Slavery policy is adhered to, for it cherishes disloyalty in our State. If to make and abide by that resolve constitutes us a faction, then are we, and, God helping us, will continue to be a faction. If, on the other hand, Mr. President, it relieves us in your mind from the imputation of factiousness, and gives us in your estimation our true position as a loyal people, we shall confide without hesitation in your justice and your friendship.

The policy of our State Executive represses and chills the loyal heart of Missouri, as a pro-Slavery policy represses and chills loyal hearts everywhere. The true and earnest

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patriots of our State have been made to feel in every way that there is little sympathy between him and them. No word has ever fallen from him publicly, which recognizes what we consider to be a vital truth, that, in the rebellion, it is Slavery warring against our noble institutions of Freedom. In our deliberate judgment, he who has not yet learned that truth, is wholly unable to comprehend how to foster and uphold loyalty, or to discountenance and suppress disloyalty. We do not believe that Governor GAMBLE has yet attained that point, and we have no hope that he will. You will not therefore be surprised to learn that he has never publicly approved your Proclamation of January 1, 1863, or the arming of negroes. On the contrary, it is the universal belief of the loyal people of Missouri, that he is opposed to both; as nearly all who support him are known to be.

It is as well-understood a fact in Missouri as any other in public affairs, that no man's loyalty to the Union commends him to Governor GAMBLE's favor, unless it be accompanied by a well-defined loyalty to the State administration; which latter description of loyalty has secured important positions to many, whose appointment could never have been justly based upon their devotion to the Union cause. But not in such points alone have the loyal hearts of Missouri learned that between them and Governor GAMBLE there is little in common. The whole policy of his administration, so far as it connects itself, directly or remotely, with the civil strife in our country, is adverse to them, and lenient, if not favorable, to their adversaries. He has interposed his official influence to screen disloyal men from military measures deemed necessary to subdue the spirit of treason. He and his partisans used their influence to procure the removal of a Commanding General of the Department of the Missouri, whose only offense, so far as known, was a just severity toward rebels and their aiders and abettors. He has, without authority of law, in the judgment of some of our ablest jurists, drafted into active service under the State, large bodies of the Enrolled Militia of Missouri, every officer of which above the rank of Captain, holds office at his pleasure. We declare it to be an incontrovertible fact, that known identification with the Radical Union party is almost certain to exclude an individual from any official position in those troops. Many such men have been summarily dismissed from important commands, without explanation, and their places supplied with men of doubtful loyalty, and in some instances by those who, in the early stages of the rebellion, were violent secessionists, and who now combine

with professed Unionism a conservatism which leaves no doubt of the quarter toward which their sympathies flow. It has been too marked a fact to escape notice, that the officers thus dismissed were generally those who had distinguished themselves by the vigor with which they pursued traitors, and those who fed, clothed, and shielded them; while we believe it to be strictly true, that no one has been dismissed because of neglect or inefficiency in that work. Companies and regiments of the Enrolled Militia, which pursued rebels, guerrillas, bushwhackers, and their accomplices with a legitimate severity, have been disbanded, under circumstances which left upon loyal minds the painful conviction, that their offense was a too active and resolute effort to rout and destroy those fiendish marauders. In every way the people of Missouri have been forced to learn, that rigor toward those enemies of law, order, property, life, and loyalty, commends no man to the favor of our Executive. It is equally well known that those who cordially sustain your Proclamation of Emancipation, and your policy of arming the negroes, fall under his displeasure in the bestowal of appointments.

The result of all this is only what would inevitably follow. Disloyalty, under the *alias* of Conservatism, is presumptuous and defiant. In large portions of our State, it is far safer to be known as disloyal, than as truly loyal. Thousands of Union men have been driven from their homes beggared, and multitudes have been murdered while pursuing their peaceful avocations—often in the presence of their families—for no offense but that of uncompromising fidelity to the Union. The whole country was shocked at the recent awful tragedy at Lawrence, in our neighbor State of Kansas; but were that multiplied a hundred-fold, it would not equal the sum of the outrages which loyal men have suffered in Missouri, but which, occurring in detached instances and isolated positions, are little heard of away from the immediate vicinity, and therefore come not to your knowledge. It is a lamentable fact, that in the larger part of our State the property and life of a Union man are less secure now, than they were when rebel armies were there.

In sober truth, Mr. President, the condition of loyal people there is rapidly becoming intolerable. To what further extent our suffering brethren can bear in patience the load of unmerited wrong which presses them on every side, God only knows. And all this we unhesitatingly lay to the charge of Governor GAMBLE'S pro-Slavery conservative policy, which infects all administrations, civil and military, discourages and depresses loyalty, and elevates dis-

loyalty into a predominance which is galling to the last degree to the unconditional Union men of Missouri.

We desire, Mr. President, distinctly to invoke your attention to the organization by Gov. GAMBLE of the Enrolled Militia of Missouri. It is a matter in which, in our judgment, the Government of the United States is concerned. We have already stated that it is the opinion of many of the ablest jurists of our State, that the organization of that militia force is without any warrant of law. It has proceeded solely from the will of the Governor. Seventy-five regiments have been organized, and, as before stated, all the officers above the rank of Captain receive their appointments from him. It has been officially announced that this is a *State* force, organized under State authority, whose duty is to enforce the laws of the State, and that to those laws alone they are amenable. This force is furnished with subsistence, forage, and transportation by the United States; and yet, by orders from the Head Quarters of the State, they were prohibited from rendering assistance in enforcing some orders issued by Federal authority. Until recently they were used for the purpose of returning fugitive slaves to their owners. In organizing this force, those citizens capable of performing military duty, who declared their sympathies to be with the rebellion, were, without commutation, exempted from rendering military service, and yet have received full protection ever since; many of the loyal militiamen being compelled to stand guard over their property. At the same time loyal citizens have, without authority of law, been forced, without having previously voluntarily enlisted, to enter the service of the State, for periods varying from one to eight and ten months; in many instances leaving their families wholly without the means of support. The organization of those troops has assumed a *quasi* permanent character, by the creation of a force known as "*Provisional Regiments*." The intended strength of this force is unknown. That rests entirely with the Governor. It is organized by arbitrary detail from the Enrolled Militia, by officers selected to serve in a Provisional Regiment. The term of service is indefinite, its nature and objects undefined by law and unknown to those who are detailed, and the selection of the soldier is independent of any fixed rule. His first intimation is that he has been detailed to serve in a Provisional Regiment, and he is not permitted to inquire by what authority he has been detailed, or into what service he must enter, or for what length of time he must serve. It is sufficient for him to know that he has been detailed, and must go at once, without time for preparation; and if he fails to respond immediately to the call, he is hunted out and compelled into the ranks at the point of the bayonet. In the exercise of this arbitrary power intolerable burdens

have fallen upon loyal citizens, from which the disloyal are exempt: in a word, a bonus is thus paid for disloyalty, and a penalty exacted for loyalty.

And we call your especial notice, Mr. President, to the fact that on the 17th day of this month, at the very moment that steps had been or were about to be taken, by *habeas corpus*, to test the legality of this whole system of conscription into the service of the State, the Commanding General of the Department of the Missouri issued a General Order, declaring that your Proclamation of the 15th inst., suspending the writ of *habeas corpus* in certain cases throughout the United States, would in that Department be "held to apply to all Missouri Militia called into active service under the orders of the Department Commander." Gen. SCHOFIELD has thus made himself a party to Governor GAMBLE's system of compulsory service in the Militia, in a manner which, we respectfully suggest, was not contemplated by you in that Proclamation.

In regard to this whole matter of the Enrolled Militia, we would further respectfully suggest, whether it is consistent with the Constitution of the United States for such a force to be organized and kept under arms by any State authorities; and we hope it may please you, Mr. President, to cause that point to be investigated. But whether so or not, we beg leave, with all respect, to protest against the further continuance of that system in Missouri. Permit us to say, with the frankness due to this occasion, that Missouri is as much entitled as any other State to be protected by the *National* arms. Neither law, justice, nor equity demands that the burden of protecting her should be thrown upon her people and her treasury. We ask therefore, the immediate restoration of the military control of that State to the hands of the National officers and troops, and the entire discharge of all the Enrolled Militia of the State from any further service at the arbitrary will of the Governor.

We ask further, Mr. President, that, in the place of Gen. SCHOFIELD, a Department Commander be assigned to the Department of the Missouri, whose sympathies will be with Missouri's loyal and suffering people, and not with Slavery, and pro-Slavery men. We regret to feel compelled to make this request, but duty demands it. Gen. SCHOFIELD has disappointed our just expectations, by identifying himself with our State Administration; and his policy as Department Commander has been, as we believe, shaped to conform to Gov. GAMBLE's pro-Slavery and conservative views. He has subordinated Federal authority in Missouri to State rule. He has become a party to the enforcement of conscription

into the State service. He has countenanced, if not sustained, the orders issued from the State Head Quarters, prohibiting enlistments from the Enrolled Militia into the volunteer service of the United States. Officers acting under him have arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned loyal citizens, without assigned cause, or for daring to censure Gov. GAMBLE's policy and acts. Other such officers have ordered loyal men to be disarmed, and in some instances the order has been executed; while, under the pretense of preventing an invasion of Missouri from Kansas, notorious and avowed disloyalists have been armed. He has issued a military order prohibiting the liberty of speech, and of the press. An officer in charge of negro recruits, that had been enlisted under lawful authority, as we are informed and believe, was, on the 20th instant, arrested in Missouri, by Brigadier General GUITAR, acting under General SCHOFIELD's orders, his commission, side-arms, and recruits taken from him, and he imprisoned and sent out of the State. And, finally, we declare to you, Mr. President, that from the day of Gen. SCHOFIELD's accession to the command of that Department, matters have grown worse and worse in Missouri, till now they are in a more terrible condition than they have been at any time since the outbreak of the rebellion. This could not be, if Gen. SCHOFIELD had administered the affairs of that Department with proper vigor, and with a resolute purpose to sustain loyalty and suppress disloyalty. We therefore respectfully pray you to send another General to command that Department; and, if we do not overstep the bounds of propriety, we ask that the Commander sent there be Major General BENJAMIN F. BUTLER. We believe that his presence there would restore order and peace to Missouri in less than sixty days. He would be received by our people with rejoicing, and they would once more be permitted to feel that LOYALTY is to govern Missouri.

Mr. President, we have laid before you a frank statement of the condition of Missouri affairs. We have endeavored carefully to avoid exaggeration, and to speak the simple truth. Much more might have been said, but we wished not to weary you. Seventy of us, from every part of Missouri, stand in your presence to witness the truth of our statements. We invite your inquiries upon any point that we have touched. We shrink from no investigation. We entreat you to observe, that in our ill-fated State the conflict is between LOYALTY and DISLOYALTY. It is impossible that both should rule there. One or the other must go down. Whether the loyal hearts of Missouri shall be crushed, is for you to say. If you refuse our requests, we return to our homes, only to witness, in consequence of that refusal, a more active and relentless persecution of

Union men, and to feel that while Maryland can rejoice in the protection of the Government of the Union, Missouri is still to be the victim of a pro-Slavery conservatism, which blasts wherever it reigns. Does Missouri deserve such a fate? What border slave State confronted the rebellion in its first spring as she did? Remember, we pray you, who it was that, in May, 1861, captured Camp Jackson, and saved the Arsenal at St. Louis from the hands of traitors, and the Union cause in the Valley of the Mississippi from incalculable disaster. Remember the Home Guards who sprang to arms in Missouri, when the Government was without troops or means to defend itself there. Remember the more than fifty thousand volunteers that Missouri has sent forth to battle for the Union. Remember that, though always a slave State, her unconditional loyalty to the Union shines lustroously before the whole nation. Recall to memory these things, Mr. President, and let them exert their just influence upon your mind. We ask only justice and protection to our suffering people. If they are to suffer hereafter, as now, and in time past, the world will remember that they are not responsible for the gloomy page in Missouri's history, which may have to record the independent efforts of her harassed but still loyal men, to defend themselves, their families, and their homes, against their disloyal and murderous assailants.

WASHINGTON, *September, 30, 1863.*

CHAS. D. DRAKE, of St. Louis, *Chairman.*

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J. W. McCLURG, M. C., 2d *Vice Chairman.*

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N. T. DOANE, of Grundy county, }

H. T. COMBS, of Harrison county, }

W. B. ADAMS, of Montgomery county. }

THOMAS ANSELL, of Callaway county. }

J. W. AZELTYNE, of Cooper county. }

J. F. BABCOKE, of Miller county. }

S. H. BEALL, of Carroll county. }

O. H. BEEMAN, of Adair county. }

GEO. A. BEZONIA, of Phelps county. }

T. B. BRATTON, of Livingston county. }

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