

1890

**The Ocala Demands**

In 1890, the Southern Alliance, the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, and the Colored Farmers' Alliance met jointly in Ocala, Florida. They formed a Supreme Council of the National Farmers' Alliance, and drew up the following list of demands. The Ocala Demands were drawn up in December, just after the Alliance movement had had a sharp impact on the fall elections in the South and the states of the Great Plains region.

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1. a. We demand the abolition of national banks.
- b. We demand that the government shall establish sub-treasuries or depositories in the several states, which shall loan money direct to the people at a low rate of interest, not to exceed two per cent per annum, on non-perishable farm products, and also upon real estate, with proper limitations upon the quantity of land and amount of money.
- c. We demand that the amount of the circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.
2. We demand that Congress shall pass such laws as will effectually prevent the dealing in futures of all agricultural and mechanical productions; providing a stringent system of procedure in trials that will secure the prompt conviction, and imposing such penalties as shall secure the most perfect compliance with the law.
3. We condemn the silver bill recently passed by Congress, and demand in lieu thereof the free and unlimited coinage of silver.
4. We demand the passage of laws prohibiting alien ownership of land, and that Congress take prompt action to devise some plan to obtain all lands now owned by aliens and foreign syndicates; and that all lands now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of such as is actually used and needed by them be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.
5. Believing in the doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none, we demand—
  - a. That our national legislation shall be so framed in the future as not to build up one industry at the expense of another.
  - b. We further demand a removal of the existing heavy tariff tax from the necessities of life, that the poor of our land must have.
  - c. We further demand a just and equitable system of graduated tax on incomes.
  - d. We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all national and state revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government economically and honestly administered.
6. We demand the most rigid, honest, and just state and national government control and supervision of the means of public communication and transportation, and if this control and supervision does not remove the abuse now existing, we demand the government ownership of such means of communication and transportation.
7. We demand that the Congress of the United States submit an amendment to the Constitution providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people of each state.

QUESTIONS

1. Do the demands include any that touch on the subject of race relations?
2. What do this document and the platform of the Populist Party have in common? What are the principal differences?