THE NATIONAL LIBERAL REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT
OF 1872

THESIS

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By

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PREFACE

The study of third party movements is essential to the understanding of the historical development and change in policies of the two major parties. When a movement has gained wide popularity and support by advocating social or political reform, the major parties have been forced to re-examine their own policies, and in many cases have had improvement virtually forced on them. Thus third party movements have frequently led to social legislation and attempts to abolish political abuses and irregularities.

The purpose of this study is to present an historical account of the Liberal Republican movement during the Reconstruction period. The Liberal movement was chosen for investigation because it was the first prominent third party movement in the post-Civil War years. The Liberal Republican movement was less important in shaping the policies of the two major policies than later third party movements, and, in fact, its long range results are almost impossible to trace. By gaining national prominence, however, and by accepting the Democrats in a coalition, the movement did provide a much needed stimulus to the Democratic party and caused the Republicans to reconsider their policies. It also provided an example to later movements that a third party could gain a great deal of support by advocating and working for general political reform.
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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE LIBERAL REPUBLICANS

The Liberal Republican movement, which advocated general reform in politics, reached its pinnacle in the national election year of 1872, but it was actually conceived during the early years of the first Ulysses S. Grant administration. Problems of reconstruction and administrative abuses, many of a scandalous nature, gave rise to an anti-administration faction within the Union Republican Party, and, in general, provided impetus to the Liberal movement.¹

Following the election of Grant in November, 1868, the majority of the voting population in the United States breathed a sigh of relief.² The victorious general of the Union army seemed to bring with him an air of security and mature judgement, and, while it was true that few of his supporters considered him to possess any outstanding ability to deal with political affairs, it was also true that few of them considered him to be the complete political incompetent

¹The term Liberal is used in this thesis to identify that group of Republicans which opposed the Grant administration and Radical control of politics.

that he proved to be. The Republicans had chosen Grant to run in 1868 because the party leaders felt he was the only candidate who could guarantee a Republican victory at the polls. Carl Schurz, Republican Senator from Missouri and a leading mid-western journalist who later became one of the outstanding leaders in the Liberal Republican movement, recorded in his memoirs that the majority of the voters held in high esteem the great war hero.

Upon assuming the duties of the presidency, Grant was faced with all the difficulties of reconstruction, but at the same time he was presented with probably the best opportunity in United States history to show that he could be a great statesman. Grant, however, looked upon the presidency as a reward for his part in saving the Union and had agreed to head the Republican ticket only after being assured that he would

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4James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the Restoration of Home Rule in the South in 1877, 7 vols. (New York, 1892-1905), VI, 159. When the Republican Convention of 1868 met at Chicago, Grant was the only man mentioned for the presidential nomination. The fact that Grant's nomination would be unopposed was generally understood some months in advance. See John Tweedy, A History of Republican National Conventions from 1856-1908 (Danbury, 1910), pp. 84, 100.

5Schurz, Reminiscences, III, 285-303. For more evidence of Grant's popularity see Rhodes, United States, VI, 236.

be renominated in 1872. He soon convinced many Republicans that his political stupidity was unequaled in the annals of presidential history. Grant began his first term by ignoring prominent Republican leaders and choosing instead a group of relatively undistinguished men to serve in his cabinet. He eventually realized that he had to have a group of loyal supporters in Congress if he was to carry through his pet projects. He was able to win the devotion of Roscoe Conkling, James D. Cameron, Zachariah Chandler, Benjamin F. Butler and O. P. Morton in return for giving them the control of the federal patronage, which they handled in a most uncomplimentary manner to the Grant administration.

One of the first of Grant's pet projects, the purchase of San Domingo, led to the development of a schism between Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and the administration and also to the dismissal of the Attorney-General, Judge E.

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7Frederic Bancroft (editor), *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 6 vols. (New York, 1913), 11, 415.


Rockwell Hoar. Grant felt that the acquisition of San Domingo would be of great economic value to the United States and apparently his motives were completely patriotic. Sumner opposed Grant's annexation plans. Both Grant and Sumner directed harsh words at each other as a result of the disagreement, and while the annexation treaty was defeated in the Senate, Grant was able to have Sumner removed as the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. In the heat of the battle, Republican leaders asked Sumner to stop his vociferous attacks on the President or face the possibility of being read out of the party. These same leaders felt that in such an event the Republican party unity might be shattered because of Sumner's prominent standing among Republicans. Hoar was removed to make way for the appointment of a Southerner to the cabinet in an attempt to ensure favorable carpetbag votes for the annexation treaty.

10 Sumner to Justin S. Morrill, September 8, 1870, Forum, XXIV (December, 1897), 406-408; J. D. Cox, "How Judge Hoar Ceased to be Attorney-General," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVI (August, 1895), 162-173.

11 James D. Richardson (editor), Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 10 vols. (Washington, 1898), VII, 97-101.

12 Rhodes, United States, VI, 349-354; Sumner to Morrill, September 8, 1870, Forum, XXVI (December, 1897), 406-408; Nation, XII (March 16, 1871), 172-173.

13 Hamilton Fish to Justin S. Morrill, September 6, 1870; Justin S. Morrill to Charles Sumner, September 10, 1870, Forum, XXIV (December, 1897), 405-410; Nation, XII (March 16, 1871), 172-173.

The San Domingo dispute also brought about the opening breach between the Grant administration and Schurz. Schurz strongly opposed Grant's annexation plans and delivered what he considered to be the best speech he had ever made in opposition to the San Domingo treaty.\textsuperscript{15} Schurz's alienation from Grant grew steadily until finally an all-out break occurred in 1872 with the rise of the Liberal Republican movement to national proportions.

The Republican leaders were apparently satisfied with the existing policy of protection since the party platform in 1868 did not include any mention of the tariff issue.\textsuperscript{16} Following Grant's election, however, tariff debate began in Congress which eventually resulted in the passage of the tariff act of 1870, which Grant signed. This tariff act lowered duties on several items but managed to preserve the doctrine of protection.\textsuperscript{17} This virtual endorsement of a high tariff by Grant proved to be unfortunate for Republican party unity since the demand for tariff reduction was particularly strong among mid-western Republicans. The states of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, and Kansas sent a


\textsuperscript{16}Republican National Platform of 1868, quoted by Tweedy, \textit{Republican National Conventions}, pp. 96-98.

\textsuperscript{17}Ida Tarbell, \textit{Tariff in Our Times} (New York, 1911), pp. 68-69.
total of thirty-five Republicans who favored tariff reform to Congress in 1870.\textsuperscript{18} Ordinarily loyal administrative newspapers in the mid-west began to support vigorously a tariff reform movement, and even the pro-Grant \textit{New York Times} began to criticize the existing tariff policy.\textsuperscript{19} Horace Greeley, through the pages of the \textit{New York Tribune}, remained one of the few leading journalists of the day to advocate a protective tariff. The \textit{Nation}, under the editorship of E. L. Godkin, expressed the opinion that the protective tariff was a gross injustice to the American people and that the awakening within party ranks to the need for tariff revision should be heeded by the party leaders in Washington.\textsuperscript{20}

Republican leaders reacted to the growing demand for tariff reform by forcing the resignation of special revenue commissioner David A. Wells, who favored tariff revision, thus further alienating the reform segment within the Republican party.\textsuperscript{21} A group of tariff reformers then met in Washington and laid plans to defeat opposing representatives who strongly advocated a policy of protection.\textsuperscript{22} The \textit{New York Tribune}

\textsuperscript{18}Rhodes, \textit{United States}, VI, 278; \textit{The Free Trader}, quoted in the \textit{New York Tribune}, December 24, 1870.


\textsuperscript{20}\textit{The Nation}, X (Mar. 3, 1870), 132.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, XI (July 7, 1870), 2; (October 20, 1870), 250-251.

attributed the defeat of several Republican Congressmen that fall to the work of the tariff reformers.\footnote{New York Tribune, December 13, 1870.}

In Congress, Speaker of the House James G. Blaine began to fear a possible union between the tariff reformers and the Democrats. Blaine was convinced that if this coalition came about the members of it would work to defeat his re-election as Speaker; thus he set out to defeat it by making a compromise with the Republican reformers. At a secret meeting in New York, Blaine told four influential reform leaders: William B. Allison, Horace White, Charles Nordhoff, and General Jacob Brinkerhoff, that if they would not oppose his re-election as Speaker he would let the reform element name the Chairman of, and give them a majority on, the Ways and Means Committee. The reform leaders accepted Blaine's proposal and requested that he appoint James A. Garfield. When the Forty-second Congress opened on March 4, 1871, those favoring tariff reform apparently made up a majority. Blaine was duly re-elected Speaker, but then he failed to keep his part of the bargain. He appointed H. L. Dawes, who was not acceptable to the reformers, in place of Garfield and allowed a protectionist majority on the Ways and Means Committee. This action by Blaine widened the ever growing breach within the Republican party between the reformers and the administrationists.\footnote{Tarbell, Tariff, pp. 71-73.}
Carl Schurz, who felt that the system of government appointments was absurd, and a group of other Senators usually identified with the reform element within the Republican party, Lyman Trumbull, A. G. Thurman, and Charles Sumner, actively worked for civil service reform from the very beginning of the Grant administration but achieved few results.\(^{25}\) General Jacob D. Cox, Secretary of the Interior under Grant, strongly advocated reform in the manner of government appointments but could gain no support from the President, and, October 3, 1870, he was forced to resign.\(^{26}\) Samuel Bowles, a leading advocate of reform and the editor of the *Springfield Republican* in Massachusetts, attacked Grant's handling of the civil service and Cox's forced resignation.\(^{27}\) The *Nation* followed suit by lauding Cox's attempts at reform and blasting the "party intriguers" influence over Grant.\(^{28}\) In November, 1870, a group of civil service reformers met in New Haven and

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\(^{26}\) Jacob D. Cox, "Civil Service Reform," *North American Review*, CXII-CXIII (Jan., 1871), 81-112; Rhodes, *United States, VI*, 381-382; *Nation*, XII (March 16, 1871), 172.


\(^{28}\) *The Nation*, XI (October 13, 1870), 232.
wrote Cox a letter of admiration and appreciation for his services.29

The next year Grant set up a Civil Service Commission to study the situation and make recommendations for improvement. On December 19, 1871, he announced that steps would be taken toward reform based on the findings of the Commission.30 Grant was apparently sincere in his effort, but the senatorial clique of Chandler, Cameron, Morton and Conkling strongly opposed this action, and as a result Grant failed to give it the backing necessary for success.31

In dealing with the South, Grant once again relied too heavily on that radical congressional clique made up of the most avid administration supporters.32 In Congress, the Republicans were seriously split over the method of dealing with the South, and Schurz and Trumbull emerged as the leaders of that group demanding a policy of leniency and conciliation.33 The Nation gave editorial support to those favoring leniency and had great praise for the stand of Schurz and Trumbull.34


30 Richardson, Messages and Papers of United States Presidents, VII, 156-159.


32 Rhodes, United States, VI, 390-391.

33 Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1869-1873), 1925, 2061; Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, p. 319.

34 Nation, X (April 28, 1870), 266-267.
Later, the Nation came out for a general amnesty and complete restoration of home-rule in the South. In April, 1871, the Springfield Republican wrote that Grant's negligence in solving the problem of disunity between North and South was the worst of his mistakes.

The growing discontent within Republican party ranks manifested itself first on the state level in practically all sections of the country. Missouri, which was destined to play an important role in the establishment of a national movement, furnished the Liberals with a conspicuous example of a successful party bolt. In December, 1866, a Liberal movement, headed by Colonel B. Gratz Brown, a prominent Republican and a former Senator, was begun at a private meeting at St. Louis. Persons supporting the movement pledged themselves to work for universal amnesty, universal enfranchisement, civil service reform and tariff and revenue revision. The disfranchised class regarded Brown as their spokesman and champion in their fight "to regain the rights of citizenship" which would allow them to take "an honorable and patriotic part in the direction of the public affairs" of Missouri. The next year Carl Schurz,

35 Ibid., X (May 19, 1870), 314.

36 Springfield Republican, April, 1871, quoted in Merriam, Bowles, II, 127.

the influential German newspaper editor and public speaker, moved from Wisconsin to Missouri and lent his support to the Liberal movement.38

At the Republican National Convention in Chicago in 1868, Schurz, as a member of the Missouri delegation, introduced and succeeded in getting adopted into the platform a resolution providing for amnesty to be given to those Southerners who were cooperating in the work of re-unification.39

The next year the Liberals in Missouri urged Schurz to seek the party nomination as the candidate for a vacant Senate seat. Schurz agreed, and a debate followed in which he bested the Radical's hopeful nominee, Benjamin F. Loan, and the Radical leader of the state, Senator Charles D. Drake. Schurz's nomination and election broke the Radical dictatorship in the state.40

By 1870 the Liberal element in Missouri wielded considerable influence in the State Legislature as they consistently worked for more lenient registration laws to replace the regulations passed by the Radicals two years before.41

At the Republican state convention at Jefferson City in August the Liberals proposed a resolution providing for enfranchising

38 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 517.
40 Ibid., III, 295-301; Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, I, 473-481.
41 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 517.
amendments to the state constitution. The Radicals defeated
the resolution when it was put to a vote, and the Liberals,
250 strong, bolted the convention. An attempt at healing the
breach failed.42

The Liberals, known locally as "Brownites," quickly or-
ganized their own convention, drew up a Liberal platform
advocating leniency and reform, and nominated Gratz Brown for
governor. The Radicals renominated the incumbent governor,
Joseph W. McClurg.43 A few days later Schurz made the opening
speech in what became one of the most vigorous and bitterly
fought state campaigns in United States history.44 Schurz
charged the Radicals with failing to live up to their pledge
to do away with proscriptive laws which were no longer neces-
sary for the public safety. He charged that the Radicals il-
legally packed the convention and that they were attempting
to control Negro votes for the purpose of keeping certain
white groups from regaining the suffrage.45

42Ibid., X, 519-520; Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, I, 514-515.
43Annual Cyclopedia, X, 519-520.
44Ibid., X, 520; Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, I, 510-
518; Schurz to Matthew H. Carpenter, October 20, 1870; Ibid.,
I, 520-521. Brown wrote to a Liberal sympathizer in Wisconsin
that the campaign was a "bitter fight in Missouri." B. Gratz
Brown to James R. Doolittle, October 17, 1870, Missouri Histori-
tical Review, XI, 11-12.
Schurz explained to the people of Missouri that the Liberals had not compromised any of the war aims of the Republican party and were in fact the "advocates of the true Republican faith," as opposed to the Radicals who had forgotten the aims of the party. He welcomed Democratic support as long as it cooperated with and worked for the same goals as the Liberals. Schurz urged the Negroes to take themselves out from under Radical control and support the Liberals' policy which would guarantee the suffrage to all citizens, white and black. He felt that this action would promote fraternal feelings between the races. Schurz made a plea for all "well meaning men" within the Republican party to support the Liberals because theirs was the "cause of reform; equal rights, peace and fraternal feeling." He was confident that this cause would be "triumphantly sustained by an intelligent and patriotic people."46

The Missouri Republican, one of the leading Democratic journals of the West, backed the Liberals and proved very effective in obtaining Democratic support for the movement. Schurz's paper, the Westliche Post, helped capture a large portion of the German vote for the Liberals.47

The Radicals had the advantage in the campaign since they were in control of the state.48 In Washington, Grant reacted to the Liberal bolt by reading Schurz out of the Republican

46 Ibid., I, 515-518. 47 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 520. 48 Ibid.
party and by using the patronage as a club to enforce party loyalty.\textsuperscript{49} Federal office-holders were forced to support financially the Radical campaign in Missouri or lose favor with the administration.\textsuperscript{50} The senior Senator and leader of the Radical faction in Missouri, Charles Drake, immediately saw to it that federal office-holders with Liberal sentiments were removed.\textsuperscript{51} The \textit{New York Tribune} attacked the Missouri movement as an attempt by tariff reformers to gain control of the state government.\textsuperscript{52} Schurz emphatically denied the \textit{Tribune}'s charge.\textsuperscript{53}

In spite of the formidable opposition mustered against them, the Liberals were triumphant on election day in November, as Brown had predicted the month before.\textsuperscript{54} The suffrage amendments were approved, Brown was elected by a large majority, the Liberals won control of the State Legislature, and

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52\textit{New York Tribune}, September 6, 7, 1870.


54B. Gratz Brown to J. R. Doolittle, October 17, 1870, \textit{Missouri Historical Review}, XI, 11-12.
four coalition candidates (Liberal-Democrat), two Liberal Republicans and three Radicals were sent to the National Congress.55

Following the Liberals' success in Missouri, Schurz made a rather lengthy speech in the Senate in which he attacked the abuses of the Grant administration and the Congressional clique which had such vast influence over national affairs. He praised and defended the Liberal movement in Missouri and indicated that the Union Republican party could not rest on its merit alone but had to return to its principles or face a similar split on the national level.56

In Arkansas dissention between Republican Liberals and Radicals began as early as May, 1867.57 By April of the next year it appeared that an outright party split was imminent.58 The Arkansas Daily Republican, the leading Radical newspaper in the state, called for reforms within the party proper and warned against lapsing into the corruptness of the old Democratic regimes in Arkansas.59 In July, 1868, the Republican split seemed confirmed when the dissatisfied element started a newspaper, the True Republican, under the editorship of Enoch H. Vance. J. G. Price, editor of the Daily Republican,

55 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 521.

56 Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 2-70; for a specific example see pp. 24-31.

57 Arkansas Daily Republican, May 8, 1867.

58 Ibid., April 24, 1868.  59 Ibid., May 4, 1868.
immediately launched an attack on the True Republican, calling it a front for wealthy elements within the party and warned that this could seriously weaken Radical control in the state. Price said that "order and discipline must be maintained," and that while there was room for disagreement and discussion within the party, the will of the majority had to be followed.

Price's pleas for party unity had little effect on the dissatisfied element. In April, 1869, a protest meeting was held in Little Rock and was attended by eighteen Republican members of the State Legislature. This group blasted the Radical rule in Arkansas, which was headed by Governor Powell Clayton, and charged it with abusing its power through the retention of proscriptive laws, mismanagement of the railroads, and running up a huge state debt. The group asked Negroes and whites to join in the fight against the Radicals and to return to the true principles of the Union Republican Party.

In October, 1869, Governor Clayton outlined his future policy which included "favoring the earliest possible enfranchisement of the people and retrenchment and reform in public expenditures." These declarations were generally well received by the people and the press and tended to dull the accusations of the dissatisfied element. Nevertheless, following the

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60 Ibid., July 14, 1868.  
61 Ibid., July 16, 1868.  
62 Annual Cyclopedia, IX, 30.  
63 Ibid., IX, 30.
governor's speech the disgruntled Republicans organized into a Liberal Republican party and were able to get nine representatives elected to the State Legislature in 1870.\textsuperscript{64} The Grant administration backed the Radicals in Arkansas by once again using the patronage as an effective weapon to fight Liberalism.\textsuperscript{65} The party remained split until after the national election of 1872.\textsuperscript{66}

The Republican State Convention in Tennessee was held at Nashville in May, 1869. During the proceedings the party broke into Liberal and Radical wings. The Liberals nominated DeWitt C. Senter who favored the immediate removal of all political disabilities. The Radicals nominated William B. Stokes who was opposed to the immediate restoration of privileges to the disfranchised class. Both candidates claimed to represent the true Republican party but only Stokes endorsed the National Republican platform of 1868, which called for enfranchisement as soon as could be safely done.\textsuperscript{67} The Democrats declined to nominate a candidate and instead, gave their full support to the Liberal element because of Senter's views on the franchise question. When the election took place

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., 1872, XII, 25; Ibid., 1870, X, 32.

\textsuperscript{65}J. M. Harrell, Brooks and Baxter War (St. Louis, 1893), pp. 113-116.


\textsuperscript{67}Annual Cyclopedia, IX, 662-663.
in August, Senter won by an overwhelming majority. The next year the Democrats deserted the Liberals and, by taking advantage of the Republican split, became the dominant political element in Tennessee.

Virginia Republicans met at Petersburg in March, 1869. The Radicals dominated the convention and were able to get H. H. Wells nominated for governor. In accepting the nomination Wells strongly endorsed the election of Grant and a continued policy of Radical reconstruction. The Liberal element, which included some very "influential delegates," then walked out of the meeting and held their own convention. The Liberals charged the Radicals with being bent on destruction of the Republican party in Virginia and then made a plea for all true Republicans to rally to their support for the good of the party. The Liberals endorsed a policy of complete amnesty and nominated Gilbert C. Walker for governor.

The Conservative party, which included the State Democratic organization, threw their full support behind the Liberal movement. Virginia Negroes held a separate convention and endorsed the Radicals' candidate and policy. When the election took place in July, the Liberal-Conservative coalition was victorious. Walker was elected governor, the clause

68 Ibid., IX, 662-663; Carey A. Folk, "Tennessee Since the War," in J. A. C. Chandler and F. L. Riley (editors), The South in the Building of the Nation (Richmond, 1909), II, 537.
69 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 709-710.
70 Ibid., IX, 711-712.
retaining white proscription was defeated as a part of the new state constitution, and the coalition ticket won a clear majority in the State Legislature. The next year, in an attempt to explain away the Liberal victory, Conkling said that the coalition ticket won in Virginia solely because a majority of Republicans mistakenly thought that the Grant administration favored the arrangement.

Difficulties also occurred within Republican ranks in some of the Eastern states. In Massachusetts the party underwent a severe trial when Benjamin F. Butler, a strong and somewhat notorious supporter of the Grant administration, began working for the Republican nomination for governor of the state. The administration in Washington backed Butler, but the party almost split on the state level. An abusive inter-party campaign took place, and only Butler's defeat by William B. Washburn in the state convention at Worcester in September, 1871, held the Republicans together.

In New York the Republicans suffered an almost irreparable breach because of Grant's close association with Conkling and the feud it produced with the other New York Senator,

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71Ibid., IX, 712-713.
72Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 2 Sessions, p. 383.
Reuben E. Fenton. Following Grant's election, Fenton was the favored senator from New York, and his friends received the most desirable state offices. In the spring of 1870, a struggle erupted in the Senate over Grant's nomination of Thomas Murphy as port collector of New York. Fenton opposed the appointment whereas Conkling sided with the President. The Senate confirmed Murphy a few weeks later. Fenton's stand on the issue ended his influence with Grant, who then accepted Conkling as one of his most trusted advisors.

In August, Grant wrote to Conkling that New York was the most important state in the Union to the Republican party and that because of his great desire for a party victory there, he wished to speak with Conkling about the potential Republican nominees for state offices. When the State Convention met at Saratoga in September, a contest for control took place between Fenton, who had the support of the faction of the Republican party which had entered into an arrangement with the Tammany Hall Democrats, and Conkling, who had the support of the Grant administration. Conkling won the factional struggle because Grant had given him the weapon he needed, control of the patronage in the state. The Fenton faction

75Conkling, Conkling, p. 317.  
76Ibid., p. 325.  
77Grant to Conkling, August 22, 1870, ibid., p. 328.  
78Ibid., p. 328-329; Nation, XI (Oct. 20, 1870), 251.  
79Nation, XI (September 15, 1870), 162.
then decided secretly to oppose the state ticket. In the November election the Democrats won the governorship and a slight majority in the legislature.

In September 1871 two Republican delegations arrived at the Syracuse convention from New York City. The conflicting claims of the "Custom House wing," under Conkling's control, and the "Fenton wing," headed by Horace Greeley at the convention, caused considerable excitement. The convention leaders referred the two groups to a credentials committee which decided in favor of the Conkling wing and thus gave them control of the convention. The Fenton group then seceded from the convention and held a separate meeting in which they denounced the Conkling-controlled, pro-Grant Republicans.

A few weeks later the bitterness of the Fentonites seemed to have subsided somewhat. Greeley wrote in the Tribune that they would accept the regular party platform and would support the Syracuse nominations. As the election date drew nearer, however, the split, far from healing, became wider and more noticeable. The anti-administration Tribune and the pro-Grant, pro-Conkling Times attacked each other nearly every day.

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80 Conkling, Conkling, p. 330. 81 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 547.
82 Ibid., XI, 555. 83 White, Autobiography, I, 166-167.
84 Nation, XIII (October 5, 1871), 217.
85 Ibid., XIII (October 19, 1871), 249-250. Editorially, the Nation opposed Fenton and Conkling but it remained a Republican journal. It did express some admiration for Greeley. Ibid., p. 250.
The dissatisfied element, at least to some degree, evidently voted the state ticket in 1871 since the Republican party carried the election by a large majority. Actually, they were given no choice since the Democrats were hard-put to explain the exposures of irregularity and fraud in the government of New York City at that time. After the election the party breach continued to grow, and the discontented faction attacked the Grant administration, charging the President with using federal power to defeat them in the state. The New York contest had not only split the party in that state but it had greatly increased the discontent with the national administration in other areas. Powerful journals such as the Chicago Tribune and the Cincinnati Commercial joined the New York Tribune in attacking Grant and criticizing the Union Republican party.

Conkling voiced the administration's views on the growth of the Liberal factions in several of the state organizations by calling these groups "a hybrid conglomeration made up of the crotchets, distempers and personal aims of restless and disappointed men."

By 1871, the Grant administration faced severe attacks from the Liberal segment of the party. Liberals charged Grant with neglecting internal reforms, avoiding action on the

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86 Annual Cyclopedia, XI, 557-559.
87 James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress, 2 vols. (Norwick, 1886), II, 520.
88 Conkling, Conkling, pp. 442-443.
tariff and civil service issues, destroying the purity and usefulness of the Supreme Court by packing that legal body for political purposes, and being a dictator to half the Union. Liberals said the President had been mainly concerned with the "project of annexing a semi-barbarous island." ^89

The forced resignations of Wells, Cox and Hoar and the dismissal of Sumner seriously affected Republican unity. At first the Liberals tried to keep the party united in order to reform it from within and to work for the nomination of a better man than Grant in 1872. Opposed to the Grant administration as the Liberals were, throughout most of 1871 they still feared an all-out break with the party proper because they believed a split might make a Democratic victory possible in the next national election. ^90 In the Fall of 1871, Greeley published an article condemning the two-term tradition and declaring war on the practice of renomination. Greeley thought the President should be officially declared ineligible for re-election after serving one term. Greeley's idea never gained a great deal of popularity, even among contemporary Liberals. ^91

It soon became apparent that the party could not be reformed from within, because the majority of the Republicans

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^89 Nation, XII (June 8, 1871), 396-397.
^90 Ibid., XII (March 16, 1871), 172-173.
^91 Ibid., XIII (September 14, 1871), 172.
remained faithful to the President. At the same time that the Liberals were attacking Grant, he was busy ensuring his renomination by awarding federal jobs to those pledged to support him at the 1872 convention. No President before "had wielded such enormous patronage" power, and Grant's use of it for party and personal ends practically assured his renomination. On the other hand, Grant's actions increased hostility in the Liberal ranks and thus increased the chances for a party split on the national level.

In December, 1871, the President made an obvious attempt to restore the Liberals' faith in the administration. His third annual message to Congress advocated civil service reform, tariff revision and a more lenient Southern policy. Later in the month he actually submitted a plan for reform in the system of government employment. Perhaps Grant was waking up to reality, but subsequent events were to show that his actions came too late to heal the breach.

The growing discontent on various state levels placed the Republicans in an embarrassing position even though Grant's renomination seemed inevitable. The Liberals were faced with the alternatives of remaining helplessly in the party and bowing to Grant or making a clean break with the administration.

93 Nation, XIII (September 14, 1871), 172.
94 Richardson (ed.) Messages and Papers, VII, 142-155; 156-159.
and attempting to overthrow the President in an open contest. Impressed by their success in Missouri and the growth of their faction in other areas, the Liberals chose the latter course.
CHAPTER II
DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL
REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

Rumors of the formation of a new national party developed as early as the spring, 1870, and Senator Charles Drake implied at the time that perhaps even certain senators were involved in the movement.¹ The Nation remarked during this period that there were only two possible issues on which a new party could be based, "free trade" and "hard money," because neither the Republicans nor the Democrats were dealing effectively with these issues. It was the Nation's belief that tariff and revenue reformers generally did not agree with each other and that, therefore, at least for the time being, a new party could not be formed.² The Springfield Republican commented on the possibility of a new national organization in 1870 by saying that the Republican party still had a certain amount of "vitality" and "flexibility" and that probably it could reform "its own abuses."³ Despite the Nation's official editorial policy during 1870, which was aimed toward working for reform within the Republican organization, its editor, E. L. Godkin, wrote to a friend that it was conceivable

¹Nation, X (March 10, 1870), 151-152. ²Ibid. ³Springfield Republican, November 25, 1870, quoted in Merriam, Bowles, II, 135.
that a new party, built "upon the ruins of the Republican party--and--having for its object Tariff Reform, Civil Service Reform and Minority Representation," might come into existence during 1871.4

In a Senate speech in December, 1870, Schurz said that a new period of development faced the United States and that it would naturally bring forth "new problems, new duties, new questions of general interest" which would have great influence on "the composition and the relations of parties." It appeared to Schurz that dissatisfied elements were cropping up in both the existing organizations and that this could be the foundation of a new party. He thought that under the circumstances party discipline would "prove insufficient to prevent irregular movements, splits and breaks and schisms." He pointed to the Liberal success in Missouri as an example.5 Schurz said that the Republican party had to endorse a policy of progressive reforms in order to preserve its vitality or it would be replaced by a party which did.6 He did not believe the Democrats would be that party, because he considered their pleas for reform to be insincere.7

Schurz wrote to a friend that his attacks on the evils of the Grant administration took a great deal of moral courage

4E. L. Godkin to Frederick F. Cook, October 6, 1870, Ogden, Godkin, II, 69.
6Ibid., p. 64. 7Ibid., pp. 66-70.
because his colleagues suspected his motives, and, as a re-
sult, his party standing was greatly imperiled. "Yet it must
be done," he wrote. He commented that Grant was not essential
to the success of the Republican party and that he was, in
fact, a "heavy load" to that organization. 8

In the spring of 1871, Schurz wrote to Godkin and Cox
that he hoped the growth of state liberal organizations fol-
lowing the Missouri example, such as the one recently started
in Ohio, would enable the Liberals to gain control of the
Republican party, defeat Grant's renomination and demoralize
"the Chandlers and Conklings and Camerons." 9 By September
of the same year it was evident that Schurz had given up this
idea of intra-party reform. He made it clear in a speech
delivered at Nashville that he felt that a new national party
was needed to bring about the necessary revisions in national
policy. 10 Schurz chose to begin the tedious work of develop-
ing a new national movement in that area most dissatisfied
with the Grant regime, the South. 11

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8 Schurz to J. D. Cox, February 3, 1871, ibid., pp. 176-77.
9 Schurz to Godkin, March 31, 1871, ibid., pp. 252-54; Schurz to Cox, April 4, 1871, ibid., pp. 254-55.
10 "The Need of Reform and a New Party," delivered at Nash-
11 Schurz wrote that large numbers of Southerners had no
strong Democratic ties, but they detested Grant. See Schurz
to Sumner, September 30, 1871, ibid., p. 312.
In addressing the southern audience Schurz said that his only concern was for the national welfare which to him stood above all party interests. In regard to the South, Schurz favored a "just, generous and conciliatory" policy and the removal of all political disabilities which he claimed "ought to have been granted long ago." He called for a return to sound constitutional practices and the restoration of local self-government, and, speaking of civil service, he said that there should be a "general house-cleaning, to knock off the dust and to extinguish the vermin." The tariff, he said, was rigged to favor the few at the expense of the many, and it should exist only to the extent that it benefited the national treasury. Schurz said taxes should be reduced since there was no great hurry to repay the national debt, and he advocated a return to specie payments in order to stabilize the United States' credit.

Schurz then told the gathering at Nashville that

... these views of the condition of public affairs, and the problems to be solved, are shared by millions of people at the North, especially the political school to which I belong, called the "Liberal Republicans," and, if I mistake not, by this assembly.

Schurz impressed upon the minds of the Southerners that the North possessed the "preponderance of population, and of political power," yet, "the chance of a liberal, progressive,

13 Ibid., p. 259.
14 Ibid., p. 260.
reform policy among the northern people" depended almost entirely on the attitude of the South. The North, he said, anxiously watched for signs of disorder in the southern states, and however liberally inclined it might be, it would never support a reform venture which might in some way, due to southern support, jeopardize the results of the Civil War.\textsuperscript{15} Schurz said that hence a Democratic victory, while being unfortunate for the whole country, would be especially so for the South. He felt that the Democrats, although they could not possibly succeed, might attempt to overthrow some of the war achievements. When they failed, "the weight of that misfortune would fall directly and almost entirely upon the South."\textsuperscript{16}

In speaking of the Republicans, Schurz said that the party was greatly weakened by "corrupt and insidious influences" and that if the "generous, liberal, progressive" element of the party did not gain control, then the time had come for the organization of a new "truly national party of the future," composed of the best men of both the existing parties. The formation of a new party would not be difficult because the tendency toward a new organization was "breaking through the skin of the body-politic in all directions."\textsuperscript{17}

If a new party came into being which advocated general reform

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 299.  
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 299-300.
in politics and fraternal feelings in all areas of the United States, he said he would support it and earnestly work for its success. He felt that all "patriotic citizens in both sections of the country" would act accordingly.\textsuperscript{18}

Schurz said that if the South would unite and follow the lead of the Liberal Republicans, her enemies would be "silenced and put to shame by the well-doing of her people"; and she would regain "her power in the councils of the Nation."\textsuperscript{19} He then asked the southerners to rid themselves of old prejudices and resentments and to vigorously undertake the duties facing them in order to bring about "a new era of good feeling."\textsuperscript{20}

Schurz's appeal to the South brought immediate, if seemingly limited, results. The day after the Nashville speech 200 former confederate soldiers signed a letter expressing "high regard" and "warm admiration" for Schurz's "unselfish, unpartisan, cultured and patriotic address." These ex-soldiers pledged obedience to, and faith in, the American Republic. They promised to work for political reform and expressed a belief in the equality of the races. The group considered parties of a sectional nature as organizations "groping in the moonlight of the past." They wished to join a party animated by the spirit of "toleration, broad and elevated patriotism, not bounded by state lines."\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 301. \textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 304. \textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 306.

\textsuperscript{21}Frank T. Reid and others to Schurz, September 21, 1871, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 306-307.
Schurz was deeply moved by the letter and replied that such men as these would lead the "Young South" above "old prejudices and obsolete aspirations" into "harmony with the progressive spirit of the age."  

A week after the southern speech, Schurz commended the Ohio Liberals on their policy of refusing to support the Democrats in the state elections of 1871 despite their attempts at forming a coalition. Schurz hoped that this policy would be followed everywhere so that the Democrats would be soundly beaten in all sections of the country. This result would hasten the demise of the Democratic party and "take from the minds of the southern people the last delusion as to the possibility of a Democratic triumph." Schurz wrote that a Liberal Association had already sprung up in Tennessee and that state liberal organizations probably would soon gain ascendancy over the Democrats in all areas of the South. To aid the growth of Liberal Associations, Schurz suggested the circulation of liberal documents in the southern states.  

Schurz firmly believed that, in the event of Grant's renomination, the third party movement which he had begun would be strong enough to beat the Republicans and the Democrats in the next national election. He felt that this new  

22 Schurz to Reid and others, Sept. 23, 1871, ibid., 307-8.  
23 Schurz to Cox, Sept. 27, 1871, ibid., 310.  
24 Schurz to Sumner, Sept. 30, 1871, ibid., 311.
organization would "absorb the best elements of both parties" and that it should be headed by Charles Sumner. Schurz defended Republican reconstruction in the past and said that true Republican principles should never be compromised. At the same time, he contended that the Liberals had to encourage rather than repel the reforming efforts of southerners who could be trusted. Schurz claimed that the Democratic party was broken up in Missouri by the Liberal movement and that the same thing was happening in other states.

By October, 1871, Liberal Associations had sprung up in practically all the northern states as well as Tennessee, Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. To coordinate the state movements in the North and the South, Schurz suggested that a national central committee be set up. He felt that "progressive Democrats" in harmony with the Liberal movement should be allowed membership on this national committee; this would, in turn, help win Democratic support in both areas of the country. Schurz considered it "extremely important" that the idea of letting men of both parties join a liberal organization begin in the South, because it would help improve opinion of that section in the North. Reformed opinion was necessary to Schurz's plan because he hoped to make the

25 Ibid., pp. 312-313.  
26 Ibid., p. 313.  
27 Schurz to Cox, October 14, 1871, Ibid., p. 314.
Liberal Associations in the North and the South links "in a great chain."28

Schurz's activities caused great concern among the administration Republicans, and the New York Times bitterly criticized the Missouri senator throughout the Winter and Spring of 1871-1872.29 During this period the Times, edited by Louis J. Jennings, described Schurz as an "unchronulous demagogue," a "heartless demagogue," an "unchronulous adventurer," an "office jobber," a "political charlatan" and "a dog." That organ warned that Schurz was "subtle, cunning, and dangerous," wholly un-American in spirit, and a "born destructionist."30 On one occasion the attacks became so vicious that Schurz "gratified his assailant by a tart and vigorous reply on the floor of the Senate."31 The Nation accused the Times of digging up minute facts about Schurz and then twisting them all out of proportion, while at the same instance the Times' editorial policy defended Thomas Murphy, who, the Nation said, was clearly incompetent.32 The New York Tribune began to lend its support to the Liberal movement in early 1872, and the Times and the Tribune attacked

28Schurz to Cox, October 22, 1871, ibid., p. 315.
29Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, p. 347.
For specific example see the New York Times, December 28, 1871.
30Nation, XIV (February 29, 1872), 129.
31Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, p. 347.
32Nation, XIV (January 4, 1872), 1.
each other practically every day.\textsuperscript{33} The \textit{Atlantic Monthly} began to criticize Grant's government appointments and the fact that he was profiteering from government contracts given to corporations in which he owned stock. The magazine said that the political trend for the preceding forty years had been in the direction of anarchy and for that reason the "aims, desires and intentions" of the new Liberal movement should be earnestly considered.\textsuperscript{34}

The Liberal Republican party of Missouri held their state convention at Jefferson City on January 24, 1872. Liberals from all parts of the United States attended along with the Missouri delegates, and they used this meeting to officially launch the national Liberal Republican movement. Those in attendance resolved to work for removal of all political disabilities, civil service and tariff reforms, restoration of local government and less "centralized authority." The Missouri Liberals then invited all Republicans interested in securing these reforms to meet in a national convention at Cincinnati on Wednesday, May 1, 1872: "there to take such action as convictions of duty and the public exigency require."\textsuperscript{35}

Schurz was unable to attend the Missouri convention because of his duties in Washington. He did write a letter to

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, XIV (February 29, 1872), 129-130. \\
\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Atlantic Monthly}, XXIX (January, 1872), 126. \\
\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Annual Cyclopedia}, XII, 552; \textit{Nation}, XIV (February 1, 1872), 65.
\end{flushleft}
the meeting, saying that the same principles which the Missouri Liberals fought for in 1870 were, in 1872, an issue at the national level.\textsuperscript{36} Schurz wrote that Liberals believed in the constitutional guarantee of the results of the war, but that they also believed in the promotion of the public welfare. Because of the latter belief, the Liberals felt that the "old warcrys," so popular with the administration, should not be raised for the purpose of subjugating one section of the country or for the profit of a few individuals.\textsuperscript{37}

The \textit{Nation} warmly endorsed the Missouri platform by contending that there were no objections to its resolutions which any true Republican could make.\textsuperscript{38} Horace Greeley, a protectionist, also endorsed the Liberals' platform and the proposed Cincinnati convention. Greeley's one reservation was on the question of tariff reform. He explained his position by asking only that the convention leave the issue to be settled by Congress.\textsuperscript{39} Greeley's sentiment for the Liberal cause prompted administration Republican leaders to warn him that he was losing his position as a recognized party leader and that unless he changed his course, he would be committing political suicide. Administration supporters told Greeley

\textsuperscript{36} Schurz to William Follenius, January 20, 1872, Bancroft (ed.), \textit{Schurz's Papers}, II, 315-316.


\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Nation}, XIV (February 1, 1872; March 21, 1872), 65; 177.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}, XIV (April 4, 1872), 209.
that he should realize that the whole Republican party had
"not suddenly become rotten."\textsuperscript{40} Greeley answered by saying
that Grant was not fit to be a justice of the peace, much
less President. He said Grant first declared war on him and
his friends in the New York elections of 1871 by the unfair
use of the patronage and that this action had brought only
discredit to the President's integrity. Greeley claimed it
was too late for reconciliation; he expressed strong doubt
that Grant could be re-elected in 1872. He said that giving
up his position in the Union Republican party was of no con-
cern to him and that he could bear the future consequences
of his actions.\textsuperscript{41}

In the weeks following the Missouri call the Liberal
movement appeared to be growing rapidly in all areas of the
country.\textsuperscript{42} In the East an impressive list of influential men
reputedly favored the Missouri platform.\textsuperscript{43} Three of the four
surviving members of Abraham Lincoln's cabinet, Salmon P.
Chase, Gideon Welles and Montgomery Blair, lent their support
to the Liberals throughout their challenge to the

\textsuperscript{40}Justin S. Morrill to Greeley, March 11, 1872, \textit{Forum},
XXIV, 411-412.

\textsuperscript{41}Greeley to Morrill, March 12, 1872, \textit{ibid.}, 412.

\textsuperscript{42}Trumbull to Jesse W. Fell, March 9, 1872, \textit{Mississippi
Valley Historical Review}, I (June, 1914), 106-107.

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Nation}, XIV (April 4, 1872), 209.
administration. The fourth, William H. Seward, refused to take a stand on either side before his death in October, 1872. In March, Samuel Bowles, through the pages of the Springfield Republican, actively began to support the proposed Liberal convention. Charles Sumner reportedly favored the convention, and, in fact, many Liberals felt that he would preside at the meeting. The increasing Liberal strength prompted Trumbull to write that the success of the Cincinnati convention seemed assured and that "the best elements of the Republican party" would attend the meeting.

On April 12, 1872, Schurz and Trumbull spoke at a mass meeting of Liberal Republicans in the Cooper Institute in New York City. It was a large and enthusiastic meeting and to all outward appearances, the audience was composed of that sober, thoughtful middle class, equally removed from wealth and poverty, which one has seen in the same room on all great occasions since 1860. Congress was marked by verbal battles between the administration supporters and the Liberals during the period.

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45 Seward to Conkling, August 12, 1872, Conkling, Conkling, pp. 445-446.
46 Merriam, Bowles, II, 178-179.
47 Nation, XIV (March 21, 1872), 177.
48 Trumbull to Fell, March 9, 1872, MVHR, I (June, 1914), 106-107. For more evidence of the growing Liberal strength see Trumbull to Fell, April 11, 1872, ibid., p. 108.
preceding the Cincinnati convention. In the Senate Schurz and Sumner vigorously attacked the administration's policy of selling arms to France "under circumstances that suggested jobbery and corruption in the War Department and outrageous disregard of the duties of a neutral." Morton and Conkling stoutly defended the administration, but Schurz so effectively disclosed its irregularities that he practically assured Liberal support from the German-Americans, who were highly offended because of the aid to France.

With the battle lines clearly drawn between the Liberals and administration Republicans in early 1872, the attitude of the Democratic party became increasingly important. In the spring of 1870 the Democrats had begun trying to improve their reputation. In Ohio, Clement L. Vallandigham led the state Democratic party into fully accepting the constitutional amendments resulting from the war. The Ohio platform, drawn up by Democrats at their convention in June, 1871, pledged the party to a "full, faithful and absolute execution and enforcement of the constitution" as it stood, in order to secure "equal rights to all persons under it without distinction of race, color or condition."

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50 Ibid., XIV (February 8, 1872), 81.
51 Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, pp. 333-37.
52 Ibid.; Nation, XIV (April 4, 1872), 209.
53 Annual Cyclopedia, XI, 609-611.
The state Democratic organizations in California and Illinois promptly accepted the Ohio platform and Illinois Democrats even thanked the Republican party for past services to the Union.\textsuperscript{54} Democrats in Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey and Wisconsin followed suit and adopted the Ohio platform.\textsuperscript{55} New York and Pennsylvania Democrats also adopted the platform but both organizations took the opportunity to attack the Republican party and the evils of the Grant administration.\textsuperscript{56}

The \textit{Nation} termed this movement by the state Democratic parties the "New Departure" and commented that the Democrats, by improving their reputation, making good use of the "manipulation" and "debauchery" of the Grant regime and aligning themselves with the dissatisfied Republicans, could conceivably gain political ascendancy in the next national election.\textsuperscript{57}

As early as July, 1871, at least one Democratic journal favored disbanding the National Democratic party. The ex-Democrats could then work to divide the Republican party and support one of the factions in order to defeat Grant.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., pp. 90, 392.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., pp. 416, 482, 493, 517, 547, 775-776.
\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., pp. 556-557, 621.
\textsuperscript{57}Nation, XII (June 8, 1871), 396.
\textsuperscript{58}Iowa Burlington Weekly Hawk-Eye, July 6, 1871, quoted in Fred E. Haynes, Third Party Movements Since the Civil War (Iowa City, 1916), p. 23.
Nevada was the first state in which the Democrats actually joined in the promotion of the Liberal Republican movement. In February, 1872, Nevada Democrats pledged to support the Cincinnati platform and candidate, provided that the Liberals showed "a similar desire for mutual cooperation and action."

Some Republican reformers favored a Democratic-Liberal coalition in the national election of 1872. The majority of the Liberals, however, favored the complete breakup of the Democratic party, after which the ex-Democrats could individually join and support the Liberal movement. The Liberals so desired the breakup of the Democratic party, in order to add to their own strength, that an article appeared which proclaimed "the death of the Democratic party." The article went on to say that ex-Democrats had no political future except joining a possible reform movement and helping to elect Republicans. Schurz in particular had a "deep and abiding" distrust of the Democratic organization. He believed that the Democratic party's talk of reform was only a "loud pretense." Schurz felt that the Democratic party had actually

59 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 567.

60 Trumbull to W. C. Flagg, January 10, 1872, MVHR, I (June, 1914), 106.

61 Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 660-70, 299-301; Schurz to Cox, Sept. 27, 1871, ibid., 310; Schurz to Sumner, Sept. 30, 1871, ibid., 311-13; Bowles to Schurz, Mar. 22, 1872, ibid., 353.

62 Atlantic Monthly, XXIV (January, 1872), 125.

63 Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, p. 341.

64 Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 66.
"grown morally weaker" and that it was "essentially a party of the past." 65

By mid-April, 1872, it became clear to the Liberals that, because of the number of Republicans remaining faithful to Grant, the Cincinnati nominee would have "to look to the Democracy for much of the support needed to insure success in the election." 66 Grant, of course, had felt that the whole Liberal movement, from its very inception, was an attempt "to carry a portion of the Republican party over to the Democracy, and thus give them control." 67 Liberals defended against this charge by saying their movement was the work of people desiring reform only, and that it was in no way a Democratic trick to regain power. 68 On one occasion Drake charged Schurz with going over to the Democrats; Schurz denied any intention of such an action. 69

The Reunion and Reform Associations begun by Schurz at Nashville, and comprising liberal men of both parties, were in complete agreement with the aims of the National Liberal Republican convention. Because many of these men were nominal Democrats, however, they decided to keep their convention

65 Ibid., p. 298.
67 Annual Cyclopedia, X, 520.
68 Nation, XIV (March 21, 1872), 180.
separate in order to facilitate the establishment of a new reform party in which they could acquiesce, although they planned to meet in the same city and at the same time as the Liberals.  

The administration tried to discredit the growth of the Liberal movement by pointing out the existence of unsavory characters within its ranks. The New York Times said the movement was composed primarily of disappointed office seekers and unscrupulous politicians, singling out Reuben Fenton and John Cochrane as proof. The Nation replied that those who insisted that every reform movement should be "supported from the outset only by Christian patriots, and . . . composed of saints and sages" were "not particularly anxious for reform at all."

As the opening date of the Cincinnati convention drew near, the Liberals focused their attention on possible presidential candidates. Those mentioned most often in the pre-convention discussions to head the Liberal ticket were Charles Francis Adams, Lyman Trumbull, Horace Greeley, David Davis and Charles Sumner. Schurz regarded only Adams and Trumbull

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71 Conkling, Conkling, pp. 442-443.

72 New York Times, April 15, May 2, 1872.

73 Nation, XIV (April 18, 1872), 249.

74 Ibid., XIV (March 21, 1872), 181; Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, p. 344.
as fulfilling the ideal requirements in all respects. He had no sympathy for Greeley and Davis, who allegedly were supported by the political intriguers who had joined the movement for personal gains.\textsuperscript{75} Schurz had great respect and admiration for Sumner, who was generally well received by the other Liberals, but the Massachusetts senator never took a definite stand in favor of making nominations at Cincinnati. Hence his name was never as seriously considered as it might have been.\textsuperscript{76}

B. Gratz Brown, with the aid of friends, tried to make himself a front-running candidate in the pre-convention canvassing by organizing his support into a large show of strength.\textsuperscript{77} A movement was started among West Virginia Liberals to work for the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Salmon P. Chase at Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{78} Chase, whom a friend described as being "consumed by an eager and passionate ambition for the presidency," made it clear on at least two occasions that he would gratefully accept the Cincinnati nomination if

\textsuperscript{75}Bancroft-Dunning, \textit{Schurz's Political Career}, p. 344.

\textsuperscript{76}Schurz to Sumner, September 30, 1871, Bancroft (ed.), \textit{Schurz's Papers}, II, 312; \textit{Nation}, XIV (March 21, 1872), 177.


\textsuperscript{78}\textit{Annual Cyclopedia}, XII, 800.
offered to him. An astute political observer of the day felt that if Chase's health had not failed he quite possibly would have been nominated at the Liberal convention.

Judge David Davis was neither a Republican nor a Democrat in the strictest sense of the party terms. He was a political independent "with a strong taste for active politics." In February of 1872, the Labor Reform party met at Columbus and nominated Davis to head their ticket. The Labor platform endorsed the general political reforms advocated by the Liberals, and this seemingly improved Davis' chances at Cincinnati. The independent journalists, however, banded together in open opposition to Davis and worked along with Schurz to prevent his nomination on the Liberal ticket.

79 Hoar, Autobiography, I, 283; Chase to M. C. C. Church, March 26, 1872, Robert B. Warden, An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati, 1874), p. 278; Chase to "Mr. Ball," April 8, 1872, ibid., p. 729.


83 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 773-774; Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency From 1788 to 1897 (Boston, 1924), pp. 335-338.

84 Henry Watterson, "The Humor and Tragedy of the Greeley Campaign," Century, LXXXV, 32-33; Nation, XIV (May 2, 1872), 281.
Many influential Liberals considered Lyman Trumbull the best possible choice for the Cincinnati nomination.\textsuperscript{85} Trumbull himself, while always working for reform, had no desire to leave the Republican party as late as January 10, 1872.\textsuperscript{86} Shortly after the Missouri call, however, he became thoroughly converted to the Liberal movement and convinced of the success of the Cincinnati convention.\textsuperscript{87} Trumbull originally felt the Liberal convention should be in the form of a protest meeting and that nominations should not be made; but he became more in favor of placing a ticket before the public as the movement grew and the Liberals' chances for success improved.\textsuperscript{88}

Horace Greeley worked devoutly for the election of Grant in 1868 and was even considered for the position of postmaster general as a reward.\textsuperscript{89} He soon became disillusioned with the President and openly criticized the administration.\textsuperscript{90} Greeley endorsed the Missouri call to meet at Cincinnati; though he consistently held to his protectionist views on the tariff.\textsuperscript{91}

In March, 1872, Greeley learned that certain of his friends

\textsuperscript{86} Trumbull to Flagg, January 10, 1872, \textit{MWHR}, I (June, 1914), p. 106.
\textsuperscript{87} Trumbull to Fell, March 9, 1872, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 106-107.
\textsuperscript{88} Trumbull to Fell, April 11, 1872, \textit{ibid.}, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Nation}, VII (November 12, 1868), 381.
\textsuperscript{90} Greeley to Morrill, March 12, 1872, \textit{Forum}, XXIV, 411-12.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Nation}, XIV (April 4, 1872), 209.
were suggesting him as the vice-presidential candidate on the Liberal ticket. Greeley considered this action "very good," and asked only that his supporters enter into no political intrigues. Greeley's reaction to his friends' work seemed to bear out the contention of James G. Blaine and Murat Halstead that Greeley was "thirsty" for the prestige connected with holding a public office.

Charles Francis Adams was "a very popular candidate before the people." The Nation felt that if he were nominated the Liberals would gain the support of a number of nominal administration men despite their pledges to Grant. General W. F. Bartlett, an administration supporter, lent credulity to the Nation's implications by writing that if Adams received the Cincinnati nomination he would support the Liberal ticket. Adams commented on his growing popularity as a possible presidential candidate by saying that he could not

93 Greeley to John D. Wefrees, March 10, 1872, ibid., p. 546.
94 Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 552-553; Murat Halstead, "Breakfasts with Horace Greeley," Cosmopolitan, XXXVI (April, 1904), 700.
95 Nation, XIV (April 25, 1872), 265.
96 Ibid., XIV (April 18, 1872), 249.
97 Newspaper clipping found in Charles Francis Adams' Diary (on microfilm at North Texas State University library), April 8, 1872.
"think of it without a shudder." The administration Republicans realized that Adams would present a serious challenge to Grant if nominated at Cincinnati. For that reason, Conkling sent General Barlow to talk to Adams about accepting the vice-presidential nomination on the regular Republican ticket. Adams, of course, refused the offer. David A. Wells wrote to Adams that he was being seriously considered for the presidential nomination at Cincinnati. Adams wrote back and said that he frankly did not want the nomination and that he could only be induced to accept it if it was an unequivocal call from the people based upon confidence in his character "earned in public life." Adams wrote in his Diary that he was glad that he would be out of the country at the time the Cincinnati convention would be held.

By April, 1872, the Liberal Republicans had grown into a definite opposition party on the national level. There was a strong possibility that the Democrats would endorse the Liberal presidential candidate and thus present the administration Republicans with the difficulty of dealing with

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98 Adams, Diary, April 2, 1872.
99 Ibid., April 16, 1872.
100 Ibid., April 18, 1872.
101 Adams to Wells, April 18, 1872, Charles F. Adams, Letterbook (on microfilm at North Texas State University library).
102 Adams, Diary, March 30, April 2, 1872.
a coalition ticket, headed by a prominent man in public affairs. On the eve of the Liberal Republican convention the Grant administration had reason to be concerned. Both sides knew that the success or failure of the Liberal movement depended on the up-coming action at Cincinnati.
CHAPTER III

CINCINNATI CONVENTION AND AFTERMATH

Charles Francis Adams wrote in his diary on April 16, 1872, that Judge David Davis of Illinois would probably try to capture the Liberal Republican convention at Cincinnati.\(^1\) Adams' prediction proved quite accurate. The movement to win the Liberal nomination for Davis began even before the convention opened.\(^2\) The fact that the Democrats considered Davis an acceptable coalition candidate and that the Labor Reform party had nominated him as their presidential candidate added to his strength.\(^3\) Davis had a great many supporters in his home state, and he provided the transportation that carried a number of them, considered to be in his "personal service," to Cincinnati.\(^4\) He had long had the ambition to be President, and he spent a great deal of money in the few days

\(^1\)Adams, Diary, April 16, 1872.

\(^2\)Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.

\(^3\)Adams, Diary, April 16, 1872; Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 773-774; Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, pp. 335-338.

\(^4\)Swett to Fell, April 1, Mississippi Valley Historical Revue, I, 107; Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872. This edition of the Republican dealing with the Cincinnati convention was photographed with the Adams Family Papers and is found in Charles Francis Adams' Diary pressed between the pages dated May 25 and May 26, 1872.
preceding the convention in order to enhance his chances of winning the nomination.5

The New York delegation was deeply involved with the Davis intrigue. Fenton came to Cincinnati several days before the convention opened and entered into the planning of Davis' nomination.6 The leaders of the New York delegation openly admitted that Davis was their second choice and said that he was even "Greeley's choice after himself." Those familiar with convention politics believed that this frank admission denoted a possible sell-out by the Greeley forces to Davis early in the balloting in an attempt to secure the first place on the ticket for him and the second for Greeley.7 The Pennsylvania delegation also promoted Davis' cause, and they had, in fact, bargained with the Democratic leaders of that state to give their full support to him in the event of his nomination.8

Davis' friends argued that his selection at Cincinnati would bring almost the entire support of the Democrats over to the Liberal movement, without which, they said, "there could be no successful contest made against Grant." Those arguing against the Davis nomination said that "he was in no true sense a Republican" and that since the convention was a Republican

5Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
6Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
7Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
8Ibid.
meeting, it should select a "first-class, undisputed Republican" who could carry a large per cent of the Republican vote. They said that the Liberal movement had to represent "the best share of the Republican party, which it could not do under Judge Davis;' otherwise the movement would be valueless. Opponents of Davis charged him and his supporters with intriguing and said that they would, if successful, "stamp the convention with disgrace and contempt." They contended that any triumph by Davis would be a victory for the "old Democratic Party" with its "old spirit and its old leaders."9

A group of independent journalists delivered the fatal blow to the Davis intrigue. Before the convention opened, Bowles, Halstead, White and Watterson met and formed the "Quadrilateral," which was designed to work along with Schurz. This group decided to attempt to limit the nominations of the convention to Adams and Trumbull, ruling out Davis and Brown completely. These men made no such decree on Greeley, because they felt that even "to talk about him as a candidate was ridiculous." Because they considered Greeley as no threat, the Quadrilateral conferred with Whitelaw Reid, acting editor of the Tribune, in an attempt to secure that paper's support for the Liberal candidate.10

On Monday April 29, the editors told Fenton, who was generally felt to be the director of the Davis-Greeley intrigue,

9Ibid.

that they were against the plot and that they would not support Davis if he were nominated. Fenton replied that the journalists' decision would probably be fatal to Davis' chances, and he promptly returned to Washington.\textsuperscript{11} Davis claimed he knew nothing of the plot, but after Monday his support rapidly dissipated and he ceased to be a threat.\textsuperscript{12}

With the failure of the Davis drive Greeley's chances for capturing the presidential nomination increased, though it was not generally recognized by the delegations at Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{13} The New York delegation met in caucus and resolved to support Greeley as long as even the faintest hope of his nomination existed.\textsuperscript{14} Greeley's friends from New York, led by Theodore Tilton, John Cochrane and Waldo Hutchins, made up a great majority of the delegation and they succeeded in keeping practically all tariff reformers off the list of delegates.\textsuperscript{15} The decision by the New York group meant that the solid sixty-four votes of that state would be given from first to last to Greeley. This action was the first and the most important

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 33; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303; Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872; New York Times, May 7, 1872.  
\textsuperscript{12}Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303; Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.  
\textsuperscript{13}Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 304.  
\textsuperscript{14}Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.  
\textsuperscript{15}Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 521.
step toward his nomination. The work by Greeley's supporters was less conspicuous than the Davis intrigue and the Nation described those involved as "practical men" engaged in the work of "manipulation" in such a manner "that would have delighted even Tom Murphy himself." Added to the strong nucleus of the New York delegation the Greeley forces could count on the entire vote of the New Hampshire and Vermont delegates, who allied themselves to Greeley primarily because he had lived several years in both states during his youth. Greeley also had much strength from the South, even more than most people supposed. In the preceding years he had consistently worked for southern amnesty and had cautioned the North not to seek vindication on the defeated section. On numerous occasions Greeley had delivered a speech entitled "Universal Amnesty and Impartial Suffrage" in which he made known his views toward the South, and he frequently printed editorials of a similar nature in the New York Tribune. Greeley's supporters anticipated that the Pennsylvania delegation, headed by the political wise A. K. McClure, would join their candidate's bandwagon whenever its vote would nominate him. When this action took place,

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16 Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
17 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
18 Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
it would give Greeley the support of the two delegations, New
York and Pennsylvania, which had more political experience
than the rest of the delegations put together. The Greeley
forces would then have a great advantage in dealing with the
novices and theoretical reformers from other states.²⁰

Still, because of his stand on revenue reform for which
the Mid-West opposed him and because of his unpopularity with
the Germans, Greeley seemed a very unlikely choice.²¹ Indeed,
"men laughed when his name was spoken of" in connection with
the presidential nomination.²²

Adams would allow no organized faction to promote his
candidacy at Cincinnati.²³ He was, however, the most popular
choice of the reform element, and he continued to gain strength
in the few days preceding the opening of the convention.²⁴
The Ohio and Massachusetts delegations, along with the Quad-
rilateral, gave Adams his strongest support.²⁵ The leading
journal of the convention city, the Cincinnati Commercial,
edited by Halstead, actively promoted Adams' nomination.
Factors working against Adams were his letter to Wells and

²⁰ Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
²¹ Ibid.
²² Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 304.
²³ Adams, Diary, April 16, 18, 1872.
²⁴ Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
²⁵ Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872; Watterson, "The
Humor and the Tragedy of the Greeley Campaign," Century, LXXXV
(November, 1912), 31.
the fear among some delegates that he might alienate the Irish vote. 26

Brown's hopes rested with William M. Grosvenor, who had been chairman of the Missouri state convention that had issued the call for all Liberals to meet at Cincinnati. As the head of the Missouri delegation Grosvenor could work for his nomination at the convention. 27

At a quarter past twelve noon on Wednesday, May 1, 1872, Grosvenor called the National Liberal Republican convention to order at the Exposition Hall in Cincinnati. He then nominated Judge Stanley Matthews of Ohio for temporary chairman. Upon accepting the honor, Matthews made a fiery speech attacking the Grant administration and received a tremendous ovation. Schurz appeared briefly and "was hailed with deafening cheers." So that state delegations might have time to organize, the meeting was adjourned until the following morning. The delegations agreed to allow each state and territory to be represented by double the number of delegates of its congressional districts plus four delegates at large. 28

On Thursday Matthews called the convention to order, but an incident occurred that interrupted the proceedings. Tilton,

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26 Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
27 Ibid.; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
Susan B. Anthony and Laura De Force Gordon elbowed their way down the center aisle and up the steps to the speaker's platform in a demonstration for the advancement of women's rights. The delegates rose and gave them a good-natured cheer, and the orchestra played "Come to the Gipsy Camp." For a few minutes general confusion and hilarity reigned.  

The Nation, in commenting on this event, said there were several "crack-brained people" in attendance but that by and large the delegates were "respectable, honest, intelligent [and] public spirited." The Nation went on to say that one of the other "crack-brained people," George Francis Train, had attempted to hold his own Liberal nominating convention in his hotel room, but it had broken up in an "uproarious dispute over the existence of a God."  

With order restored the convention returned to business and elected Schurz for permanent chairman. Many Liberals did not expect Schurz to accept this position since he undoubtedly would have been more valuable on the floor than acting as an impartial president. He accepted the honor, however and received another large ovation. As he made his way to the speaker's platform, the orchestra played "Hail to the Chief."  

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29 Ibid., p. 63.  
30 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.  
32 New York Tribune, May 3, 1872; Rhodes, United States, VI, 415.  
the delegates to leave behind "the selfish spirit of political trade." He warned them not to be fooled by old political tricks and not to fritter away their zeal "in small bickerings and mean, selfish aspirations." Schurz said if they really wanted reform they had to entrust the work to none but those who understood it and honestly cared about getting it done. He claimed that he was not trying to advance the "interest of any one man against all others" and that he earnestly depri-ciated the frequently heard cry: "anybody to beat Grant." He said only that the Liberal candidate should be a man of "superior intelligence coupled with superior virtue." He asked the convention to be "honest and straight-forward" in making a platform and not to become involved in the "tricky manipu-lations" which so frequently characterized other political organizations. He told the convention that it stood "on the threshold of a great victory," and that victory would surely be theirs if they truly deserved it.\textsuperscript{34} The \textit{Nation} commented that Schurz's speech was "full of the loftiest aspirations" and clearly represented the feelings of the true reform element at the convention.\textsuperscript{35}

The tariff controversy presented the Platform Committee with its greatest difficulty. The original promoters of the Liberal movement were free-traders from the Mid- and North-West, and the Missouri Platform, on which the Cincinnati

\textsuperscript{34}Bancroft (editor), \textit{Schurz's Papers}, II, 354-361.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Nation}, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
convention was called, contained a free-trade clause. The New York call, which even Greeley had signed, very nearly made the same declaration, and revenue reformers from the East and the West thought the national platform would have to take a favorable stand on the issue.\(^{36}\) Greeley had made his position clear at the first. While he endorsed the Cincinnati meeting, he claimed that he was still a protectionist and that he desired the convention to leave the settlement of the question to the members of Congress.\(^{37}\) Again on April 30, Greeley wrote that if the Liberals at Cincinnati adopted a free-trade platform he and the *Tribune* would not support the movement.\(^{38}\)

Unless his compromise offer was accepted by the convention, he asked to be counted out. Greeley's frank and open position on the tariff question "reached the hearts of the great mass of delegates."\(^{39}\) Late Thursday night, after the two factions realized that there was no common ground on which they could stand, the Platform Committee accepted the Greeley proposal.\(^{40}\)

The die-hard revenue reformers bitterly attacked the compromise, and a leading historian said that it was "out of keeping with the high aims and determined spirit of the movement."\(^{41}\) Bowles thought that the tariff reformers should have

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\(^{36}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{38}\) *New York Tribune*, April 30, 1872.  
\(^{39}\) *Springfield Republican*, May 8, 1872.  
\(^{40}\) *Ibid.*; *Nation*, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.  
\(^{41}\) *Nation*, XIV (May 9, 1872), 300; Rhodes, *United States*, VI, 419.
demanded the right to name the presidential candidate in return for their concession. He felt that the offer would doubtless have been accepted and that thus the "platform and candidate would have grown out of an honorable compromise."\(^4\)

The majority of delegates, however, considered the arrangement to be a workable one and seemed to be more interested in a general political reform than in the tariff question.\(^4\)

Schurz thought the concession necessary "for the sake of harmony," and he advised a "conciliatory course" which the tariff reformers adopted.\(^4\)

On Friday, May 3, the last day of the convention, the Platform Committee presented its resolutions which were unanimously adopted as the official platform of the Liberal Republicans.\(^4\)

The resolutions, preceded by an address "to the people of the United States" which made an appeal for support in opposing the evils of the Grant administration, proclaimed the following principles: "the equality of all men before the law" regardless of race or color; the maintenance of the Union; emancipation, enfranchisement and opposition to any future opening of questions settled by the war amendments;

\(^{42}\)Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.

\(^{43}\)Ibid.; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.

\(^{44}\)Schurz to Greeley, May 6, 1872, Bancroft (editor), Schurz's Papers, II, 362.

"the immediate and absolute removal" of all political disabilities resulting from the war; a return to local self-government and a de-emphasizing of the federal power; a thorough civil service reform including a requirement that "no President shall be a candidate for re-election;" fair taxation and economy in government, plus the remitting of the tariff question to the decision of Congress; a denunciation of repudiation; a return to specie payment; a remembrance of the "heroism and sacrifices of the soldiers and sailors of the Republic;" opposition to all further land grants to railroads and corporations, and preservation of the public domain for actual settlers; fair and peaceful dealings with foreign nations.  

When the platform was completed and accepted, the Liberals turned to the work of choosing their candidates. Adams' strength had continued to grow throughout the convention meetings, and it was generally felt that Schurz's speech pointed distinctly to Adams as his choice. Adams seemed to be the second choice of practically everybody, and by Thursday night a great many delegates figured that Adams would be nominated after several of the states had first cast token votes for their favorite sons.  

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46 Ibid., pp. 66-69; Stanwood, History of the Presidency, pp. 341-344.

47 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
Brown's friends became alarmed at the implications of Schurz's speech which they knew did not fit the Missouri governor. Shortly afterward, Grosvenor told the Missouri delegation that he felt that it would be impossible to nominate Brown for the first place on the ticket and that they should work to nominate him for Vice President along with Adams for President. Many Missouri delegates considered this action treasonable to Brown. They telegraphed him that he was being sold out by Schurz and Grosvenor to Adams, and they urged him to come to Cincinnati at once. In the meantime, a delay in the completion of the platform caused by the disagreement over the tariff issue gave Brown the time he needed, since it kept the convention from going into balloting for candidates on Thursday night. Brown and his cousin, Senator Frank Blair, arrived late Thursday night "burning with personal disappointment, with mortified vanity, with plans of revenge upon men who, they supposed, had betrayed them." That same night they concluded a "combination" with the Greeley forces in which Brown would give his support to Greeley in return for second place on the ticket. The Cincinnati Commercial warned the next morning that the question before the convention was "Adams and Trumbull or Greeley and Brown." Despite

48 Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872. Bowles felt that if the balloting had begun that night "Adams' nomination would have been certain," ibid.

49 Ibid. 50 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.

51 Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
Greeley's increase in strength and the Commercial's warning, the majority of the delegates still looked upon the possible nomination as "an utterly ludicrous thing, which would cover the proceedings with ridicule and contempt" and, in fact, regarded it "as impossible."52

Adams' supporters knew that Trumbull would accept second place on a ticket headed by Adams, and they felt that only this combination could defeat the Greeley-Brown ticket.53 The Illinois delegation, split between the supporters of Davis and Trumbull, agreed on Friday morning to vote as a unit for Adams as their second choice if neither of their candidates made an impressive showing in the early balloting. They failed to make a solid switch, however, and it "eventually proved the ruin of the Adams cause."54

After the first ballot, but before the results were announced, Brown ascended the speaker's platform and withdrew his name from the list of presidential candidates. He told the convention that he was "animated sincerely and solely by the desire of victory" in the contest against Grant and that he wanted the Liberal presidential candidate to be the man who would receive the largest Republican vote. He told the delegates that in his estimation, that man was Horace

52 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 304.
53 Adams, Diary, April 18, 1872; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 303.
54 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 304.
Greeley. The results of the first ballot were then read, and, though Adams had the lead, there was no choice.55

Brown's speech brought forth great cheers from the Greeley supporters, but as these began to die down "a well-defined, concerted hiss crept through the building" from the opposition. The cheers began again, and the convention was lost for two minutes in a tumultuous demonstration carried on by the opposing factions.56 Schurz and other leading Liberals were astonished and concerned over Brown's action, and for the first time during the proceedings Schurz left the speaker's platform in an attempt to rally the opposition forces. He told the Missouri delegation that Greeley's nomination would be a "great political mistake," and he urged them to cast their votes for Adams. Missouri delegates were undecided about what to do at first, but after Schurz returned to the chair and Brown remained with the delegation, the Greeley votes began to increase slowly until they composed two thirds of the whole.

Brown's appeal was successful with his friends in other states, and they began to transfer their votes to Greeley.57 On the second and third ballots Greeley gained considerably, but Adams held a slight lead. At this point brief consultations took place among many of the delegations, and on the fourth ballot

56Ibid., p. 64.
57Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
Adams gained many votes while Greeley lost a few. At the end of the fifth ballot Adams had 309 of the 358 votes necessary for the nomination while Greeley, at 258 votes, had almost no gain. Trumbull had been running a very poor third throughout the balloting; he never presented a serious challenge to either of the leaders. Davis was running an extremely poor fourth; on the fifth count he had netted a total of only thirty votes.

If, at this time, the Davis and Trumbull forces from Illinois had switched their votes, as they had earlier agreed, and had led the Trumbull supporters from other states to Adams, his nomination would have been secured. Instead, the Illinois delegation retired for consultation, and while they were gone the rush to Greeley began. The results of the sixth ballot showed 324 votes for Adams and 332 for Greeley. Illinois delegates were still in conference, and while the convention awaited their vote and an official announcement from the chair, the Greeley supporters began an extremely noisy demonstration in their candidate's behalf. The convention was gripped in a state of noise and confusion. When the Illinois delegation returned and announced their vote, twenty-seven for Adams and fifteen for Greeley, the demonstration reached a fever pitch. The enthusiasm of the Greeley supporters began to spread throughout the convention; changes to Greeley

59 Ibid.; Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 304.
began to come so fast they could hardly be recorded. Pennsylvania changed fifty to Greeley, Indiana switched twenty-seven to him, and a general stampede to Greeley followed. Illinois, caught up in the enthusiasm, joined the Greeley bandwagon and changed her vote solidly for Greeley. When the official result of the sixth ballot was finally announced, Greeley had received 482 votes and Adams had dropped to 187.60 In describing the enthusiasm generated for Greeley and its results, Bowles wrote that "the heart gained another of its victories over the head, --and, quite to the amazement of nearly everybody, Greeley was nominated."61

Brown received the vice-presidential nomination on the second ballot by an overwhelming majority. With the official business of the meeting finished, Schurz declared the Liberal Republican Convention adjourned.62 Greeley learned of his nomination the same day, and he asked Reid to thank the convention for the "generous confidence" they had shown in him.63 In his formal letter of acceptance written on May 20, 1872, Greeley said that he had waited until then so that he might judge how the public had received the work of the convention. It was his estimate that the sentiments expressed at Cincinnati

60 Ibid. 61 Springfield Republican, May 8, 1872.
63 Schurz, et al. to Greeley, May 3, 1872; Greeley to Reid, May 3, 1872, ibid., p. 69.
had "received the stamp of public approval." He had great praise for the platform, and he said it was indeed an honor to be given the Liberal Republican nomination which he accepted in behalf of the American people. He said that if elected, he would be the "President, not of a party, but of the whole people." 64

Following Greeley's nomination there was great discontent among the reformers. The result of the convention was so totally unexpected that it "confounded nearly everybody." It seemed pitifully ironic that the revenue reformers had helped elect "the greatest living champion of protection." After months of trying to keep the movement free from political manipulation the reformers had been made "the victims of one of the paltriest political tricks ever executed." 65 The Nation thought that the result threw "an air of folly and absurdity over the very name of reform." The same magazine thought that Greeley was generous and kindhearted but that he would be easily duped if elected to office. 66 Bowles wrote that Brown was responsible for Greeley's nomination by carrying over to him "the unnatural votes that he had gathered for himself." Also he claimed that Brown had betrayed the reformers at the convention. Bowles thought that Brown had only fooled himself by thinking that he had a chance for the presidential nomination and that his sell-out to Greeley constituted "a case

65 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 304.
66 Ibid., 300.
of personal weakness and cruel injustice as well as of political infidelity." Bowles wrote to Dawes that while Fenton had been for Greeley "in his way," he was "neither a political idiot nor a political buccaneer, and Greeley was nominated by a combination of those two." He cited Tilton as representing the former and Blair as the latter. Though Bowles regretted Greeley's nomination and the manner in which it came about, he realized that Greeley himself had no advance knowledge of Brown's action and had not personally agreed to any bargain, and he gave him credit for possessing a high personal character. Bowles told Schurz that he felt that Brown's conduct at Cincinnati was "infamous" and that he had only hurt himself. He asserted that Schurz and Adams had emerged from the convention with their reputations untainted, and he was more than ever their admirer.

Schurz was greatly disappointed in the convention results. Bowles quoted him as saying that he was "overwhelmed and discouraged" by Greeley's nomination. Schurz wrote that he

67 *Springfield Republican*, May 8, 1872.
69 *Springfield Republican*, May 8, 1872.
70 Bowles to Schurz, May 8, 1872, Bancroft (ed.), *Schurz's Papers*, II, 368.
71 *Springfield Republican*, May 8, 1872. Schurz denied that he said that saying that he "never said such things;" see Schurz to Bowles, May 11, 1872, Bancroft (ed.), *Schurz's Papers*, II, 370.
could not think of the action at Cincinnati "without a pang." He said that he had consistently worked for reform and that while he had been criticized for not taking a more prominent role in the selection of candidates, he had never had the desire to be a "President-maker"; he had always wanted the nomination to be a "spontaneous outgrowth of an elevated popular feeling which would have made it stronger and more valuable." Instead, he said, the Liberal movement had lost its high moral character and had been "dragged down to the level of an ordinary political operation," and this was a "hard blow." The Nation charged that Schurz was, to a large extent, responsible for the "disaster at Cincinnati," because he did not openly campaign for Adams. Schurz replied that this was a cruel accusation and that beside the fact that he did not want to play the role of "President-maker," he was foreign born and he did not want to take too prominent a role in the selection for fear of prejudicing some voters against the Liberal candidates. Joseph Pulitzer said in later years that Schurz could have wielded the decisive influence at the convention and could have completely offset Brown's capitulation to Greeley, but "it was simply not in him to speak."  

The members of the Quadrilateral expressed disappointment in the convention results but decided that they should support Greeley because they had not taken an open stand against him. Bowles, in fact, wired his paper on the night of May 3 to support Greeley; the others soon followed suit. After careful consideration Bowles even thought that Greeley might offer formidable opposition to the administration candidate. On the other hand, Godkin had a strong dislike for Greeley and indicated that the Nation would not support him. He referred to the Cincinnati nominations as a "wretched mess." Schurz wrote to Greeley and told him of his and many other Liberals' disappointment over the Cincinnati meetings. He said the outcome of the convention was a result of political trade and intrigue, though he did not believe that Greeley himself was a "party to this arrangement." He said that mutual concessions had been required to hold the different elements of the convention together and that while the revenue reformers had consented to a compromise on the tariff, they had in return been sold out on the nomination of a presidential candidate.

75 Merriam, Bowles, II, 78.


77 Ogden, Godkin, I, 254-257; II, 62; Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 297-300; Godkin to Schurz, May 19, 1872, Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 376.
As a result, they had neither the platform nor the candidate they desired. For that reason Schurz was not sure what future action the reformers would take. He said that frankly he was not even sure what action he would take in regard to the campaign. One thing he was quite sure of, the German population of the nation would not support Greeley, and they made up a large portion of the Liberal strength in the Mid-West.78

Greeley replied by attacking the revenue reformers and saying that they were "not Republicans at all, but frauds." He said that his own forces were misrepresented at the convention, particularly in reference to the South. Speaking of the Germans, he said that they disliked him not so much because he favored protection but because he was a "Total Abstinence man." He said that he had always "rejected with Scorn" any attempts at political arrangements or bargains of any kind. Greeley asked Schurz to "take time for reflection and consultation" before deciding on any future action, because he did not see how the present course could harm anyone. He was confident that the "sober second thought" would bring all the Liberals into the proper relation.79

Schurz again wrote to Greeley on May 18 pointing out that it might be wise not to accept the nomination, at least until other political developments had indicated that it would


79 Greeley to Schurz, May 8, 1872, Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, pp. 350-351.
be in the best interests. He did not believe that Greeley could carry on a "vigorous Campaign," and he said that the Liberal candidate was especially weak in the North, which would be the most important section in the election. He commented that the Democrats might not accept Greeley as a coalition candidate, particularly if the Regular Republicans nominated someone other than Grant. He said that there was a strong probability that "another Liberal Republican ticket" would be in the field sometime soon and that this would give the Democrats a third choice.\(^{80}\) Greeley replied that he would accept the nomination unconditionally and that he was far more certain of gaining Democratic support than he was of having Schurz's support. He declared that he would take New York, nearly all of New England and the South, with no trouble at all. He believed that his chances to carry the Northwest were very good, at least as good as the administration's. Except for "German hostility" he believed they "would be more than even."\(^{81}\)

The reference to another Liberal ticket by Schurz in his letter of May 18 alluded to a meeting that was being planned by a group of dissatisfied Liberals.\(^{82}\) On May 30 this meeting took place in the Steinway Hall in New York City. Those in

\(^{80}\) Schurz to Greeley, May 18, 1872, Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 372-376.

\(^{81}\) Greeley to Schurz, May 20, 1872, ibid., 377.

\(^{82}\) Bancroft-Dunning, Schurz's Political Career, p. 352.
attendance expressed their dissatisfaction with the current administration, the Greeley nomination and the protective tariff. In conformity with their views, these Liberals scheduled a conference to be held at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on June 20, to be attended by all men with similar feelings.83

In the meantime, the Regular Republican Convention met in Philadelphia on June 5.84 At the opening of the meeting a massive demonstration for the renomination of Grant took place. The roll was then called, and Grant received the entire vote of every delegation at the convention.85 The Nation commented on the meeting by saying that it was "cut and dried" and that the "machine" was in control at all times.86

A rather exciting contest did develop over the vice-presidential nomination between Schuyler Colfax, the incumbent, and Senator Henry Wilson from Massachusetts. Grant did not particularly desire Colfax as a running mate, and he gave his support to Wilson who was nominated on the first ballot.87

The Republican platform heartily endorsed a policy of protection and justified the party's action in the South as an "imperative duty."88

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83 *Annual Cyclopedia*, XII, 779.  
85 *Tweedy, Republican National Conventions*, pp. 119-121.  
86 *Nation*, XIV (June 13, 1872), 388.  
When the meeting at the Fifth Avenue Hotel took place, it was the dominant opinion that Greeley should be accepted as the lesser of the two evils. The group did not like having to support Greeley, but they particularly desired the defeat of Grant; for that reason they hesitated to put another ticket in the field to divide further the opposition to the administration. A small group of dissatisfied Liberals would not accept this decision, however, and they nominated William S. Groesbeck of Ohio for President and Frederick L. Olmsted of New York for Vice-President, on a free-trade platform. During the excitement of the Greeley-Grant canvass, this ticket was entirely forgotten. The delegates to the Reunion and Reform convention in Cincinnati, May 1-3, held an indignation meeting after Greeley's nomination. They did not endorse the Liberal ticket, and no action was taken on nominating other candidates, but they did draw up a platform advocating tariff reform. They also organized a national committee of correspondence to consult with other political leaders and to determine a future course of action.

The national convention of the Democratic party took place at Baltimore on July 9. The Liberal Republican platform

90 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 779.
91 Nation, XIV (May 9, 1872), 297.
was presented to the delegates without a single change, and it was overwhelmingly accepted. The convention gave Greeley 686 votes out of a total of 732, thus making him the coalition candidate of the Liberals and the Democrats. The Nation, in commenting on the Baltimore meeting, did not believe that the best elements of the party were represented there.

Some delegates at the convention desired a Democratic candidate in the field and were strongly opposed to endorsing Greeley as a coalition candidate. They gathered at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore on July 9 and maintained a loose organization until after Greeley's nomination by the regular body. They then issued a call for a Straight-out Democratic Convention to be held in Louisville on September 3 for the nomination of candidates. A fairly large number attended on the appointed day, and they criticized the action taken in Baltimore. A very conservative platform was drawn up, and the convention nominated Charles O'Connor of New York for President and John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts for Vice-President. Both declined the nomination, but the Straight-Outs continued to back them, and they received a few votes in the election.

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92 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 730-781; Stanwood, History of the Presidency, p. 349.
93 Nation, XV (July 18, 1872), 40.
94 Annual Cyclopedia, 782-783; Stanwood, History of the Presidency, pp. 349-351; Porter and Johnson, National Party Platforms, p. 42.
Preceding the Liberal Republican convention a Negro National Convention had assembled at New Orleans on April 15. Delegates to this meeting endorsed the Grant administration and his policies in regard to the South. Frederick Douglass, the chairman, advised the Negroes to vote only for those Republicans who supported the Supplementary Civil Rights Bill. 95 At Louisville on September 25, a Negro Liberal Republican Convention was held. Every state and territory in the United States sent delegates to this meeting. The Negro Liberals praised the work of the Cincinnati Convention, adopted its platform and accepted its candidates. This convention claimed that race discrimination was no longer a political issue and advocated a lessening of Radical control in the South and a higher moral tone in the actions of the national government. 96

The Cincinnati Convention, called by the Reform element, had been made the victim of political intrigues. Greeley's nomination was not in line with the general character of the movement and prominent Liberals, such as Schurz, were greatly disappointed in the convention results. Brown's capitulation to the ranks of the more experienced politicians made Greeley's selection possible while at the same time it confused and alienated many reformers who were particularly opposed to his stand on the tariff and the manner in which he was chosen.

95 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 775.
96 Ibid., p. 778.
CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1872

Adams learned of Greeley's nomination at Cincinnati when he debarked from the Russia at Liverpool, England, on May 4, 1872. He commented that it was extremely odd that the convention took this action but that the unexpected was what usually turned up. He believed that a ticket headed by Greeley completely offset "all the calculations of the original authors" and that success with such a candidate was entirely unthinkable. He expressed great "relief in being out of the melee" and some curiosity as to the effect of the Liberal nomination on the other parties. The Grant supporters, he suspected, would "exult a good deal," and he thought that Greeley would make the campaign an easy one for the administration.\(^1\) Adams had earlier expressed the belief that the Liberal movement would fail, and after the nominations he was convinced of the accuracy of his prediction.\(^2\) He extended his gratitude to those who had supported him at Cincinnati, and he said that he was amazed at the strength to which his forces had grown, since he had done nothing to solicit it.\(^3\) He said that he

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1Adams, Diary, May 4, 1872.

2Ibid., April 10, 16; May 4, 1872.

3Adams to Winston S. Pierce, May 26, 1872; Adams to D. R. Alward, June 5, 1872, Adams, Letterbook.
was glad that he had not been nominated, because this success "would have brought with it so much of the more unpleasant portion of political life." Adams' prediction was borne out by the campaign of 1872 which was indeed made up largely of the unpleasant aspects of politics.

The administration press began to degrade the Liberal movement during the Cincinnati convention by labeling it a "conclave of cranks," and they continued their attacks throughout the campaign. The Nation commented that the canvass was the most vicious and disgraceful within memory, for each side accused the other of being liars, traitors, thieves, drunkards, "prudent Generals" and fools. Greeley was particularly open to attacks by the administration supporters, and he was greatly abused during the campaign. One journal commented that it was impossible to take Greeley seriously, because his appearance and his voice made people want to laugh. Regular Republicans published a satirical work in book form which ridiculed Greeley and the whole Liberal movement. The book made

4 Adams to Miron Winslow, May 26, 1872, ibid.

5 Watterson, "Humor and Tragedy of the Greeley Campaign," Century, LXXXV (November, 1912), 30; New York Times, practically every issue during the months June to November, and particularly through August, September, and October.

6 Nation, XV (August 8, 1872), 83.

7 New York Tribune, November 22, 1872; Conkling, Conkling, pp. 435-448.

8 Atlantic Monthly, XXX (August, 1872), 256.
Greeley appear as a complete fool who could neither reason nor write with any degree of intelligence. It referred to him as the "cabbage candidate," made fun of his farming background and proclaimed that he was an expert on at least one subject, turnips. In later years a personal friend of the Liberal candidate said that Greeley's comical looks, which he thought favored Charles Dickens' literary character, Pickwick, hindered his political ambitions.

Political cartoonists achieved a prominence in the Greeley-Grant campaign. Thomas Nast drew devastating caricatures of Greeley with great effectiveness. The Nation said that Nast's work won much support for Grant and described the artist as having "a keen relish for ridicule and . . . a capacity for making fun." The Atlantic Monthly, on the other hand, found Nast's campaign cartoons quite objectionable, often without point, and criticized him for a lack of "parabolic significance."

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9F. G. Welch (Pub.), That Convention or, Five Days a Politician (New York, 1872), pp. 47-55, passim.

10Halstead, "Breakfasts with Horace Greeley," Cosmopolitan, XXXVI (April, 1904), 698.

11An example of Nast's effective cartooning of Greeley can be found in Denis Tilden Lynch, The Wild Seventies (New York, 1941), p. 195. The cartoon, which shows Greeley shaking hands with "Boss" Tweed, whom he has just bailed out of jail, is a reproduction of the original which appeared in Harper's Weekly, August 3, 1872.

12Nation, XV (November 14, 1872), 311.

13Atlantic Monthly, XXIX (May, 1872), 642.
Reid commented after the campaign that Nast's cruel characterizations would not have been tolerated in any other country and not even in the United States at any other time. He felt that some of them called for a "prayer for forgiveness."

Frank Leslie, whose *Illustrated Paper* supported Greeley, brought Matt Morgan from England to compete with Nast. Administration supporters accused the imported cartoonist of extremely poor taste in depicting Grant during the campaign, because he practically always pictured the President as a stumbling drunk. Morgan characterized Greeley as the pious protector of the American people and labeled him, "that old sage, so mild and bland." Morgan's critics said that he was, to a large extent, responsible for Greeley's defeat, because his drawings were so obviously ridiculous that they angered the public and thus drove support to Grant.

Both the Liberals and the Regular Republicans composed campaign songs proclaiming the merits of their candidate and telling of the fear he struck in the hearts of the

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14 Reid, "Comment on Colonel Watterson's Paper," *Century*, LXXXV (November, 1912), 44. Reid was particularly incensed at a Nast cartoon showing Greeley shaking hands with John Wilkes Booth over Lincoln's grave; *ibid.* This cartoon is reproduced in Glyndon G. Van Densen, *Horace Greeley, Nineteenth Century Crusader* (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 419. Other Nast cartoons can be found in *ibid.*, pp. 411, 413, 415, 417.

15 *The Nation*, XV (November, 1872), 310.

16 *Ibid.*; *The Nation* said that Morgan's "caricatures were political blunders," *ibid.*
opposition. The New York Times paid five hundred dollars to the man producing what they considered to be the best song concerning the "Greeley Pill." Tilton's Golden Age was convinced that campaign songs might help Greeley win the election and that, in fact, a "singing campaign" was what most frightened the Grant administration. The Nation reminded both of these journals that campaign songs had never won an election in the past, that they probably would never win one in the future and that it was utterly stupid to waste time and money on such nonsense.

Gratz Brown caused the Liberals a great deal of concern when he took part in some rather scandalous behavior which the administration press reported with glee. Brown attended the commencement at Yale College in July, and after making a "foolish and ignorant speech," he had the impropriety to get "very drunk and behave in a very disorderly manner." The Springfield Republican, one of Greeley's most ardent supporters, indignantly demanded that Brown withdraw his name from the ticket. Brown heatedly denied the charge of drunk and disorderly behavior at the New Haven Hotel and said that he was usually a very temperate man but that he was suffering severe pain that

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17 Goodspeed (Pub.), Life of Greeley and Brown, pp. 72-75; Nation, XV (October 10, 1872), 231-233. These songs were given such titles as "The Last Lay of Useless Before He Was Laid Out by H. G. and the People," Goodspeed, p. 74.

18 Ibid., XV (October 10, 1872), 231-233.

19 Ibid., XV (August 8, 1872), 82.
night and that he merely drank some liquor to obtain "temporary relief." He said that he would never drink while discharging public duties and that he had, in fact, been a total abstainer "at various intervals" for many years. The Grant supporters quickly seized on Brown's refutation of the charge and said that a man who drank because he felt a little pain was not fit for public office.  

Grant did not escape similar charges of frequent intoxication. In an attempt to gain the support of the Prohibition party for Greeley, the New York Sun issued a damning review of the President's past intemperate habits while referring to Greeley, a total abstainer, as the "cold water farmer of Chappaqua." 

The early part of the campaign was launched with such vigor by the administration forces that Grant predicted that Greeley would not even be a candidate when the election took place in November. He thought that the Liberals, whom he referred to as "soreheads" and "knives," had actually done the Republican party a favor by setting up their own organization, because he was confident that many Democrats would not support Greeley. Thus the opposition would be split to a greater degree than ever, while at the same time a greater

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20 Ibid., XV (August 22, 1872), 114.

21 New York Sun, May 18, 1872, quoted in Stone, Dana and the Sun, p. 202. Chappaqua was Greeley's country home.
degree of harmony could be reached among the members of the Regular party. 22

Grant's most trusted advisors were very active in the campaign. Conkling became one of the administration's most effective defenders of Grant, and at the same time he venomously attacked Greeley in his speeches. He was credited with directing the majority of the New York state vote to the President in the election. 23 He told vast audiences that they had an alternative between "chaos and disorder" on the one hand and a "safe, tried and stable government" on the other hand. 24 Butler spoke for Grant in Massachusetts and then made an "oratorical pilgrimage to the West" in his behalf. Blaine secured the state of Maine for the President and then journeyed to Illinois where he spoke with great effectiveness. Morton worked constantly for Grant and made speeches on numerous occasions "with greater power and effect than any of his Republican coadjutors during the whole campaign." 25

Whereas Brown appeared to hinder the Liberal ticket, the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee, Wilson, added great strength to the Regular ticket. Wilson's nomination by the Republicans at Philadelphia helped to keep doubtful states

22 Grant to Washburne, May 26, 1872, James Grant Wilson (editor), "Grant's Letters to a Friend," North American Review, CLXV (July, 1897), 8.

23 Conkling, Conkling, pp. 435-448.

24 Ibid., pp. 442-443.

25 Ingersoll, Greeley, p. 563.
such as Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New Hampshire in the Grant column in the election and also greatly increased the administration's strength in the South. 26 Even Vice-President Colfax, who had been by-passed for Wilson at the nominating convention, made twenty-two speeches promoting a second term for Grant, though they were not particularly aggressive. 27 Grant himself took no active part in the campaign for traditional reasons and because he realized that he could render no effective aid as a result of his poor speaking ability. 28

The Liberals also launched an intensive campaign in the summer of 1872. Following Greeley's nomination, the Nation predicted that Schurz would not work or speak for Greeley's election. 29 Schurz, however, had been too prominent in the movement to desert it at this point, and he began actively to support the Greeley cause. 30 The Tribune reported in July that Schurz felt that the Liberal movement was "beyond the point of failure." 31 A political observer of the period said that after Schurz reconciled himself to Greeley's nomination,

26 Atlantic Monthly, XXX (August, 1872), 255. Hoar thought that Wilson was one of the outstanding politicians of the period and that if he had been alive in 1876 he would have been the Republican nominee for President that year; Hoar, Autobiography, I, 218.

27 Smith, Colfax, p. 363.

28 Grant to Conkling, July 15, 1872, Conkling, Conkling, p. 435.

29 Nation, XIV (May 30, 1872), 345.


31 Ibid., July 22, 1872.
no one worked as strenuously as he for the success of the Liberal candidate.  Davis withdrew his name from the Labor Reform ticket and supported Greeley in the campaign.  Chase expressed a great deal of confidence in Greeley's ability and said it would be a pleasure to vote for him.  He felt that there was no disgrace connected with the Democrat-Liberal coalition and that the Cincinnati platform would quiet any accusations that the Democrats were not free from the taint of slavery.  Bowles argued that while Greeley did not stand for all the reforms that the country needed, he did represent "the largest and noblest of them," and so the Massachusetts editor gave the Liberal candidate his support.  Trumbull lent his support to Greeley, as did a number of other prominent Liberals and Democrats.  Greeley took an active part in the canvass, traveling extensively and speaking to large audiences.

32 Ingersoll, Greeley, p. 547.
33 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 773-774.
34 Chase to Stanley Matthews, May 10, 1872, Warden, Chase, pp. 733-734; Chase to Demarest Lloyd, September 15, 1872; Jacob W. Schuckers, The Life and Public Service of Salmon P. Chase (New York, 1874), p. 593.
35 Chase to Lloyd, August 14, 1872, Schuckers, Life of Chase, p. 593.
37 Ingersoll, Greeley, p. 562.
The major issues of the campaign concerned the civil service, the tariff, labor reform, financial conditions and, most important, the results of the war, reconstruction in the South and reconciliation of the sections. Greeley pledged himself to work for civil service reform based on the "English or Prussian system as to permanence," and many of the Liberal leaders considered this to be a satisfactory declaration.\(^3^9\) Greeley explained to Schurz that the charges that he would be easily duped by insincere friends were completely without basis. He said that should any of them ever betray his confidence or attempt to swerve him "from the path of rectitude," he would cease to regard them as his friends. He strongly advocated the one-term principle as a cure for many of the evils connected with government appointments, because it would place the President "above the hope of future favor"; thus he would no longer fear "alienating powerful, ambitious partisans."\(^4^0\) Schurz told a St. Louis audience that a vote for Greeley would be a vote for civil service reform, while if Grant were re-elected the abuses would only continue to grow.\(^4^1\)

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\(^4^0\) Greeley to Schurz, July 8, 1872, ibid., 390-392.

\(^4^1\) Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 434-437.
with him a "ravenous horde of office-seekers" composed of reactionary Democrats and discontented Republicans.\textsuperscript{42} The \textit{Nation} pointed out that while one of the basic tenets of the Liberal movement was civil service reform, Greeley made too few pronouncements on the subject to convince anyone of his sincerity. The same journal went on to imply that the system would remain the same and that only the personnel would change if Greeley were elected.\textsuperscript{43} The \textit{Atlantic Monthly} said that Grant had indeed shown poor taste and ignorance in his appointments but that Greeley would show much worse. The journal contended that the service needed reforming only because of past Democratic administrations which had originated the existing system. The \textit{Atlantic Monthly} further alleged that Greeley, as the coalition candidate, had shown every indication of continuing to use the "public patronage as a means of party warfare."\textsuperscript{44}

In an attempt to appease the demand for tariff reform, the administration supporters in Congress passed a 10 per cent horizontal reduction on many manufactured articles in May, 1872. The tariff remained protectionist in nature, however, and was unsatisfactory to the majority of the revenue reformers, although, as one historian has pointed out, "it was better than nothing."\textsuperscript{45} The administration charged that the Liberals had

\textsuperscript{42} North American Review, CXV (October, 1872), 419-420.
\textsuperscript{43} Nation, XV (August 15, 1872), 100-101.
\textsuperscript{44} Atlantic Monthly, XXX (October, 1872), 510-511.
no definite plans for tariff revision and that the matter had, in fact, been relegated to a position of unimportance.\textsuperscript{46} The non-committal stand of the platform on this issue, plus the fact that Greeley had been a life-long protectionist, kept the Liberals from making any adequate defense of the charge, but Schurz did say that he felt that any acceptable tariff reform would be more likely to take place under Greeley than under Grant.\textsuperscript{47} Eastern business men, fearing that what Schurz said was true, "rallied impressively to Grant." They were afraid that if Greeley were elected, the reformers in the Liberal movement would pursue tariff and taxation policies harmful to their interests.\textsuperscript{48}

The Liberals might possibly have had an advantage in the attempt by both sides to gain the support of the labor element. Greeley had consistently worked for labor and had put several of his ideas into practice by improving the working conditions of the Tribune employees. He was the first prominent American to advocate shorter working hours, and he believed in the "wisdom of strikes" in cases where they were warranted.\textsuperscript{49} One labor historian has said that Greeley was as important to the social revolution of the latter nineteenth century as

\textsuperscript{46} Atlantic Monthly, XXX (October, 1872), 510.
\textsuperscript{47} Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 433-434.
\textsuperscript{48} Nevins, Fish, II, 605-606.
\textsuperscript{49} Ingersoll, Greeley, pp. 444-445.
Thomas Jefferson was to the political revolution of 1800. He has described Greeley as "the Tribune of the people, the spokesman of their discontent, and champion of their nostrums."\(^{50}\) In his speech at Jeffersonville, Indiana, Greeley took an open stand in favor of improving laboring conditions.\(^{51}\) In Wilson, the Regular Republicans also had a man who held the appeal of the working class, and he was an outstanding politician.\(^{52}\) In Ohio and Pennsylvania the Regular Republicans made a direct bid to labor in their state platforms.\(^{53}\)

Administration supporters pointed with pride to the financial record of Grant's first term. They compared it with the preceding record of Andrew Johnson's administration and loudly proclaimed a large reduction in government expenditures. They contended that the country was operating under ideal financial conditions and that the economy was stable and healthy.\(^{54}\) Conkling said that under Grant the country had "flourished as no one dared predict."\(^{55}\) He told an audience that prosperity abounded in the United States, that business

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\(^{50}\) John R. Commons, "Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origins of the Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXIV, 469.

\(^{51}\) *New York Tribune*, September 24, 1872.


\(^{53}\) *Annual Cyclopedia*, XII, 656, 663.

\(^{54}\) *Nation*, XV (July 25, 1872), 49-50.

\(^{55}\) Conkling, *Conkling*, p. 437.
was thriving and that debt and taxes were melting away.\textsuperscript{56} Regular Republicans pointed out that the merchants and manufacturers had great confidence in the Grant administration.\textsuperscript{57} In New York City a group of leading financiers and businessmen signed and circulated a pamphlet endorsing Grant's "faithful administration of the National Treasury" and pledged their support in promoting his re-election.\textsuperscript{58} Administration supporters charged that Greeley's financial policies were so unsound that they would bring on an economic disaster.\textsuperscript{59} In a financial address Greeley explained that his position was basically conservative. He said that he desired less federal aid to manufacturers and businessmen; instead, he favored paying more gold and currency out of the treasury, because he felt the capitalists could handle it better than the government.\textsuperscript{60} The \textit{Nation} commented that this was an illustration of the "unblushing audacity" which had characterized Greeley's campaign, because in the past he had been the country's foremost proponent of federal aid to industry.\textsuperscript{61}

The war, its results and conditions in the South furnished the most fertile arguments for both sides during the campaign.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., p. 443.  
\textsuperscript{57}\textit{North American Review}, CXV (October, 1872), 417.  
\textsuperscript{58}\textit{New York Times}, October 16, 1872.  
\textsuperscript{59}\textit{North American Review}, CXV (October, 1872), 419-421.  
\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Nation}, XV (September, 1872), 194.  
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid.
The administration supporters eulogized the President as the savior of the Union and referred to him as that "soldier in war" and "quiet patriot in peace--who never knowingly failed in his duty." They said that the Union would have been lost except for the "genius" of Grant who bore the American cause "on his shield through the flame of battle."\(^{62}\) Conkling said that no patriot could vote for Greeley and still believe in the past necessity of the war and its results. He went on to say that Grant had enlisted at the very beginning of the war "without commission, command, uniform or shoulder straps" and "started for the field--grasping the Stars and Stripes" to become the most victorious soldier in history, while at the same time, many of his current critics were running for re-election to the Senate and reading classical dictionaries.\(^{63}\) Administration Republicans called attention to the fact that Greeley had been one of Grant's most vigorous supporters in his first campaign and he had said that Grant would "be far better qualified for that momentous trust in 1872 than he was in 1868."\(^{64}\) Administration organs continually attacked Greeley's conciliatory policy toward the South, charging that he intended to pay the Confederate debt and give a pension to rebel soldiers.\(^{65}\) They asserted that Greeley's election would

\(^{62}\) Conkling, Conkling, p. 437.  
\(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 438.  
\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. 439; Nation, VII (November 12, 1868), 381.  
mean "reaction" and might jeopardize the work of reconstruction. The composition, aims, growth and controlling tendencies of the Liberal movement, Grant's supporters claimed, all pointed to this "unwelcome conclusion." They said that Greeley was dangerously unfit for office and that he could not resist the "malign influences that would be swept into power with him." As a result, state's rights would be restored to such a degree that federal enforcement of the constitutional amendments would be impossible in the South, and a condition no better than slavery would grow up in the area.16

In August a Soldiers and Sailors state convention met at Utica, New York, pledged to support Grant and then marched to Conkling's residence. Conkling told the gathering that the Liberals represented a plot to destroy the victory won by the Union Soldiers. He predicted that this "sordid coalition's" attempt to blacken the reputation of a great soldier and President would be rejected in November.67 In September a convention of Civil War veterans met in Pittsburgh and adopted resolutions endorsing Grant and reaffirming the principles of the Republican convention.68 Northern Union clubs came out wholly in favor of Grant and bitterly assailed Greeley for having signed Jefferson Davis' bail-bond in 1867. The Liberal

66North American Review, CXV (October, 1872), 420-422.
67Conkling, Conkling, pp. 446-447.
68Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 783.
candidate, who said that he had done so only to soothe the hatred generated by the war, was cheered by the South for this action.69

It was generally understood from the very beginning of the canvass that union and reconciliation between the North and the South would be the main reliance of the Greeley forces in the campaign.70 In Greeley's letter of acceptance to the Cincinnati convention, he expressed the desire for men in both sections "to clasp hands across the bloody chasm" that had so long divided them. He said that the hatred and strife generated by the war had to be forgotten so that an "atmosphere of peace, fraternity, and mutual good will" could be established.71 Blaine said that Greeley's policy of advocating universal amnesty and reconciliation was the one doctrine which made the coalition between the Democrats and the Liberals possible and that Greeley emphasized it because he felt it was the surest way of winning the election.72 In September, Greeley made an extended speaking tour through the Western States. In practically every address he criticized the administration's handling of reconstruction and strongly advocated a more


70Nation, XIV (May 30, 1872), 345.

71"Proceedings" p. 71.

72Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 531.
lenient southern policy. At Louisville he assured the Negroes that the Liberals were interested in their welfare. At Jeffersonville, in speaking of his violent opposition to slavery in the past, he said "that might have been a mistake, but it was at any rate an earnest conviction."

Schurz exposed what he believed to be the evils of Radical reconstruction in his campaign speeches for Greeley. He said that the first responsibility of those who had participated in defeating the South was to prove to this section that they were interested in the welfare of the southern people. He contended that the South could not be "renationalized" as long as corrupt politicians used the section for their own advantage through the manipulation of the Negro votes. The South was bankrupt and discouraged because of the "so-called carpet-bag government," which was made up of the most "reckless and rapacious of political bloodsuckers." He condemned all legislation which in any way provided for a continuance of military control in the South. The administration, he claimed, was more interested in controlling the ballot-boxes in the South and in "receiving an extension of their plundering license" than in bringing about any real reunion of the sections. He charged that the administration was "utterly unfit to encourage

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73 Greeley's speeches on this tour are quoted in the Appendix of Ingersoll, Greeley, pp. 650-663.
74 Nation, XV (September 26, 1872), 194.
75 New York Tribune, September 24, 1872.
and develop the good impulses slumbering in the Southern people and thus to solve the great problem of National reconciliation."76 In another instance Schurz said that young southerners wanted to forget the ruinous conflict of the past and be "recognized as American citizens again in the fullness of an American citizen's rights."77

The administration supporters answered the Liberals' charges concerning their policy of reconstruction with convincing arguments. They said that what few evils did exist, though they were greatly exaggerated by the Liberals, the southerners had brought upon themselves. They contended that the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan warranted strict federal control and supervision in many instances but that the belief that military rule existed in the South was a myth. Grant's supporters pointed out that there were not enough soldiers in the reduced army of 30,000 men to occupy the area completely. Reportedly, only 3,000 more soldiers than were ordinarily stationed in the South were located there in 1872. The administration claimed that amnesty had been extended to such a degree that only some 200 of the original secessionist leaders could not hold office, and that even this disability would probably be removed during the next session of Congress.78

77 Ibid., p. 439.
Hamilton Fish reminded a southerner who had denounced the "carpet bag tyranny" that every southern state was represented in the Senate, that each Congressional district was represented in the House, and that no southern man was disfranchised by any laws of the United States. Other Republicans called attention to the fact that thirteen ex-Confederate generals were sitting in Congress in 1872 and that local reform movements in the South, promoted by the administration, were rectifying abuses at their point of origin. They claimed that only under Grant would this "great settlement" become complete.

The first test of strength between the Democrat-Liberal coalition and the Administration Republicans came in the North Carolina state elections on August 1, 1872. Both parties had great interest in the results of the campaign, which was one of the most exciting in the state's history. Daniel R. Goodloe and W. H. Helper were the leaders of the coalition faction which supported the Conservative candidate, Augustus S. Merrimon, for governor and pledged their support to Greeley in the national campaign. The Regular Republicans endorsed

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79 Fish to Edward S. Baker, October 26, 1872, Nevins, Fish, II, 602. The Act providing for general amnesty in the South was passed on May 22, 1872, by a large majority. Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 513-514; Rhodes, United States, VI, 329.

80 North American Review, CXV (October, 1872), 418-419.

81 Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 534.
Grant and re-nominated the incumbent Governor Caldwell. The canvass was an extremely bitter struggle from beginning to end, and the administration allegedly applied a great deal of pressure to assure a victory for the Regular Republican ticket. Reportedly, blank warrants were issued to deputy marshals to be used for election purposes and blackmail, and "just before the election 3,000 persons were under arrest by the federal authorities, and most of them were promised that the cases against them would be dropped if their influence should be used for the Republican candidates." By election day the campaign had attracted national interest. The early returns, coming from the eastern section of the state, indicated a victory for the Greeley partisans. The returns from the Mountain and Western areas, which were received late, reversed these supposed results, and established a Republican victory. Liberals all over the nation charged the administration with fraud in the election and asked Merrimon, who lost by 1,898 votes, to demand a re-count. Merrimon could find no substantial evidence of fraud and refused to contest.

83 Ibid., 148-149; Bancroft (ed.), Schurz's Papers, II, 398.
85 Ibid., 149-150; Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 534.
the election. The administration had won the first contest, and from that "hour the popular current was clearly with the Republicans." Reid commented in later years that "the North Carolina election was the turning point" in the national campaign. The Nation said that enthusiasm for Grant began to increase considerably following the election results in North Carolina.

In several state elections which followed the North Carolina canvass, the administration continued to gain momentum while the Liberal Republican movement began to slowly crumble away. In the West Virginia elections, held on August 22, the administration-backed candidate, John J. Jacob, who ran as an independent Democrat, won the gubernatorial race. Greeley did extensive campaigning in Maine during August in an attempt to revive the sagging political fortunes of the Liberals. At Portland he denounced Grant and defended the Democrat-Liberal coalition by saying that he had made no bargains, nor had

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88 Reid, "Comment on Colonel Watterson's Paper," Century, LXXXV (November, 1912), 44.
89 Nation, XV (August 29, 1872), 129.
90 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 301.
91 Nation, XV (August 22, 1872), 114.
he promised any offices to any individual or faction in return for their support. Greeley's efforts were wasted, however, because in the state elections held in early September, the Liberals "suffered an overwhelming defeat" which seemed "to make the state sure for Grant" in November. Vermont also held its state election in early September, and the Liberals were defeated by a large majority.

With the Liberals having suffered a series of defeats in August and September, the results of the states holding October elections, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana, were eagerly awaited by both sides. Greeley made an exhaustive speaking tour through these states in an effort to increase Liberal strength. Regular Republicans, and even Grant himself, expressed concern over the outcome of the October elections, particularly in Pennsylvania and Indiana. The results of the elections showed that the administration's concern was

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93 Nation, XV (September 12, 1872), 161.
94 Ibid., XV (September 5, 1872), 145.
95 Ibid., XV (September 12, 1872), 161; Nevins, Fish, II, 607; Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 434.
unwarranted; all four of the states returned Regular Republican majorities. After the results were in Fish wrote that "the Presidential election may be considered as decided." Watterson wrote that "defeat stared the Liberals in the face," and that for the first time Greeley realized the "hopeless nature of the contest."

The Liberals attempted to regroup their forces in late October, but zeal was lacking, and the outcome of the national election was no longer in doubt. When the election took place on November 5, Grant was reelected by an unprecedented majority. Greeley carried only six states: Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas. Grant carried the rest. Following the crushing defeat, Greeley wrote to a friend that he was the "worst beaten man who ever ran for the high office," and that he had been so bitterly assailed that he hardly knew whether he was running for President or for

98 Nation, XV (October 17, 1872), 241.
99 Fish to Washburne, October 12, 1872, Nevins, Fish, II, 608.
100 Watterson, "The Humor and Tragedy of the Greeley Campaign," Century, LXXV (November, 1912), 42.
101 Nation, XV (October 17, 1872), 241-242; Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 536.
102 Annual Cyclopedia, XII, 784; Stanwood, History of the Presidency, pp. 350-353; Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, II, 535. Greeley received a popular vote of 2,834,079 to Grant's 3,557,070, or 43.8 per cent of the total, ibid.; Van Deusen, Greeley, p. 420. In the electoral college Greeley received 66 votes to Grant's 272, Rhodes, United States, VI, 437.
the Penitentiary." The death of Greeley's wife on the eve of the election, his overwhelming defeat at the polls and his loss of control of the Tribune following the election were too much for the exhausted candidate to stand; he died a few days later on November 29. Dignitaries from all walks of life attended his funeral; riding in the second carriage behind the family in the procession was the President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant.

Greeley had no glamorous war record such as Grant had, and he was much more open to abuse. As a result, in the battle of personalities which characterized the campaign, Greeley was definitely the loser. The Liberal candidate's non-committal stand on the tariff and his questionable political associations made many people doubt that he would bring about the general political reforms which the Liberal Republican movement had advocated in the beginning. The Liberals decided to make the South and reconciliation the major issue in the campaign, because they felt it would strengthen their political alliance with the Democrats. While the southern argument was probably the strongest available for the Liberals, it was evident at the time that the administration had made real progress in dealing with the South and that reconstruction

103 Greeley to Colonel Tappan, quoted in Smith, Colfax, p. 365.
104 Van Deusen, Greeley, pp. 420-425.
evils were, in many cases, greatly exaggerated. After May 22, 1872, when Congress passed a general amnesty bill, the Liberals were left without any real issue in the campaign.
CHAPTER V

THE DEMISE OF LIBERALISM

The Liberal Republicans no longer posed a political threat on the national level after 1872, but vestiges of the movement lingered on for several years. A state convention composed of Liberals and Democrats met at Columbus, Ohio, in 1873, and nominated candidates for state offices. This coalition ticket received over 10,000 votes in the election that year. In Connecticut, Liberals combined their forces with the state Democratic organization and succeeded in electing the majority of their candidates to office in 1874 and 1875. General N. P. Banks, who had been active in the national Liberal Republican movement of 1872, was elected to Congress in 1874 in Massachusetts as an independent candidate backed by the Democrats. Another Liberal Republican, Julius H. Seelye, was also elected to Congress in Massachusetts that same year. The next year, a group of prominent Massachusetts Liberals announced their formal union with the Democrats who nominated a Liberal Republican, General W. F. Barlett, for Lieutenant Governor. Two state Liberal Republican conventions were held in New York in 1874, and the delegates to both declared that they would support only the candidates of the two major parties who most closely represented the principles set down by the Liberal Republican party at their Cincinnati convention in
1872. The following year, New York Liberals took similar action, pledging to support the candidates whom they thought would cooperate with the Democratic Governor, Samuel J. Tilden, in bringing about administrative reform.¹

Schurz continued to be active as an independent Republican after the failure of the Liberal movement. In 1875 he attempted to organize a national assembly of respected public men with the specific stipulation that scheming politicians would not be invited to attend. He felt that it was not necessary to have a large number of men at the proposed meeting, but that those who attended should have large followings and wield great influence. He worked along with Charles Francis Adams' two sons, Brooks and Charles Francis Jr., in an attempt to raise money for the meeting which he felt could be organized by the early part of 1876. Schurz felt that sentiment for his proposed action was growing in the East and the West, and he asked Bowles to make a tour through the South to win support in that area.²

Early in 1876 the national committee of the Liberal Republicans sent out an inquiry concerning the advisability of calling a national convention. The responses were not particularly favorable. In April, Schurz and other prominent Liberals issued a circular which attacked the corruption

¹Haynes, Third Party Movement, pp. 30-33.
²Ibid., pp. 33-36.
connected with the present administration. The circular included an invitation to those interested in using their influence to work for a more acceptable Presidential candidate in 1876 to meet in New York on May 15. Several states were represented at the meeting, which became known as the "Fifth Avenue Conference." Schurz delivered the main speech, emphasizing the need for civil service reform. It was the general feeling at the conference that it would be useless to place a third candidate in the field, and many Liberals favored supporting the Democratic ticket, headed by Tilden, in the national election. On June 30, a meeting of the executive committee of the "Fifth Avenue Conference" decided to make no pronouncements regarding possible candidates. Schurz himself felt after this meeting that united action on the part of the independents was no longer necessary, because it appeared that two acceptable candidates would be in the field. In July, Schurz announced that he favored supporting the Regular Republican nominee, Rutherford B. Hays, and thus the man who was largely responsible for the Liberal Republican movement returned to the party fold. In the elections of 1876 former Liberals supported both the major parties with little semblance of organization. Following 1876, all traces of the national Liberal Republican movement vanished, and never again did the Liberals attempt to influence political affairs in an organized manner.3

3 Ibid., pp. 36-41.
Political abuses and corruption were not peculiar characteristics of any particular area, but they were national in scope in the post Civil War years. A grateful public in 1868 elected to the office of President a war hero who was clearly incompetent to deal with the national problems which confronted his administration. As a result of Grant's definite lack of political skill, those persons favoring a progressive policy were disappointed in him from the very beginning, and a reform group, embracing both conservative and progressive elements, grew up in opposition. This group, known as the Liberal Republicans, were conservative to the extent that they advocated a return to specie payments, a more lenient southern policy, a lessening of government control in local affairs and tariff for revenue only. The fact that they worked for civil service reform, believed in strict enforcement of the war amendments and were interested in the conditions and welfare of the Negroes attest to the fact that they were not reactionary in nature.

The Union Republican Party had been strained almost beyond the point of endurance during the term of Johnson. The Liberal Republican movement, however, furnished the first open break in the party and, by advocating a general reform in the structure of national politics, laid the basis for the political transition of the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Liberal movement, by accepting the Democrats in a coalition were given a much needed stimulus and led the way in improving
public opinion of that party. The Democrats, by entering into the coalition, officially accepted and endorsed the war amendments for the first time, thus helping to refute the charge that they were a party of the past. The Liberal movement forced the Union Republican party at least to reconsider its position on several issues, such as the civil service and the tariff, on which the administration made token attempts at reform, and on the southern issue where it removed practically all basis for Liberal criticism by passing a general amnesty act.

This is not to say that the Liberal movement was as important as later third party movements, such as the Populists, in shaping reforms of the two major parties, but it was the first such movement to take place in the post war years, and it was broader in scope than those which followed. By being first, the Liberal movement furnished the pattern and laid the groundwork for the numerous reform groups which grew up in the West after 1872. The fact that it was an extremely broad movement gave it an illusion of strength but in reality made its ultimate defeat inevitable. Various political elements, not interested in reform at all but only opposed to Grant, attached themselves to the Liberal movement and by so doing lost the Liberals a great deal of support. The movement became divided between the Reformers and the politicians. The results of the Cincinnati Convention are convincing proof that
the strictly political element won the struggle, thus shoving reform, and with it the chances for victory, into a relatively unimportant position. In the final analysis the individuals composing the Liberal movement had only one thing in common, the desire to defeat Grant. As events proved, a strictly negative agreement such as this was inadequate to hold the Liberal Republican movement together.
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