

AN
AMERICAN
PROGRAM

BY

Wendell L. Willkie

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FOREWORD

THE SEVEN ARTICLES included here on what seem to me the most important problems before us today were written before the conventions in the hope of stimulating discussion that would affect the party platforms for the 1944 presidential campaign—particularly the Republican platform. For I believe that party platforms are important indications of the collective will of the party, both in their omissions and in their professions. And this is a time in our history when we need to choose our leaders with full knowledge of their purposes.

Later, I embodied the gist of the seven articles in a suggested platform in the event that I might have the opportunity to fight for the ideas I believed in at Chicago. The opportunity never came.

When the editor of *Collier's* asked me to analyze and comment on the platforms adopted by the Republican and Democratic Parties, I at first hesitated. There seemed little to be gained by post mortems. But when I realized the vast disappointment of millions of thoughtful men and women in these platforms—a disappointment which I shared—I decided that on at least two points I might help to arouse and make articulate a body of public opinion that would demand clear statements of purpose, not only from the presidential candidates but from the vice-presidential and congressional candidates, instead of the evasive mockeries put over at Chicago. The two subjects were our international obligations and our attitude on racial minorities.

As the campaign goes on the importance of candor and straightforward thinking on these subjects becomes increasingly clear. It is not enough that we should be offered the mere forms of international cooperation. That is shadow building. For it is the economic relationships between nations that will determine the real possibility of peace. And pledges of wider social security with just treatment of minorities are largely

words as long as the interpretation and performance of such pledges is left to the individual states.

Believing that the influence of an aroused, informed public opinion is of incalculable value in a democracy, I once more urge that we demand now, while there is still time, meaningful statements on these matters from those who would be our leaders; and that in the future we continue watchful and alert that our purposes may be made effective. For our attitude on our racial minorities and on our international obligations will constitute a test of our sincerity at home and abroad and of our ability to bring about, with other nations, a world of peace and security.

September 25, 1944

WENDELL L. WILLKIE

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In April, 1943, Simon and Schuster were privileged to publish ONE WORLD by Wendell L. Willkie. That book, one of the most significant documents of our time, immediately became the most widely read and discussed non-fiction book of the twentieth century. It was translated into virtually every foreign language. In the United States, in Great Britain, in free countries all over the world, it was, and still is, an enormous best seller. During the past year alone, close to 3,000,000 copies were printed and distributed. Even in nations living under the Nazi yoke—in Denmark, in France, and elsewhere—editions were printed and widely distributed by the Underground. Today's newspaper headlines reveal again and again how shrewd is its observation, and thoughtful people turn constantly to its trenchantly phrased philosophy as the best expression of the purpose for which we are fighting.

Some weeks ago, at the request of the New York Herald Tribune, The Boston Herald, The Minneapolis Star Journal and Tribune, The Des Moines Register and Tribune, The Portland Oregonian, and The San Francisco Chronicle, Mr. Willkie wrote and published seven articles having to do with America's problems both at home and abroad. In view of the approaching political conventions, he pointed out what political action should be taken toward the solution of these problems. Subsequently, he published his own version of what a present day progressive platform for the Republican Party should contain. Those articles and that platform, separated by an ideological gulf from the platforms recently drafted by the Democratic and the Republican conventions, received instantaneous editorial acclaim from one end of the country to

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the other. When the Conventions were over and the candidates had made their acceptance speeches, Mr. Willkie analyzed the results of what amounted to "cowardice at Chicago" in two articles for Collier's Magazine.

Wendell L. Willkie's seven newspaper articles, his proposed platform, and his two analyses of the platforms that were adopted, are included in this pamphlet.

As Mr. Willkie's publishers, we are indeed happy to publish this little book, not as special pleading, but simply because we believe the ideas contained in these pages represent a great contribution toward creating the better America and the better world that we all hope and pray is to come.

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Federal Power and States' Rights

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY in its beginning arose from the people's urge to build a strong national government to offset the disruptive, weakening influence of the States' Rights Doctrine of the Democratic Party. Paradoxically, now, in 1944, that same Republican Party is urged to dedicate itself to the Doctrine of States' Rights.

In the days of the party's founding, a strong central government was necessary to prevent disruption of our political union. Today, a strong central government is necessary to prevent disruption of our economic and social structure by a variety of conflicting authorities and interests. In that early day, federal power was necessary to make us in fact a nation. Today, federal power is necessary to enable the United States to live and lead in the family of nations.

The debate concerning the concentration of power in Washington is a recurring one. It arises to some extent in every presidential campaign and becomes particularly violent during war periods. But the sincerity and vigor of the present protest has been occasioned by causes beyond the normal maneuvers of politics or the dislocations created by the federal assumption of necessary war powers. It arises from more far-reaching causes.

The spectacle of the present administration's arbitrary use of vast authority; the caprices of a government of men grown bold and reckless with the use of power, favoring first one economic group and then another, while subjecting individuals and their rights to the judgment of whims and theories; the manifold evidences to every citizen, even in his own community, of the inefficiencies and reckless extravagances of federal agents—all these abuses have aroused dissatisfactions among the people which have naturally formed an issue for the

opposition party. But we must not be confused as to what the issue is or where the solution lies.

It is not the worn-out issue of states rights versus strong federal government. That is not an issue; that is a relic.

The states have their proper functions and Republicans can be proud that in the administrations of the twenty-six Republican Governors we have an outstanding example today of competent state government.

But ever since the adoption of the Constitution, with the expansion of the country and the growth of its concerns, there has been a trend towards stronger central government. It was firmly established in the Civil War, and became increasingly marked after World War I. President Hoover's Committee on Recent Social Trends, published a report in 1933, that noted the growth of federal functions during the three preceding Republican administrations and concluded:

"The shifts from state to federal authority thus reflect the incapacity of the several states to deal with problems of transportation, communication, merchandising, labor-capital relations and other vital aspects of social and economic life."

It could hardly be put better.

Any national administration in a modern complex industrial society must exercise vast powers. The United States cannot be divided into forty-eight separate economic units. We cannot, for instance, have forty-eight different minimum wage laws; nor can we have a variety of state policies if we hope to protect the farmer against the precipitate downward spiral of post-war agricultural prices. Businesses national in scope, social and economic problems that affect all our people alike can only be dealt with on a national basis. The number and character of such problems increases steadily with every step in our industrial growth and expansion. And the more we move, as we must move, into the affairs of the world, the more this will be true. For we will be living and functioning and trading in a world where other peoples have granted to their governments the power and the authority to act for them.

No, the issue today is not the issue of states' rights versus

federal power. The issue is government administered under law. For if economic and social regulations in our modern industrial age must be national in scope to be effective, so their administration must be by law and rule if the citizen is to remain free.

The solution lies not in a weakened central government. It lies in assuring the proper use of the power we have deemed it wise and necessary to grant to the federal government. That means a sense of responsibility in administration. It means—and this is important—local administration of numerous federal functions in their local application. And it means primarily the substitution of government by law for government by caprice and unlimited discretions. Under such exercise of federal power, every citizen, rich or poor, labor leader or factory manager, issuer of securities or wage earner, farmer or businessman may know his rights and may know that in case of dispute they will be adjudicated fairly and equitably under law and rules which at least his lawyer can understand.

The issues involved in federal power and its proper use concern human freedom itself. They are issues which Republicans should state clearly and fight for—not behind an out-moded mask of states rights or in conjunction with those who use that mask to prevent social and political advance, or those others who, by a pretense of concern for the rights of the states, really seek to weaken the federal government to such an extent that the United States will be unable to play its appropriate role in the world of today.

They are issues we should fight for vigorously, frankly and openly. If we prevail we will have a government representing us abroad with dignity and power, an instrument of the united will of our people which can lead the world to tangible economic and political cooperation. And at home we shall have a government with power to vitalize our economy, eliminate its abuses, and, at the same time, preserve and extend the freedom of its citizens.

To build such a government—strong centrally and just in its administration—is in the finest tradition of the Republican Party.

The Negro

UNDER THE leadership of Lincoln, in the fires of Civil War, the Republican Party's struggle to save the union was transposed into the great moral issue of human freedom. By the Emancipation Proclamation and by amendments to the Federal Constitution, under Republican leadership, the Negro was legally and constitutionally guaranteed exactly the same rights as every other citizen of the United States.

It is therefore strange that Republicans, year after year, yield to the old states rights argument and a narrow interpretation of federal power, to prevent the passage of federal statutes which constitute the only practical method by which the Negro's rights can be assured him.

One of these basic rights is the right to vote. Another is the right to live free of the haunting fear and the too-frequent actuality of mob violence. The first can be guaranteed, under the circumstances existing today, only by a federal statute eliminating state poll taxes and other arbitrary prohibitions against the free exercise of the voting franchise; the other, only by a federal statute making the crime of lynching tryable in federal courts and punishable by federal law.

The Republican Party in its platform and in the declarations of its candidates should commit itself unequivocally and specifically to federal anti-poll tax and anti-lynching statutes.

The Negro people of the United States understandably refuse to accept the technical arguments against cloture in the debates on anti-poll tax and anti-lynching bills, or even the sincere claims of constitutionalism which prevent such just measures from becoming law. And the very fact that the Republican Party was the instrumentality through which the Negroes were given freedom makes them the more resentful

that it should join in acts which prevent them from obtaining the substance of freedom.

Nor will they be satisfied by the counsels of patience and the assurances of kindly men that progress has been made that eventually, through fair treatment and cooperative effort, Negroes will in some distant day obtain the rights which the Constitution itself guarantees to them.

No one who has not stopped seeing and thinking could have missed the events of the past few years that have drawn together thirteen million Americans—one tenth of the nation—into a determined, purposeful unit.

In that time, Negroes have known the bitter humiliation of seeing their men and women, eager to serve in the nation's armed forces, excluded from some branches of the service or often relegated to menial jobs in the branches to which they have been admitted. They have witnessed the ugly and tragic results of race hatred and riots. They have known the brief security of good jobs at decent wages while their help was needed in order to make the tools of war, only to be filled with deep anxiety for fear that in the readjustments of peace they will be shuffled off into unemployment and poverty.

At the same time, from the battlefields of Italy to the gold-star homes here in America they have learned that there is nothing more democratic than a bullet or a splinter of steel. They want now to see some political democracy as well.

Millions of them distrust the Democratic Party which for years has deprived the Negro of his right to vote in Atlanta while seeking his vote as the friend of his race in Harlem. But in view of the economic advances and social gains which have come to Negroes during the past twelve years, they will not leave that party for vague assurances of future action expressed in pious platitudes, or for a 1944 version of the states rights doctrine, or even for procedures which, however legally correct, in practical effect indefinitely postpone correction of sore and desperate abuses.

Negro leaders are alert and educated and sophisticated. They know that their problem is a part of the world-wide struggle for human freedom. For their people they ask only their rights

—rights to which they are entitled. The Constitution does not provide for first and second class citizens.

They are entitled to the same opportunity to acquire an education—an education of the same quality—as that given to other citizens.

They should receive the same per capita expenditure of public moneys for schools, housing, health and hospitalization as is allotted to other citizens.

Their right to work must equal that of any citizen and their reward should be the same as the reward of any other citizen for the same job.

Their economic opportunity should not be limited by their color.

And last, they should have the right of every citizen to fight for his country in any branch of her armed services without discrimination and with equality of opportunity.

These are merely rights that the Negro of our communities is entitled to share with other citizens. Republicans should see to it that he gets them. For all of these reasonable demands are consistent with the very principles upon which the Republican Party was founded. All of them are a part of the freedom for which men of every color and race are dying. Our adoption or rejection of them will be the test of our sincerity and of our moral leadership in the eyes of hundreds of millions all over the world.

Social Security

A FREE ECONOMY, by its nature, entails a certain amount of fluctuation and risk. As a matter of fact, much of its strength and its very freedoms are directly related to its risks. But one cannot enjoy the freedoms of such a society without a minimum of economic security. Therefore the risks must be spread sufficiently to guarantee that all members of society are protected against the final economic disaster of going without the bare necessities of life. This is the function of the social insurances.

We have too often been led to regard the social insurances as the opposite rather than the supplement of our enterprise system. We have been presented with them as alternatives. Do you want security or initiative? Do you want protection or adventure? This is a factitious issue. We need both. Indeed we cannot have one without the other. We cannot have security in terms of an advancing standard of living without enterprise. We cannot have the initiative and energy we need for an expanding economy without preserving and increasing the vigor of our human resources.

Our present Social Security Laws are inadequate for this purpose. The proposed Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill contains some of the essentials of an inclusive Social Security Program: Namely, a unified system of social insurances, including old-age benefits, federal unemployment insurance, a strengthened federal employment agency, disability insurance, maternity benefits, social insurance for members of the armed forces, agricultural workers and the self-employed, and medical care for all. But unfortunately it is in many respects poorly conceived and perpetuates the inequities of the present law. Taxes still fall most heavily upon the lowest paid workers, while bene-

fits are largest to the most highly paid. Coverage is still incomplete and eligibility rules are complicated.

Need knows no rules of eligibility or coverage. Protection against old age, illness and economic misfortune must be a *right* for everyone. A right each has earned through paying for all the social insurances in accordance with his ability. Benefits must be adequate to provide a minimum sustenance in health and decency, regardless of a man's previous earnings. This is important not alone to the individual, but to assure the relative stability of our consumer industries and agricultural production and the well being of our whole society.

Complete medical care should be available to all. But any plan adopted today should be sufficiently flexible to allow for experimentation and growth, and in any program of public medicine the value of the practicing physician's relationship to his patient must be recognized. Adequate provision must be made for building facilities where none now exists, for developing health and diagnostic centers, and for funds for research and medical education.

Another form of insurance that is of outstanding importance for the relatively stable functioning of our free economy is an adequate and uniform system of federal unemployment insurance. Today, we have fifty-one separate laws governing unemployment compensation. Our economy is too interdependent to allow this division of responsibility to continue. The present tax collection machinery, federal for some insurances, state for others, with duplication of records, is wasteful, costly and time-consuming. And benefit rates vary widely and are inadequate.

The post-war reconversion strain will fall unevenly on the states. In this crucial period we shall need the stabilizing influence of uniform standards and procedures, and of adequate benefits fixed, not according to former wages, but on the basis of a regional cost of living, to cover bare necessities.

For a long time our society left the education of children to the individual parents' ability to pay. Then it made a decision which changed civilization. It decided that all children should be educated, regardless of their parents' income.

We are now faced with another decision as logical and as