THE CHANGING BASIS OF THE
REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1865-1877

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REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1865-1877

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PREFACE

In 1865 the Republicans were condemning the conservative Dixie leaders, priding themselves on their Radicalism, dealing with the problems of the freedmen, and conducting a reconstruction of national political institutions, all in the name of democracy and justice. By 1877 the GOP was aligned with the southern Democrats in a coalition designed to defend property, privilege, and high finance. In the past historians have often explained the transformation by arguing that the differences were only apparent and not real. These traditional versions have contended that the Radicals were political opportunists who helped the ex-slaves only because they needed black votes in order to stay in office. This study is an attempt to reinvestigate the party during the Reconstruction era in order to understand the degree and nature of the changes. The paper reviews the basis of the party at different points in its metamorphosis to demonstrate what happened to the organization.

There is ample evidence to show that the early Radicals and moderates were sincerely devoted to the principles of equalitarianism and humanitarianism. The nature of the Reconstruction program manifests an apparently honest attempt to deal with the problems of the day. The history of the Grant administration, however, reveals a serious departure
from reform. A review of the party under Hayes’ leadership demonstrates the complete abandonment of Reconstruction and the commitment of the GOP to serve a new set of concepts. The inquiry concludes that by 1877 the Republican party was significantly different than the organization of 1865.
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CHAPTER I

REPUBLICAN COALITION

Most traditional history is boringly responsible in its accusations. Scholars merely grind out their conclusions with no passion attached to the results, and scarcely any attempt is made to generate strong feelings about past developments. But there are some eras and subjects which writers have reserved for the most scathing and venomous commentary. It is in the latter examples that devotion to historical interpretations can become close to religious. The Republican party of the immediate post-Civil War period enjoys just such a dubious distinction. Even the usually placid textbook writers have bombarded the Radical Republicans with accusations about alleged rascality. The popular treatments have chimed in with their damning rhetoric. The most recent scholarship, however, indicates that the Republican organization of Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, Benjamin Wade, and William Fessenden and their party colleagues does not deserve such condemnation. The party was a coalition embodying basically two groups, the Radicals and moderates. But it was, nevertheless, largely a humanitarian reform group trying to deal with the problems resulting from emancipation and the reconstruction of southern society.
Much of the standard treatment of the Republicans originally emerged around the turn of the century, chiefly from the writings of James F. Rhodes and John W. Burgess, and from the teaching of William A. Dunning. Other writers, principally Claude Bowers, James G. Randall, and Matthew Josephson, subsequently produced works on the subject which maintained the tone set by the three pioneers. In all cases the story was simple: President Johnson, following the lead of the martyred Lincoln, devised a forgive-and-forget plan of bringing the rebel states back into the Union. But the Radical Republicans, driven by hatred for the South, prevented the peaceful reunion and, in order to punish the dissidents, established harsh and corrupt carpetbagger governments in the former Confederate states. In the end, the scoundrels were turned out of office and Dixie was returned to the hands of its natural (white) leaders.

Burgess, the ex-Confederate soldier, in his Reconstruction and the Constitution, 1866-1876, describes the work of the Republicans as a "soul-sickening spectacle." Voicing the racist sentiment that is at least latent in most of the traditional accounts, Burgess condemns Negro enfranchisement as a "great wrong to civilization." The Reconstruction proposals of the Republicans were "brutal" acts, called forth

1 John W. Burgess, Reconstruction and the Constitution, 1866-1876 (New York, 1902), p. 263.
2 Ibid., p. 133.
by "partisan excitement and exaggerated suspicions." For Rhodes, writing about the same time, the measures were "harsh." During the 1920's the literary attack was renewed. This time Claude Bowers, writing a more widely distributed account than the first versions, lambasted the Republicans with unrelenting and uncompromising clarity. The Reconstruction governments were "torture chambers"; the men responsible for the scourge were "brutal, hypocritical, and corrupt."

Thaddeus Stevens in the House of Representatives and Charles Sumner in the Senate usually receive most of the blame for creating the odious policies, and, thus, are the victims of a heavy assault from the historians. Stevens, whose personality apparently made him a prime target for the most vicious sort of insults, is maligned for a rich assortment of alleged crimes. To George F. Milton the Pennsylvania congressman was a drunkard and an "inveterate gambler." James G. Randall in something of a classic account of the war and its aftermath, The Civil War and Reconstruction, recounts a scandalous tale of intrigue and manipulation in

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3Ibid., p. 114.


6Ibid., p. v.

which "the happiness of millions of people ... swayed by the domineering force of this hater of the South [Stevens]." One textbook account depicts Sumner as a "man who possessed malice without talent." David Donald, who later wrote a more sympathetic account of the senator's life, called him simply "arrogant"; but for James Truslow Adams, the man possessed "fanaticism and egotism." Milton characterized the senator as an "eerie, evil genius who sat ... in the Senate spinning tenuous spider-webs of far-fetched theory about Negro equality."

In the late thirties Matthew Josephson formulated a new analysis. The Radicals were not merely vindictive conspirators; revenge was too simple a motive. They were really working with Northern business interests to keep the South in subjection and themselves in power, all for the sake of the Jay Goulds, the Jim Fiskes, and the like. The Radicals "waved the bloody shirt" and promised to keep Dixie underheel, and thereby won elections. Once in office Sumner and Stevens

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12Milton, The Age of Hate, p. 33.
and others went through the motions of being reformers, but in reality they were plotting in behalf of the rising capitalists to dominate the country.\textsuperscript{13}

Even though some serious reappraisals have cropped up since the 1930's, the conclusions established by the new interpretations have not yet sifted down to the textbook level. As late as 1960 one ingenious textbook was still displaying a sneering picture of Stevens with the attached explanation that the man "shows in his hard and unforgiving face the implacable hatred of the South which made Reconstruction so bitter."\textsuperscript{14} Another version calls the era a "disgraceful chapter," and implies that the Republicans' policies were dictated by revenge.\textsuperscript{15} A third insinuates that Stevens and Sumner were motivated solely by a desire to keep the Republican party in power.\textsuperscript{16} In one widely distributed textbook the authors suggest that the proposals for Negro


\textsuperscript{15}David Saville Muzzey, Our Country's History (Boston, 1957), pp. 323-325.

suffrage were merely "strategy" to guarantee the ascendency of the GOP.  

Despite the overbearing self-assurance of such accounts the early Radicals were neither vindictive conspirators nor pawns of northeastern business interests. In fact, the Republicans demonstrated an amazing leniency toward the former rebels and manifested no inclination to operate as the pawns of industrialists. Horace Greeley and Henry Wilson both made pleas for amnesty for the defeated Confederacy and its former leaders. Thaddeus Stevens once offered to defend Jefferson Davis against the charge of treason. Senator Wade insisted that there be no wide-scale execution of Confederate leaders; he was outraged over the hanging of Mrs. Surratt. There is no economic philosophy which distinguishes the Radicals from their contemporaries. Some were free-trade advocates; others were high-tariff men. As a group they were neither pro-business nor pro-labor.

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19 Ibid.

the Radicals were really trying to keep the South underfoot, in reserve for later domination by big business, they chose the wrong tactics. As later events demonstrated, northern capitalists could obtain more cooperation from the governments restored to southern conservative leaders than they could from the experimentally minded Reconstruction regimes.

There is ample reason to adopt a new analysis of the party, an interpretation which recognizes that a spirit of social reform was very much a part of the deliberations of Reconstruction. The men who dominated the party in 1865 were largely utilitarians, not revengers; they were more the epitome of a liberal spirit of reform than they were the fore-runners of a conservative business domination of the country; they were moralistic and often doctrinaire, but they never lost sight of human problems and rarely confused means with ends. The Republicans even engaged in a number of reform campaigns other than those connected with Reconstruction and the Negro. In short, far from being "brutal, hypocritical, and corrupt," the party was largely humanitarian, sincere, and honest.

The exoneration of the Republicans, however, could be carried to excess. The early reconstructionists were not guided solely by principle; there was a political basis for the party in each stage of its history. Such are the necessary realities of holding office. Many of the Republicans, for example, supported Negro suffrage for political reasons
rather than for the democratic ideal involved. But the party
cannot be divided into two distinct groups, one representing
principles, the other, politics. There is a thin line be-
tween the two elements. In most cases a mixture of several
factors motivated the congressmen toward a certain policy. In
some instances the doctrinaire suffragists themselves
were forced to recant their philosophies because of public
pressure. But the usual circumstance was for the Radicals
to be intellectually committed to the ideals of equality and
to be spurred toward specific proposals by the support of
their constituents.

In the period from Lincoln's death to Johnson's series
of vetoes the Congressional leadership gradually assumed con-
trol of the party. President Johnson, although at one time
Lincoln's Vice-President, was never really in the Republican
camp. The political organization was a diverse and complex
party embodying the notions of a wide variety of individuals.
It is a mistake to assume that the group acted with much
solidarity, either in pursuit of revenge or in behalf of more
noble goals. Not even Sumner and Stevens always agreed with
each other. They were certainly not part of a centrally
coordinated conspiracy to push through Congress a series of

21 Eric McKitrick, Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction
(Chicago, 1960), pp. 55-56.

punitive measures to repay the South for the trouble it had caused. There were actually two basic groups in the Republican camp, the moderates and Radicals, and neither operated as a monolithic unit. In order to present an accurate account of the party's direction it is necessary to investigate the general character of each of the two wings.

Radicalism was a romantic cause advocating nineteenth-century notions of equality and liberty. The campaign for an extreme approach to Reconstruction was the last phase of both the democratic reform movement which began in the 1830's and the anti-slavery crusade of the same period. The Radicals were Jacksonian democrats who believed that the doctrine of innate equality did not have a 'whites only' clause. Their post-war program was designed to create an equalitarian society in the South. In assuming that any deficiencies in the freedmen were due to the conditions in which the Negroes lived, and in demonstrating a desire to improve the lot of the black men, the Radicals were part of the humanitarian tradition associated with the nineteenth century.


The two aspects of Radicalism, equalitarianism and humanitarianism, are best demonstrated by what the extreme wing proposed to do about reconstructing the Union after the war. The Radicals' concept of the meaning of democracy and their humanitarian sentiments largely determined their attitudes toward both Negroes and the system of slavery, their evaluation of the southern aristocratic society, and their willingness to experiment with new methods of reforming that society. The South had been defeated in a long and costly war; the North, with its strong anti-slavery sentiment, was, of course, the victor. Washington could dictate the terms of the peace and the circumstances under which the rebel states would be readmitted to the Union. It would be absurd to expect the Radicals not to try to create in Dixie the kind of community for which they long campaigned. Not even the moderates were willing to pass up the chance to advance full equality.

The equalitarianism of the Radicals began with the assumption that morality demanded that the Negro be treated as a human being. For E. L. Godkin, speaking through the columns of the New York Nation, "... the continued degradation of... [the freedmen was] dangerous to the state and a scandal to free government."25 Senator Julian proposed that "one rule be adopted for white and black..." The nation should, he believed, rid itself of "the vile spirit of caste which has

brought upon. . .[the] country all its woes."\textsuperscript{26} Society should make no distinction based on a consideration of skin color. Neither the vote, economic opportunity, nor education should be allotted on the basis of an individual's race. To secure a community embodying such equalitarian concepts the extremists adopted a series of legislative guarantees of their goals.

The humanitarian tradition which the Radicals embodied contained two basic aspects, both of which were part of the thinking of the reconstructionists, although not in explicit form. It assumed that differences between groups of people are, to a considerable degree, due to the conditions in which the individuals live. It manifested a keen interest in changing the conditions in order to upgrade the nature of the newly emancipated slaves. Viewing matters with the humanitarian assumption in mind, the Radicals knew that the process of manumission was not simply opening a gate to freedom; nor was it, they understood, as simple as just issuing a proclamation that there would henceforth be no legal protection of slavery and that anyone who continued to maintain slaves would be punished. Full emancipation was an intricate maneuver; it involved the transformation of a whole society and its people. Both the former masters and the freedmen would have to undergo some changes. What legislators could do to bring about the necessary alterations was not always

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 102.
clear; neither was it apparent that a revolution imposed from the outside would succeed. But Sumner, Stevens, and their cohorts were willing to try. They were ready to attempt to accomplish the goals of abolitionism by both direct and indirect measures: by legislation that guaranteed the civil rights of the Negroes and by acts which at least made some effort to reform the society in which slavery flourished.

Each of the basic Reconstruction proposals of the Radicals can be justified in terms of its consistency with the equalitarian and humanitarian goals of the group. In order to fully understand the vindication it is necessary to consider the situation in which the congressmen were acting. Provisional governments, recognized by the Presidency, and controlled by the "Bourbon" elements, managed affairs in the South in 1865 and 1866. These "reconstructed" regimes attempted to maintain some semblance of slave labor by passing the infamous "Black Codes." In order to capture the initiative and secure the success of emancipation, the Republicans, both moderates and Radicals, insisted that the Congress must control the process of empowering new governments in the southern states and must be the sole author of the terms under which those states would be admitted to the Union. The legislators did not intend to tolerate the continued existence of the conservative regimes. They were willing to exclude the former Confederacy until there was ample assurance that the area was ruled by progressive-minded men who would not violate
the accomplishments of emancipation. Through the tactics of Congressional control of Reconstruction the Radicals fought for a wide range of reform programs for the defeated South.

A key proposal in the Republican program was some sort of guarantee of voting rights for the Negroes. But for most of the suffragists there was no intention to enfranchise all of the ex-slaves in wholesale fashion. Charles Sumner, as well as Carl Schurz, for example, wanted to institute the doctrine of 'impartial suffrage.' The formula simply meant that it was acceptable to place limitations on the vote provided that none of the restrictions were enforced on the basis of racial considerations. That is, reading qualifications were, presumably, all right provided the same standard was applied to both blacks and whites.27

Republican leaders were not ignorant of human realities. They well understood that promising the literate Negroes the right to vote did not guarantee equality of opportunity. The chance to secure the education necessary to make reasonably rational decisions in the polling place was closely connected to an individual's financial status. Indeed, economic inequalities almost precluded the possibility of securing social and political, and even, perhaps, judicial equality. Thus, many of the Radicals became interested in one or more of several possible means of protecting the

27McKitrick, Andrew Johnson, p. 57.
freedmen beyond merely issuing a legislative decree that the ex-slaves could vote. Virtually all Republicans favored the passage of legislation to protect the civil rights of the Negroes. They also supported the creation of a federal agency to care for the blacks in their first few years after emancipation. Such an organization could, the Radicals believed, help enforce the Reconstruction acts and provide financial aid to indigent Negroes. A few, Thaddeus Stevens, for example, proposed giving land to the ex-slaves. In the sections of the South where enough public lands was available, the suggestion involved no more than turning the unused areas over to the Negroes; in the regions without the necessary unsettled acres it meant confiscating large estates for division among the landless.

Each individual Radical provided a unique contribution to the party basis. They certainly did not all agree with each other on the specifics of a Reconstruction program, or on any other issues for that matter. A look at the most outspoken leaders of the Radical wing of the party provides a significant overview of the particulars of this branch of party thought. It is generally agreed that three of the most influential Radicals in the period under consideration were Benjamin Wade of Ohio, Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, and Charles Sumner of Massachusetts.

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28 Cox, Politics, p. 208; Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade, p. 282; Binkley, American Political Parties, p. 257.
Benjamin Wade was an idealist in touch with reality. He was perhaps the most consistent of the doctrinaire democrats. While many of the Radicals who supported Negro suffrage opposed the enfranchisement of women, Wade supported both extensions of voting privileges. But he was not beyond compromising his ideals for the sake of practical considerations. He voted for the admission of Nebraska, a territory with a "whites only" voting clause in its constitution, because the additional Republican congressmen that the state was expected to provide were needed to pass the full Radical program. Wade was a major force in formulating what came to be the basic Reconstruction position: only Congress had the power to readmit the seceded South; no state would be restored to the Union until there was a guarantee that Negro suffrage and civil rights would be protected. The Ohio senator's constitutional theories were completely consistent with his proposals; he believed that once an entire state rebelled against the central authority, Congress had the right to dictate the conditions for restoration. Wade was not guided by any strong hatred for the South. Indeed,

29 Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade, p. 285; Binkley, American Political Parties, p. 258.
30 Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade, p. 276.
31 Ibid., p. 263.
32 Ibid., p. 262.
he insisted that there be no massive execution of Confederate leaders; he was outraged over the hanging of Mrs. Surrratt;\textsuperscript{33} he opposed the disfranchising of former rebels.\textsuperscript{34}

But the Buckeye solon's progressive notions were not confined to issues coming out of the Civil War. He was also concerned with the rising problems of an increasingly industrial society. He was troubled about the "... deep discontent among the masses ... who will shortly demand that their condition be made more comfortable."\textsuperscript{35} To relieve the "discontent" he proposed that "Congress ... cannot quietly regard the terrible distinction which exists between the man that labors and him that does not."\textsuperscript{36} Wade was long a supporter of better rewards for laborers.\textsuperscript{37} Somehow he could never understand the peculiar brand of laissez faire philosophy which advocated government support for the employers and damned any protection of the working man as an unwarranted interference in the affairs of free enterprise.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 267.
  \item \textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 271.
  \item \textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 288, citing \textit{Cincinnati Daily Gazette}, July 2, 1867.
  \item \textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 286.
  \item \textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 275.
\end{itemize}
Thaddeus Stevens was a hard-core politician, intent upon advancing his party, but insistent that the Republicans stick to certain ideals. It is hard to determine the congressman's chief motivation. Often he seemed to be more interested in following popular sentiment than in leading the fight for new principles. The Pennsylvanian was many times inconsistent in applying his doctrine to different situations. Stevens advocated progressive reforms for the South, but he did not always tackle the problems of the industrial North with the same liberal fervor. However, the idealistic tone of his Reconstruction proposals is sufficient to acquit him from the charge that he headed a vindictive conspiracy against the South. For instance, Stevens opposed the one scheme that would have devastated the southern economy, deportation of the Negro labor force.

Stevens' role is further explained by his life of devotion to reform. In the 1830's he was an advocate of free education, supporting in 1834 a provision to extend the free school system of Philadelphia to provide educational facilities throughout the state. During almost the entirety of his public career he championed one bill after another to broaden and improve educational opportunities; in the thirties he fought for funds for state colleges; after the war he

sought the establishment of schools for the freedmen. Like most of the other Radicals his greatest efforts were in behalf of the Negro. In the early days of pre-war abolitionism he advocated the destruction of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Later, as a delegate to a state constitutional convention, he refused to sign the proposed document because it contained a "whites only" provision for voting. Even in the act of dying Stevens was defiant of racist sentiment. He stipulated in his will, as a result of the practice of exclusion of blacks from white burial grounds, that he was to be buried in a Negro cemetery.

In his pronouncements before the Congress, Stevens made it quite clear that he did not intend to stop until he had secured a wholesale "reorganization in southern institutions, habits and manners." True to the general Radical policy, he insisted that the Congress had the sole authority to re-admit the rebellious states. Furthermore, his insistence that provisions must be made to guarantee economic, political and legal equality for the Negro was typical. But the specific proposals he set forth to uplift the black man were more extensive than the suggestions of the other Radicals. At

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\[42\] Ibid.

\[43\] Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, p. 104.

\[44\] Ibid., p. 103.
first he advocated the confiscation of the large plantations for redistribution among the former slaves, but he finally settled for a provision to provide each freedman with forty acres of land from unoccupied state-owned reserves.45

Despite indications that Stevens was not primarily motivated by hatred for the South and that he expressed some sentiments for peaceful reconciliation, there was no love lost between the congressman and the Dixie leaders. The Pennsylvanian apparently wished to inflict strong punishment on the former rebels. To him the rebellion was an act of "fiendish cruelty against the best Government on earth."46 For a few of the leaders of the Confederacy he reserved execution to "propitiate the names of our starved murdered, slaughtered martyrs"; for the rest, he would deny them the right to vote.47 He clearly did not trust the rebels and identified the insurrection with the Democratic party. "I believe," he was fond of saying, "... that on the continued ascendancy of ... [the Republican] party depends the safety of this great nation. If [Negro] suffrage is excluded in the rebel states then every one of them is sure to send a solid rebel representative delegation to Congress."48 Thus, his pronouncements often sounded like partisan, politically motivated statements, when in fact they were based on a

45 Brodie, Thaddeus Stevens, p. 248.
46 Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, p. 91.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 93.
devotion to Negro equality and the maintenance of a federal
government which would protect that equality. In attacking
Stevens for supporting a measure which would strengthen his
own power, his critics fail to recognize that when the South
refused to give the Negro the vote there was a manipulation
of votes in behalf of the conservative Democrats. As Stevens
explained, "I have never insisted that the franchise should
be unjustly regulated so as to secure a Republican ascendancy,
but I have insisted and do insist that there can be no just
regulation of that franchise which will give to any other
party the power."\(^{49}\)

Charles Sumner was the most moralistic of the Radical
leaders. In cold detachment he saw the need for social reform
in the South as an ethical responsibility for his party. The
test of the constitutionality of a measure was whether it was
needed (in the utilitarian sense of the word). He concluded
that the Radical formula for restoration, congressional
authority and guarantee of the protection of the Negro, would
serve the national good. Sumner wanted to include within the
Reconstruction acts further provisions to secure for the
freedmen a means of getting an education, and to establish a
practical method by which the black men could become land
holders. But unlike Stevens he did not have any particular
scheme to confiscate the property of the aristocracy,\(^{50}\) and

\(^{49}\)Ibid., p. 94.

\(^{50}\)Edward L. Pierce, The Memoirs and Letters of Charles
Sumner, 6 vols. (Boston, 1893), IV, 317.
disagreeing with Wade, he was not willing to compromise his demand that every state, admitted or readmitted, be required to provide for Negro suffrage. Similar to both Wade and Stevens he demonstrated his lack of vindictiveness. He opposed staging a trial of Jefferson Davis and any direct retaliation against Britain for her alleged support of the Confederacy.

From the late thirties until his death in 1874 the long-time abolitionist participated in a number of reform drives. As noted earlier, Sumner was a prohibitionist at a time when the movement was considered a liberal cause. He was an advocate of a system of international law as a means to world peace. During the 1840's he was an ardent spokesman for reforms in both public education and prison systems and codes. The Back Bay crusader was constantly agitating for improvements in educational opportunities. Even after the war he kept up his efforts; this time he was a proponent of desegregated classrooms. As early as 1867 he argued that "public schools should be open to all without distinction of race or color." He continued the fight for integration the rest of his life.

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51 Ibid., pp. 284-287.
52 Ibid., p. 291.
54 Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, p. 139.
55 Ibid.
The Massachusetts democrat was practically a charter member of the pre-war abolitionist movement. While still a Whig he formulated his anti-slavery notions. To him the movement for emancipation was consistent with the long-range trends of American society. Despite the fact that slavery was an outgrowth of conditions which existed in the South, he argued that the abolitionists were really Burkean conservatives, not men trying to thwart natural institutions with legislative decrees. Civilization was, he explained, founded with certain notions of freedom and justice ingrained in the structure of its rightful institutions; the United States resulted from a revolution fought in behalf of certain moral principles. The documents of the nation, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, all opposed any form of tyranny or slavery. But gradually, over the years, because of a lack of diligence on the part of the good men who opposed bondage as a moral wrong, the institution established itself in the society. The country was no longer filled with the same moral virtue which dominated the nation in its earlier history. The abolitionists were merely calling for a return to moral right and leading the struggle against wrong.56

In the 1840’s Sumner was a mainstay in the anti-slavery wing of the Whig party; a decade later he was a founder of the Republican party. Throughout the ten years before the

56 Donald, Charles Sumner, pp. 229-230.
war he was a leading spokesman for emancipation. At a time when the national government gave little indication that it was potential instrument for eradicating human bondage, Sumner fought for every measure which would possibly hinder the successful function of the institution. He supported the abolition of a fugitive slave law, called for an end to slavery in the District of Columbia, and advocated the legal exclusion of slavery from the national territories. Sumner believed that all men who opposed emancipation should be denied seats of power, but that the effort for freedom was not a partisan venture. He invited "men of all parties and pursuits, who wish well to their country and would preserve its good name" to join in the crusade for justice.

It is impossible to determine the exact series of motivations which cause people to do certain acts, but the most reasonable view seems to be that the early reconstruction party received stimulation primarily from the continuing doctrinaire principles of its leaders. A favorable political climate merely provided an opportunity in which to voice re-conceived convictions. The Radicals were interested in destroying the privileges of an old aristocracy, reforming the South, and expanding the opportunities of a downtrodden race, but not in severely punishing a rebellious people.

57 Ibid., pp. 98-129.
58 Ibid., p. 188.
The division between the moderates and the Radicals may be something of an artificial barrier. There is no basic difference between the two wings in terms of direction. The moderates were as much characterized by a commitment to principles as were the extremists. Even the basic changes that they championed were the same as those that the Radicals sought. They were anti-slavery advocates and Jacksonian democrats. They were willing to provide federal guarantees of the Negroes' freedom; they believed that the former Confederacy should be excluded from the Union until certain safeguards of the rights of the freedmen were established. They voted for the creation and maintenance of relief agencies to care for the indigent people of the South. But, on the whole, they did not favor any sweeping attempts to alter southern society. They were moderates in the sense that they sought only limited changes in the status quo. There was no intention in this wing to abandon emancipation; but neither was there any desire to go beyond invalidating the "Black Codes," securing the civil rights of the Negroes, and providing transitional financial assistance to the ex-slaves. There is no clear-cut stand on Negro suffrage that represents the middle-of-the-road Republicans. For the most part they were either undecided on the voting issues, or completely opposed to enfranchising the black man.59

59 Cox, Politics, p. 207.
A leading moderate congressman was William Pitt Fessenden, senator from Maine, and chairman of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. In fact, in the late months of 1865 and early 1866 he was probably more the epitome of Republicanism than was Sumner or Stevens or any of the other Radicals. He advocated the creation of the Joint Committee and recognized Congressional control over all matters of Reconstruction. "I believed," he explained, "that the appointment of a committee, carefully selected by the two Houses, to take that subject into consideration, was not only wise in itself, but an imperative duty resting upon the representatives of the people in the two branches of Congress." He deserves more credit for the formulation of the proposals of the Joint Committee than does Stevens. He supported the Civil Rights Bill; he favored the extension of the Freedmen's Bureau. Fessenden, like most of the other Republicans, wished to secure the rights of the Negro, but he indicated at one time that he would accept far less of a guarantee of white southern good faith than the Radicals expected. As noted previously, he supported most of the Reconstruction proposals, but he voted against Johnson's conviction at the impeachment trial.

60 McKitrick, Andrew Johnson, pp. 274-285.
61 Ibid.
63 Ibid., 2nd Session, p. 193.
An accurate evaluation of the early reconstructionists provides recognition of their faults as well as their virtues. The Radicals and moderates who determined the basis of Republicanism in 1865 and 1866 pursued some policies which were wise, others which proved to be unworkable. They were largely reformers, but they did not always act in accordance with their principles. In one important sense their efforts represent something of a unique venture in human history. They were trying to stage a revolution which promised few benefits for themselves. The people for whom the reforms were intended, the freedmen, had little to do directly with the formulation of the changes. It was a humanitarian enterprise, performed for the sake of moral convictions. The Radicals reaped no financial rewards for their efforts. Only racist sentiment could contend that giving the Negro the opportunity to rise to positions of power was a punishment to the white people of the South. The Republican reformers, who for so long fought for a just treatment of the black man, viewed their proposals as a means of saving the South from the hands of the rebellious conservative leaders. The moderates, William Pessenden, John Sherman, and others, were equally devoted to civil justice. But a more conservative disposition would not let them easily venture into the field of social experimentation.

In construing Thaddeus Stevens' dislike for the former Confederate leaders as a hatred for the South, the traditional
account has seriously misrepresented reality. The Dunning-Burgess-Rhodes school evinced a kind of racism in not recognizing that the Radicals' proposals were intended to help the people of the South, both black and white, overcome the handicaps of an underdeveloped society. The Reconstruction proposals did challenge the "Bourbon" power structure. They did promise to open new positions to previously powerless masses. The congressman from Pennsylvania and many of his associates did want to disfranchise and, in some cases, even punish the rebel leaders. But such measures were not intended to crush the South. They were supported for the purpose of achieving a broader equality of opportunity.
CHAPTER II

POLITICS OF MORALITY

The realities of political life often demand a retreat from idealism. Rarely does any important measure work its way through Congress without at least some changes. During the second stage in the transformation of the Republican party, a coalition of moderates and Radicals compromised what few differences separated the two groups and acted in unison against the President to form the basis of their political organization. As Johnson vetoed one congressional bill after another, the Radicals found a stronger and stronger ally in the moderates. The middle-of-the-road wing joined the extremist ranks in reaction to Presidential opposition and the passage of the "Black Codes" in the South. The leaders of the Radical wing, Sumner, Wade, and Stevens, modified their position in order to gain the two-thirds majority necessary to pass a bill over Johnson's almost inevitable veto. But the measures that were adopted were more extensive than the original proposals of the moderates. There was a synthesis, and true to the Hegelian concept, both the thesis (moderates) and the antithesis (Radicals) affected each other.

The list of Reconstruction measures passed during the coalition period fully indicates that a compromise took
place and that the result was partially influenced by Radical thought. The creation of the Joint Committee, in 1865, was the realization of a goal supported by both moderates and Radicals: the establishment of congressional authority over restoration.¹ The Freedmen's Bureau Act provided an opportunity for some Negroes to get an education and own land, but it never provided the wide scale land reform proposed by men like Stevens.² The Civil Rights Act, passed over Johnson's veto, recognized the power of the central authority to protect any of its citizens against an intrusion by the local state government, but it was not as strong as some of the original Radical proposals.³ The Fourteenth Amendment won some Radical approval, but it was so diluted that John Sherman of Ohio, a leading moderate, could brag to his constituents, "They talk about radicals; why we defeated every radical proposition in it."⁴ The first Military Reconstruction Act came from a substitute measure offered by Sherman, but it contained some Radical provisions.⁵ Thus the primary change in the party between 1866 and 1867 was a decrease in

²Ibid., p. 579.
³Ibid., p. 576; Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade, p. 266.
⁴Randall and Donald, Civil War, p. 581.
⁵Ibid., p. 595.
revolutionary idealism, a transformation that inevitably results from the realities of political compromising.

The party was dominated by utilitarianism, still hopeful that a new society would emerge in the South, and still willing to try to do something about achieving its goals. The aspirations of the Republicans were determined largely by humanitarian considerations. The Reconstruction legislation produced during the period was the last great reforming effort of the national government until the Progressive period. There may be some question as to whether or not the Radicals were motivated by the noblest of sentiments; but, regardless of the intentions of the congressmen, the result of their efforts was one of the finer achievements of the national legislature.

Although there is little new information about the Reconstruction laws, it is useful to reconsider the legislation in light of a whole new perspective on the Radicals. Such a review can, by recapitulating the equalitarian concepts embodied in the enactments, provide some evidence of the progressive nature of the extremists. In some cases it is useful to understand the circumstances in which the various provisions were adopted and the problems with which the Radicals were trying to deal, but in most cases the acts speak for themselves. They were merely attempts to guarantee emancipation and a society based on equalitarian concepts. There were some acts which, to a degree, punished the rebel leaders
by barring them from political life, but it must be remembered that the men who were limited from holding office and voting were individuals who were guilty of treason. There should be no doubt as to why the Republicans did not trust the former Confederates.

Among the several acts passed by Congress to stipulate the terms of Reconstruction were measures intended to insure congressional control of the whole process, two amendments to the Constitution, one major civil rights act, the various measures continuing and broadening the Freedmen's Bureau, and four reconstruction acts. All of the legislation was disapproved by the President. It was passed in a four-year period from 1866 to 1870, but the major portion of the program was approved by Congress within three years after the close of the war. In addition, there were other minor supplementary acts which are not considered in this study.6

Congress passed a series of acts which were intended to guarantee that the legislative branch would control the means of reconstruction. These provisions, for example, the Tenure of Office Act and the Command of the Army Act, are often viewed as proof that the Radicals were interested in consolidating their power and not in reforming the South.7

6 These secondary measures do not indicate any more about the general nature of the Republicans' Reconstruction program than is manifested in the basic legislation.

7 Congressional Globe, 39th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1737, 1758, 1791; U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 486-487 (1867).
But it is just as reasonable to view the measures as mere strategy in an effort to secure the enforcement of the Radical program. It seems apparent that the balance of powers which existed in the national government was not favorable to Congress. The war had seen a shift in power toward the executive branch, and this had caused concern in Congress at an earlier date. The congressmen realized that the current President, Johnson, was a severe hindrance to the achievement of their goals. They were pragmatic reformers, willing to use any number of possible avenues to achieve a new society. Thus, they passed the Tenure of Office Act and the Command of the Army Act and other similar measures to try to nullify Presidential interference and solidify their own position. The later impeachment of the President falls into the same category. When, in more recent years, the policy was reversed and the President began to assume more power in order to secure progressive goals, few historians viewed the development with alarm. The congressional Republicans' maneuvers deserve the same acceptance.

The basic provision of the Fourteenth Amendment excludes any 'whites only' clause from requirements for citizenship. The act forbids the states to pass any law "which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens or . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." 8 Furthermore, the article attempts to

8U. S. Constitution, Amendments, Article XIV, Section 1.
guarantee each male citizen over twenty-one the opportunity to vote in national and state elections. The provision stipulates that if any state "abridged" the universal manhood suffrage the state's delegation to Congress would be reduced accordingly. It is not an extreme Radical document. Many of the Radicals actually opposed its adoption because it represented a compromise position. Charles Sumner, for one, denounced the amendment for not specifically guaranteeing Negro suffrage. The southern conservative governments recognized by the President had an unwelcome habit of passing acts which attempted to establish a racial caste system. The national Congress was well aware of the development. At most, the amendment was a mediocre response to the southerners' unwillingness to show good intentions of accepting the freedmen as citizens.

The amendment did contain some other major provisions. In one widely lamented section it barred rebels who "previously took ... an oath ... to support the Constitution of the United States. ..." from holding office. The penalty was light; it was certainly less than what some of the Radicals advocated. Thad Stevens was notably displeased.

9Ibid., Section Two.
11McKitrick, Andrew Johnson, p. 277.
12U. S. Constitution, Amendments, Article XIV, Section 3.
It was not a vicious, undeserved retaliation against the South. It was simply a watered-down version of what was originally intended to be an exclusion of all disloyal elements from seats of power. The section which allowed Congress to later revoke the exclusion was, perhaps, unprecedented in its leniency toward the participants in a rebellion.

The Fifteenth Amendment, actually not adopted until 1870, is one of the finer liberal achievements in constitution making. It was much more to the point than the earlier attempt to exclude racial considerations from voting qualifications. It did not hedge the issues with an elaborate formula for penalizing the states who wished to limit the vote and suffer the consequences. The articles, to a large degree, reflected the 'impartial suffrage' doctrine noted earlier and attributed to Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz. It simply forbade the national government or any of the state governments to limit the vote on the basis of an individual's "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It was a fair enough measure, based on reasonable equalitarian concepts, and represented an impressive climax to a whole series of democratic reforms.

Actually the first major Reconstruction measure passed into law was the Civil Rights Act, officially adopted (despite Johnson's earlier veto) by the Congress on April 9, 1866.

The bill received virtually unanimous support from the Republicans in the House and Senate and is a good indication of the party's sentiment. Basically, it promised the Negro and the white man the same privileges and responsibilities under the law. It did not establish any special immunities or extra burdens for the freedmen. The blacks could, under the provisions of the document, enjoy all of the functions of citizenship, "to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to [realize] full and equal benefit for all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property." But if a freedman violated the law he was specifically subject to the same "punishment, pains, and penalties" levied against criminal whites. It was a simple formula based on the assumption that Negroes are human beings and therefore entitled to the rights advocated by the "all-men-are-created-equal" doctrine. It was not revengeful nor a calamitous perversion of Jeffersonian ideology. To view the act as simply an attempt to protect an abused race is to be consistent with the past records and aspirations of the Radicals.

In July, 1866, Congress passed the second major act, once again over the veto of the President. The Freedmen's

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14U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 27 (1866).
15Ibid.
16McKitrick, Andrew Johnson, p. 277.
Bureau Bill was an extension and continuation of an agency originally established during the war years. In an unprecedented innovation this measure had made provisions for a wide range of welfare benefits for the freedmen. Intended to be a federal relief society for the destitute freedmen and loyal white war refugees, the bureau was supposed to provide transitional assistance. Its supporters were cognizant of the fact that unless the former slaves were provided with some financial aid they would remain economically dependent on their former masters. Emancipation would have little meaning without the bureau. The act authorized the issuance of medical supplies, validated the sale of land to the "heads of families of the African race," arranged for the disposal of more land to the freedmen, made provisions for educational facilities, stipulated that the agency was to cooperate with other benevolent organizations attempting to aid the refugees and freedmen, and authorized the President to act through the agency in providing judicial procedures to those areas where the courts were disrupted by the war.\(^17\)

The formula for land distribution revolved around the special field orders which General Sherman issued in January of 1865 and the farms previously sold under the auspices of the direct tax commissioners for South Carolina. The act made provisions for leaving on their new farms some of the freedmen who were settled by the field orders. In other

\(^{17}\)U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 174-177 (1866).
cases, the measure stipulated terms under which the tax commissioners could sell confiscated land to the Negroes. Under the two plans it confirmed or authorized the sale of several thousand acres in lots of twenty acres each. For future distributions the act required the direct tax commissioners to survey and divide the land so that each farm would have an "average of fertility and woodland." 18

The record of achievements of the Freedmen's Bureau is impressive. Although more money was probably needed than Congress allotted, the total benefits were a significant boon to the newly emancipated slaves and the white war refugees. In all, the agency distributed over fifteen million rations and provided medical care for approximately one million people. In its brief existence it spent more than $5,000,000 for schools, mostly for Negro students. The agency disposed of large sections of abandoned land by settling several thousand freedmen and refugees. Under the terms of the last section of the 1866 act the bureau acted as a guardian of the black men's civil rights. Because of the nature of the governments established under Presidential Reconstruction the Negro had little chance to receive fair treatment in the local courts unless there was some sort of outside protection. Local southerners who controlled affairs practiced a constant policy of legal discrimination. To correct the situation the bureau either established its own local courts for the

18 Ibid., p. 176.
freedmen or dispatched observers to the regular civilian courts to try to prevent discrimination.¹⁹

The Military Reconstruction Act, the measure which provided for the eventual restoration of the Union, was passed in March of 1867, once again over Johnson's veto. It was the first of a series of four laws dealing with the general problem of reunion. Its basic provisions are well known and need little reviewing. In general, it divided the former Confederate states (excluding Tennessee) into five military districts, assigned an army officer (not below the rank of brigadier general) to each area, and required the commanding general "to protect all persons in their rights of person and property, to suppress insurrection, disorder, and violence, and punish, or cause to be punished, all disturbers of the public peace and criminals." To carry out the policing, the army was given a wide range of powers. In the final sections of the act, Congress made provisions for the eventual reestablishment of civilian governments and their admission to the union. First, it stipulated that before restoration a state must hold a constitutional convention whose delegates were chosen in elections in which there was no racial discrimination. The constitution would be ratified by popular vote and approved by Congress. Finally, the various state legislatures would endorse the proposed Fourteenth Amendment. Until these measures were taken, the act made

provisions for temporary governments in each of the states. From the latter regimes the Congress excluded certain rebels.\textsuperscript{20}

The primary faults in the act had nothing to do with the harshness of the measure; its weakness was in the vague nature of some of its provisions. Three other times within the few years following the passage of the initial act Congress was obliged to write supplementary measures clearing up the confusions.

The long-maligned reconstruction governments in the South, the so-called Carpetbagger regimes, which carried out the programs of the moderates and Radicals, provide little direct evidence of the nature of the Republican organization. Even so, there is considerable evidence that the Reconstruction program operated with much more efficiency and honesty than is usually attributed to it. Some of the achievements of the Freedmen's Bureau were noticed earlier. All of the southern governments established state school systems during Republican rule.\textsuperscript{21} But this study of the Republican party cannot investigate all of the ramifications of how Reconstruction worked. The information to be derived from such an inquiry provides little evidence of the nature of the aims and intentions of the Radicals and moderates.

\textsuperscript{20}U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 428-429.

\textsuperscript{21}Binkley, American Political Parties, pp. 12-13.
But there is one type of local endeavor which can provide considerable indication of the basis of the national party. Since, under the provisions of the Reconstruction legislation, the various states seeking readmission to the Union were required to submit constitutions for congressional approval, the type of documents proposed by the local conventions and accepted by the national government is a fair indication of the nature of the central party.

The constitutions were progressive, but not excessively experimental. The convention delegates instituted a number of reforms, but they were largely innovations already adopted in other areas or long advocated by displeased elements in the southern states themselves. A recent study of the constitutions of the South Atlantic states reveals a wide range of democratic and humanitarian reforms. In all cases there were provisions for universal manhood suffrage. The various bills of rights adopted by the states contained impressive equalitarian provisions. All of them guaranteed the right to the writ of habeas corpus; Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina attempted to permanently eliminate property qualifications for voting and holding office.

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24Ibid., p. 482.
South Carolina specifically prohibited any racial discrimination. The social justice reforms, although generally meager in comparison to the need, were nevertheless, significant. Some of the states provided for tax reforms to place a heavier load on the owners of property and less on individuals. The revised state penal systems decreased the number of capital crimes. Three states, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida, made arrangements for state penitentiaries. All of the South Atlantic states adopted liberal homestead provisions which attempted to provide land for small free holders while avoiding any excessive protection for the owners of large estates. In general, the South Atlantic states provided extensive innovations in behalf of political democracy, but few moves in the direction of economic democracy. Any proposals for wide-scale land redistribution were easily defeated; the repudiation of debts was either toned down or avoided completely.

The Republicans were willing to utilize new tactics for the sake of an equalitarian society. The emancipation of several million slaves was an unusual and unprecedented development. The situation required ingenuity on the part

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 484.
27 Ibid., pp. 479-480.
of the central government. Traditions established for other circumstances were not always suitable for the less-than-normal times. Thus the government set up agencies to feed thousands of people, provide medical care for the indigent whites and blacks, institute major land reforms in behalf of the propertyless southerners, and establish schools. It set up special courts and sent observers into the regular courts, all in the name of justice. It required the former Confederate states to write constitutions guaranteeing Negro suffrage. The Reconstruction program was full of untraditional approaches in some cases of doubtful constitutionality. But from a pragmatic point of reference, it was the most reasonable way to secure desirable ends.

The usual condemnation of the Freedmen's Bureau, the Civil Rights Act, and the other devices of the Radicals seems to be founded on the belief that any calamity, any starvation, any abortion of justice is better than extending the function of the federal government into new areas of endeavor. For reasons which are not always clear, Americans traditionally harbor a strong mistrust of the national regime. States' righters argue that because the local government is a smaller unit it is closer to the populace and thereby more responsive to the needs of the people. Fine in theory, less tenable in practice, the assumption often hindered congressional efforts. What its adherents often do not recognize is that local governments, although at their best democratically inclined
units, are, at their worst, extremely easy for vested interests to capture. Southerners who controlled the governments established by Presidential Reconstruction undoubtedly approved of the system of slave-labor. Later attempts to reinstate a similar institution by means of the 'Black Codes' were certainly not out of character. The state regimes, unless prohibited by the national Congress, were bound to discriminate against the Negroes. Far from hindering efficiency and thwarting justice, the assumption of control by the national Republicans was apparently the only move which could protect the freedmen and certain white loyal elements from persecution and guarantee the success of emancipation. The eventual failure of the Radical program was not due as much to the nature of their proposals as it was to the changing basis of the Republican party and the decreasing idealism of the organization with the coming of Grantism.
CHAPTER III

TRANSITION FROM IDEALISM

With the formation of the first Grant administration, the Republican party began to change its basic nature. The new regime encouraged and even sponsored the rise of men who valued their election victories above equalitarian principles. The spirit of idealism so prominent in the deliberations over Reconstruction practically vanished from the organization. Both the new leaders and the issues they championed manifested the transformed nature of the party. The key personalities tended to shift ideological allegiances with changes in the political winds. The party continued to advocate many important Reconstruction reforms, but there was a noticeable lack of inventiveness. Few original programs emerged from the Grant Republicans. Several old demands were forgotten. Eventually, the GOP formulated a new set of goals which completely abandoned Radical schemes and committed the organization to new political patterns.

In the early days of the new administration the organizational ideals began to buckle beneath the weight of the President’s ineptness. Perhaps the most notorious series of blunders occurred when Grant selected his cabinet. The fact that there were a few qualified people nominated for the high positions is apparently a coincidence. For the most
part the President selected the secretaries of the various departments on the basis of wealth and acquaintance. His original choice for secretary of state, Elihu Washburne, had the sole distinction of having been the richest man in Galena, Illinois, at the time Grant was clerking in a leather store in the town. Other administration appointees held similar claims to the President's favor.

The executive branch included most of the men responsible for the notorious series of scandals which scarred the 1870's. Although relatively few officials were involved in the misdeeds, the cases are at least minor threads in the fabric the party was weaving. The stories of misconduct are too infamous to need retelling here; the Credit Mobilier, the Whiskey Ring, the bribe of Vice-President Colfax, the Babcock case are reminders of a sordid age. The elements common to all of the cases form some evidence of the decline of idealism among Republican office-holders. In each instance, private citizens were able to secure favors from the government. In every circumstance, the citizens involved bestowed lavish gifts upon the proper officials. Sometimes party men contracted to sell the services of their office. Other dealings were less direct. The recipients did not always know what

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1Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration, 2 vols. (New York, 1957), I, 118-120.

2Ibid., p. 108.
they were supposed to do to earn the bribes, or what they had done in the past to deserve such kindness. But even in these cases the targets of private favors were usually ready to respond to the needs of their benefactors. The Grantites did not hold a monopoly on corruption, but the number and scope of their crimes certainly distinguish them from the former leaders of the GOP.

In Congress the Stalwarts captured control of the Republican leadership. This political breed still followed the old policies when it suited their interests to do so, but relied on worn platitudes whenever possible. They were often in the forefront of resistance to the chief reform movements of the day. They counted some of the strongest defenders of the spoils system among their number. Senator Roscoe Conkling was an open opponent of civil service reforms. He regarded the federal offices in his own state as the special preserve of the senior senator, 3 Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania commanded a swollen patronage machine in his state and jealousy guarded his prize. 4 The Stalwarts included many congressmen who failed to support Reconstruction reforms in the early days of Radicalism. Oliver P. Morton, one of Grant's closest advisers in the Senate, was initially an

4 Ibid., pp. 64-65, 173, 178.
opponent of Radical legislation, but he joined the camp of the extremists after a quarrel with Johnson.  

Most influential and highly typical was the senior senator from Michigan, Zachariah Chandler. A regular visitor to the White House, he helped shape government policies and party platforms. In the party hierarchy William Chandler, as secretary of the National Committee, tied the Republican future to the contributions of Jay Cooke and other financiers. The secretary's activities in both of the Grant campaigns reveal much about the new basis of the GOP. An intensive look at the two Chandlers provides a clear picture of the type of leaders who inherited the party crown. Both politicians lacked the dedication to reform which characterized the early reconstructionists. They joined the Radical camp after considerable reluctance and abandoned the movement when change was no longer popular.

Zachariah Chandler was an early spokesman for the anti-slavery elements. He was an active member of the forces which led to the formation of the Republican party in Michigan in the mid fifties. But he certainly did not complement his abolitionism with reforming efforts against other evils in the society. His appeals did not contain the idealistic flavor found in the speeches of Sumner. While competing

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with Stevens in denouncing the conservative Democratic power structure in the South, he never augmented his suggestions for Republican ascendancy with proposals for equalitarian innovations in the southern society. He was notably silent in the debates over the first Civil Rights Bill and the post-war Freedmen's Bureau Bill. He was conspicuously vociferous in his demands for continued subjugation of the former Confederacy. Apparently, Chandler was not dishonest, but he was close to unscrupulous in his control of the distribution of government offices in Michigan. One of his chief contributions to the party was his work as head of the Congressional Committee in the campaigns of 1868 and 1876. As chairman of the Committee on Commerce, he controlled much of the congressional "pork barrel" appropriations.

The Michigan solon began his political career as Mayor of Detroit in the early 1850's. During the rough political weather generated by the controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill he associated himself with the anti-slavery elements. In early 1854 he was one of the signers of a call for an anti-slavery mass meeting which was eventually held in Detroit on February 18. Later in the year he was present when the Republican party of Michigan was founded at Jackson. In joining the anti-slavery ranks, Chandler risked losing little


political support; the cause had strong popular backing in his region. In 1856 he was elected to the first of three terms in the United States Senate, where he was a champion of the abolition of slavery. Like Thad Stevens, his speeches against the more conservative opposition party were often close to irresponsible. He once called President James Buchanan a criminal and suggested that if the Chief Executive followed certain policies and the policies led to bloodshed, the President should be executed for murder. On the occasion of a consideration of a conference to work out a possible settlement of sectional differences, he urged the Governor of Michigan to send delegates, but concluded that "without a little blood-letting this Union will not, in my estimation, be worth a rush." 

Chandler was quick to realize the self-perpetuating nature of his Senate seat. In his first term, he began to utilize patronage and political manipulations to solidify his position. He collected a hard core of supporters to guarantee his continued ascendancy. In 1862 when he was seeking reelection, his agents infiltrated the party at the township and county levels to insure the nomination of Chandler men to the state legislature. With such tactics, the use of

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9 Ibid., pp. 20-38.
10 Congressional Globe, 35th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 1086-1093.
11 Harris, Zachariah Chandler, pp. 53-54.
12 Ibid., p. 64.
federal patronage, and broad popular support, the Senator gained control of the entire state party organization.\textsuperscript{13} His power was certainly reflected in his renomination by an open unanimous vote on the first informal ballot in the Republican caucus.\textsuperscript{14}

For his third term bid, he utilized the same successful methods. His cohorts were busy on the local level attempting to insure an all-Chandler Republican delegation to the state legislature. In those districts where their efforts failed and the party nominated anti-Chandler candidates, the senator's machine actually worked for the election of Democratic representatives. Chandler was sure of a Republican majority in the legislature, but he was not certain that the senatorial caucus would be dominated by his own men. Thus, he attempted to weed-out any unfaithfuls in his own party by giving his support, in some instances, to the opposition candidate.\textsuperscript{15}

When an attempted coalition between his rival candidates, Austin Blair and Thomas W. Ferry, tried to defeat him, Chandler broke up the union by promising to support Ferry in the election in 1871 for the other Michigan seat in the Senate. Ferry was quick to grab the opportunity and deserted Blair in favor of Chandler.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 65.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 68.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., pp. 107-109; Chandler initially made the offer to Blair, but he turned it down.
After considering Chandler's tactics for winning elections, it should not seem strange that he was such a strong opponent of any civil service reform. The spoils system was the life-blood of his whole organization. He knew how to utilize his control of the extensive patronage to maintain himself in office. Thus, he used his influence with the President to try to block any attempt to change the method of selecting government employees. Chandler was not unique in his opposition to civil service reforms; some of the original Radicals took the same position. But unlike earlier Republicans, Chandler's opposition was part of an unprogressive attitude toward most issues other than Reconstruction.

Chandler's primary consideration was staying in office. He used every maneuver possible to sway the voters. On the campaign trail his speeches lacked the appeals to equalitarianism which were common among the earlier Radicals. Instead, he flattered and teased and entertained his audiences into submission. Few tricks of demagoguery escaped the master manipulator. During the campaign of 1868, for example, while making a speech in Battle Creek, Michigan, he concluded with a ludicrous, but apparently effective, bit of persuasion: "I want to ask you, can we, with so many splendid looking women be defeated?"

Four years later, while campaigning

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17 Ibid., p. 117.

18 Ibid., p. 102.
for Grant against the Liberal Republican, Greeley, he adopted as standard procedure a format which included "waving the bloody shirt," ridiculing the opposition, and, in the beginning of each speech, telling an overworn story: 19

During the war a private in an Illinois regiment went into a drinking saloon, where he found a man in chaplain's uniform, evidently much inebriated, who asked him what regiment he belonged to. "The 19th Illinois," was the answer. "What do you belong to?" The drunken man straightened up and replied, "I belong to the Army of the Lord, Sir." "Well," said the soldier, "that may be, but to my thinking you are a thunderin' ways from headquarters." Now any man who supports the Liberal Republicans . . . must, if he claims to be a Republican, be "a thunderin' ways" from headquarters. 20

This approach was a far cry from Sumner's well-reasoned humanitarian denunciations of slavery.

Although Stevens, Sumner, and Wade were willing to take what many people considered extreme actions, the trio's

19 Professor Stampp quotes a passage from one of Oliver Morton's speeches which demonstrates the "bloody shirt" theme: "Every unregenerate rebel . . . every deserter, every sneak who ran away from the draft calls himself a Democrat . . . . Every man who labored for the rebellion in the field, who murdered Union prisoners by cruelty and starvation . . . calls himself a Democrat. Every wolf in sheep's clothing who pretends to preach the gospel but proclaims the righteousness of man-selling and slavery; everyone who shoots down negroes in the streets, burns up negro school-houses and meeting houses, and murders women and children by the light of their own flaming dwellings, calls himself a Democrat . . . . In short, the Democratic party may be described as a common sewer and loathsome receptacle, into which is emptied every element of treason North and South, every element of inhumanity and barbarism which has dishonored the age." Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, p. 117.

20 Harris, Zachariah Chandler, pp. 119-120.
radicalism did not match Chandler's fanaticism. Where the early Radicals were extreme in their devotion to equalitarian principles, Chandler was harsh in his support of punitive actions. Where the early Radical devised intricate programs of social justice reforms, Chandler proposed relentless force to reach the ends he desired. In two particular areas, foreign policy and Reconstruction, the Michigan lawmaker was especially stiff in both his manner of advocacy and the programs which he uncompromisingly supported.

On practically every score pertaining to foreign policy, Chandler was decidedly jingoistic. At one time or another he submitted a number of resolutions for Senate consideration, which, if passed, would have alienated a good many of the key powers in the world. In one such resolution he demanded an apology from the French Emperor "for his course" in Mexico. Another time, in a Senate speech, he threatened Great Britain with possible United States confiscation of "a little land up North of us." He declared that he was "not willing to arbitrate with anybody." As for claims against England, he was anxious to accept Canada as a "first mortgage

21 Professor Harris makes the following statement about Chandler's fanaticism: "Mr. Chandler was by nature an intense partisan. In defending Michigan he would revile New England and New York; in defending the North he would castigate the South; as a loyal Republican he would flay Copperheads, and as an American he took delight in berating Great Britain. . . . after all, it seems to have been with him a sort of mania." Ibid., pp. 82-83.

22 Congressional Globe, 39th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 7-8.
on the little debt. . . . I do not want it arbitrated," he continued, "I want to let it rest until the time comes to foreclose that mortgage. . . . This North American continent belongs to us and ours it must be." 23

The easy solution to all international disagreements was a threat of war. When Sumner, as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sponsored a resolution of protest against the practice in some countries of pardoning criminals with the prior understanding that they must emigrate to the United States, Chandler favored the sentiment, but opposed the bill for not declaring, among other threats, "that a repetition of these acts would be a just cause of war. . . ." 24 Chandler not only demonstrated a total lack of understanding of international relations but he manifested a type of forceful and uncompromising attitude so often associated with frontier politicians. He was apparently either unable to grasp the realities of human societies or unwilling to try to comprehend the complexities of the problems.

On matters of Reconstruction, the Michigan solon was evidently interested solely in punitive action against the South and not in specific reform measures. During the long debates over the Civil Rights Bill, he was strangely silent. Judging from his lack of discussion of the agency, his view

23Harris, Zachariah Chandler, p. 99.
24Congressional Globe, 39th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1493.
of Reconstruction initially did not include anything akin to the Freedmen's Bureau. Driven by a sense of political devotion, his reluctance to join the post-war Radical camp apparently stemmed from his desire to remain loyal to President Johnson. But once he began to act, Chandler pursued anti-administration policies with all of the fanfare and enthusiasm his oratory could muster.²⁵ He was one of the first congressmen to call for the impeachment of the President.²⁶ In the course of his actions in behalf of the Radical cause, he undoubtedly voted for some worthy measures. But the nature of his speeches, his initial hesitation to join the reforming ranks, the issues which attracted his highest attention, all indicate that for Chandler it made little difference which ideology he championed as long as it led to continued victory at the polls and in the state legislature.

Although Zack Chandler provided a good example of the type of men who surrounded the President and thus controlled the party, another official, William E. Chandler, was a pivotal figure in the formation of the new basis of the Republican organization. He is worthy of consideration as an example of an important facet of the party. As secretary of the National Committee during both of the Grant campaigns, he formulated much of the direction of the Republicans during the period. He was a major factor in developing the party's increased emphasis on winning elections. Because his primary

²⁵Harris, Zachariah Chandler, pp. 97-99.
²⁶Ibid., p. 98.
consideration was success in the voting booth, the direction which the Republicans took under his leadership is best defined in terms of the tactics used by the group to secure offices. The organization which he helped formulate depended more on the contributions of Jay Cooke than it did on the expression of political ideals. The Republican appeal was based primarily on the personalities of the candidates and attacks on the opposition.

William Chandler was a late convert to Radicalism and an early supporter of Grant. In the first few months of deliberation over the issues of Reconstruction, Chandler was in the moderate camp. But gradually, primarily as a result of the South's rejection of the Fourteenth Amendment, he began to change his position. By the end of the Johnson administration, he was an open opponent of the Presidential policy. As early as 1866 he advocated Grant's candidacy. At the New Hampshire convention in late 1867, he was chairman of a committee which produced a resolution to commit the state party to Grant. In 1866 he was elected secretary of the National Committee, a post he held for eight years, during which time he was the most important Republican in the development of party strategy. He was, perhaps, chiefly responsible for Grant's two victories.

\[28\] Ibid., p. 84.
\[29\] Ibid., p. 90.
The secretary's chief asset to the party in the elections of 1868 and 1872 was his ability to raise campaign funds. Because of his past acquaintance with key men in the field of finance he was able to secure large contributions from a few significant capitalists. Jay Cooke was a reliable source of money, as were Alexander T. Stewart, Collis P. Huntington, William E. Dodge, and Hamilton Fish, all donors of large sums. To raise further funds, Chandler and the National Committee used the long established practice of taxing office holders who owed their positions to the patronage system. The procedure was simple. The party, either on the local, state, or national level, sent requests for money to the political appointees. The office holders, being well versed in the realities of political life, were usually quick to fill the order.

Chandler's association with Jay Cooke was particularly rewarding. In both the campaign of 1868 and the one in 1872 the financier was a regular contributor to the party treasury. When the organization faced any monetary needs, Chandler would "spend Sunday with Jay Cooke." In return the Republicans usually received enough money from the banker to meet their economic crisis. Cooke protected his interests

\[30\text{Ibid., pp. 90-116.}\]
\[31\text{Ibid.}\]
\[32\text{William B. Hesseltine, } \textit{Ulysses S. Grant, Politician} \text{ (New York, 1957), p. 280.}\]
with stern warnings to the GOP hierarchy: "Unless you Republicans stop [some senators]...from pirating upon our Northern Pacific and stop the efforts to injure our railroad interests in the Northwest by passing the St. Croix bill, we'll feel we have been wounded by our friends."\textsuperscript{33} The implication was clear; the connection between business interests and Republican party interests was growing.\textsuperscript{34}

It is unnecessary to note the political advantages created by such faithful sources of money. Chandler knew how to make the best of the funds once they were collected. He apparently relied on even the most direct methods of securing support. Although the practice of buying votes was used before Grant's campaigns, Chandler greatly expanded the tactic. A letter from a close relative discusses the price tag on votes in his area: "My men cost me $10 a piece and that is about the quotation, I should say."\textsuperscript{35} With such dependable means of winning elections the Republicans faced few incentives to support popular causes.

Although Chandler was never directly responsible for any major shifts in GOP policy, the congressional Republicans could not ignore the implications of the secretary's activities. With the increasing ties between the party and big

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34}Binkley, \textit{American Political Parties}, p. 279.

\textsuperscript{35}Richardson, \textit{William E. Chandler}, p. 165.
business, the political organization could not continue to devote most of its energies to democratic reforms. It had to exist for the sake of the people most responsible for its success. Capitalists paid the bills; high finance eventually reaped the benefits.36

Although the new Republican leaders developed important changes in federal policies during the Grant years, the Stalwarts did not produce an abrupt halt in the Radical movement. For awhile they continued to voice a devotion to Reconstruction reforms. They passed important legislation designed to protect the political rights of Negroes. But even their most earnest efforts were less progressive than the plans envisioned by the original Radicals. In readmitting the former Confederate states to the union, in the Ku Klux Klan Acts the Congress did demand the protection of Negro suffrage. But the Grant Radicals did not make any provisions for economic reforms, nor did they also try to insure other civil rights. The scheme to provide Negroes with land lost support.

36 Binkley, American Political Parties, p. 279; despite traditional interpretations to the contrary, there is ample evidence that the business community generally wanted the GOP to abandon Reconstruction. Peter Kolchin, in his analysis of business journals, concludes that "the great majority of business papers that had anything at all to say on the subject of Reconstruction were decidedly hostile to the Radicals." Peter Kolchin, "The Business Press and Reconstruction, 1865-1868," The Journal of Southern History, XXXIII (May, 1967), 184. See also Stanley Cohen, "Northeastern Business and Radical Reconstruction: A Re-examination," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLVI (June, 1959), p. 67.
after the Grant election. There were no massive programs
to educate the newly emancipated slaves. With the exception
of Sumner's last civil rights proposals and the act eventually
adopted in 1875, there were no attempts to protect the social
opportunities of the blacks. Even the Sumner legislation
in its final form did not provide for integrated schools.

In outlining the prerequisites for reentry into the
Union, the Republicans struck some blows for political equal-
itarianism. They would not admit Georgia until that state
allowed blacks to sit in its legislature. In February,
1870, the Senate welcomed its first Negro member, Hiram R.
Revels of Mississippi. In the same process, however, the
Stalwarts deliberately failed to protect other rights of the
blacks. Congress did not require the entering states to
guarantee nondiscrimination in jury duty, officeholding, or
education. The GOP dominated legislature refused to require
Arkansas to share its educational funds equally with blacks
and whites.

Throughout most of the Grant era Congress was still in-
clined to pass enforcement laws to implement the Fifteenth

37 Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session,


Amendment. When Republican initiated inquiries revealed a pattern of organized political discrimination against the freedmen, the Republican leadership responded with penalties for anyone who deprived an individual of his constitutional voting rights. Instituted in response primarily to the Ku Klux Klan, the so-called "Force Acts" also dealt with state legislatures that tended to restrict the Negroes. Congress produced the first such bill in May of 1870 and followed with two more control measures the next year. The final version forbade specific practices of the Klan, including the use of disguises for the purpose of intimidation. Guilty parties were subject to criminal prosecution and "liable for redress" to their victims. In certain cases, the President could use the army and navy to enforce the law, and even suspend habeas corpus at his discretion. In early 1875 the Republican leadership tried unsuccessfully to produce still another version of the same basic controls.

Until 1874 the Grant administration apparently used the laws with impressive success. Attorney General George Williams managed to secure convictions in 74 per cent of the enforcement cases for 1870. Three years later he was still

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40 U. S. Statutes at Large, XVI, 140-146 (1870); ibid., pp. 433-440 (1871); ibid., XVII, 13-15 (1871).
41 Ibid., XVII, 13-15 (1871).
winning a respectable 36 per cent. But the next year the percentage declined to 10.5 per cent and failed to climb above that rate in any subsequent year. The losses after 1874 were part of a larger pattern in which the White House did not enforce the law with any vigor. Under orders from Williams, District Attorneys began to dismiss all but the most serious indictments. Funds to investigate and prosecute, never adequate, diminished. Federal marshals, faced with opposition from local law agents, often could not secure federal troops for police work, even though there were still Union soldiers stationed in the South. When local authorities prosecuted for perjury Negroes who testified against whites, the GOP Congress failed to adjust its tactics to deal with the interference. When courts took a narrow view of the Fifteenth Amendment and all but demolished the enforcement laws, the Republicans reacted by abandoning the black voters. Popular historical assertions to the contrary, Grant left office with Klan-like activities on the increase.

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At best the "Force Acts" promised to be effective only as long as the Republican party chose to be paternalistic toward the blacks. But even when used, the laws did not fulfill all Reconstruction goals. Other measures were needed to obtain economic and cultural advances for the emancipated race. Without accompanying provisions for educating the Negroes and providing them economic opportunities (programs which the Stalwarts continued to ignore), the legislation was destined to eventual failure. Yet for the Stalwarts no reforms were considered necessary beyond these meager efforts. There were no subsequent programs to provide the rest of what Sumner and Stevens wanted for the ex-slaves, let alone any provisions to aid poor whites and war refugees.

The Stalwarts began to renege on even the promise of farms for the freedmen. President Johnson demolished the scheme to give confiscated property to the ex-slaves, but the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 still provided an avenue for land reform. The measure reserved public areas in five southern states for distribution in eighty-acre lots to individual farmers. For a year the law gave blacks and white unionists an advantage by limiting the program to "loyal" persons. The Grantites, however, ignored the potential

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of the bill and finally helped repeal it in 1876.\textsuperscript{49}

In order for the act to be completely effective, Congress needed to pass further legislation. They should have enlarged the number of acres available.\textsuperscript{50} The freedmen often required help in beginning their farming operation. Without a mule, wagon, tools or enough food to eat until the first crop was harvested, the black farmer found it difficult to take advantage of free land. Sometimes the ex-slaves had no way to transport their families to their new homes except to walk the long journey through hostile country. White southerners frequently harassed their black neighbors until the latter were forced to go elsewhere. Without federal protection from intimidation the freedmen could not always acquire their own farms.

George W. Julian, the author of the 1866 bill recognized the need to provide as much land as possible for homesteading. One potential source of property was the nearly five million acres previously given to railroads in the South in return for more track construction. Much of the grant was still

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49}Congressional Record, 44th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1090.
\item \textsuperscript{50}General O. O. Howard, director of the Freedmen's Bureau, makes the following statement concerning the amount of land needed for the project: "Had this project been carried out and the negroes generally been so settled on farms, either more land must have been added or the Bureau would only have been able to furnish about an acre to a family." Howard, Autobiography, p. 229.
\end{itemize}
uneared by 1868. The land lay idle, but it was closed to public entry. Julian proposed to reopen the land to homesteading. In 1868 the House passed a bill declaring all but one of the grants forfeited. The measure barely passed, however, and several important Radicals voted against the legislation. Casting nays were such important Stalwarts as James G. Blaine of Maine and William B. Allison of Iowa.51 The old Radical, Thad Stevens, who was supposed to be such a staunch representative of business and railroad interests, supported Julian's scheme.52 In the Senate, the Republican-controlled Public Lands Committee failed to report the House bill and the movement to reopen the lands to settlers died.53

During the Grant administration, Julian and William S. Holman of Indiana had to fight off constant attacks in order to keep the Southern Homestead Act itself on the books. Many of the critics of the measure came from the Republican party.54 Finally, in 1876 many Grantites joined the Democratic majority in repealing the legislation. Included in the opponents of the law were such prominent Republicans as Oliver P. Morton, John Sherman, and Thomas W. Ferry.55

51 Congressional Globe, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 985.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 3rd Session, p. 1364.
55 Congressional Record, 44th Congress, 1st Session, p. 3655.
Through the Freedmen's Bureau the Congress did provide considerable economic assistance to black homesteaders in the late sixties. Although many lost their farms because the help was not enough and conditions were too harsh, several thousand ex-slaves owned property by 1870. In fact, there was relatively more homesteading in the South during the period than in any of the other public land states. But the GOP abolished the Bureau in 1872, and thus it was not around to assist black commercial farmers through the depression which began in 1873. There was really little meaningful economic support for the ex-slave after 1868.

Perhaps the biggest obstacles to black homesteading were the roadblocks created by some whites. There are numerous reports of violence and intimidation intended to drive Negroes from their land. Sometimes southerners met black families on the road, pretended to befriend them, and falsely informed

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them that there was no public land available in the area. Without any way to know better, the Negroes often accepted the advice without question and left the region to seek a livelihood elsewhere. 61

Despite such interference there was no response from the national government. There were no force bills to protect land rights like those produced to guarantee black suffrage. Although the Grant administration might have used some of the general provisions of the Ku Klux Klan Acts to stop harassment of homesteaders, there was no attempt to do so. There were no widespread campaigns to acquaint ex-slaves with their opportunities. Misinformation remained a serious obstacle. 62

The situation called for the type of innovations produced by the early Radicals. Like any reform movement Reconstruction required constant adjustments to meet new problems. It would take time to test, evaluate, and build real opportunities for blacks. To continue the Radical program with no more than Stevens and Sumner produced in the early post-war years was to make even their contributions useless.


62 Howard, Autobiography, pp. 293-294; Rose, Rehearsal, pp. 63-65; Richardson, Reconstruction of Florida, pp. 77-79.
There were a few Republicans who tried to continue the reform movement in its more comprehensive form. Charles Sumner fought an arduous campaign to secure additional protections for the Negroes' civil rights. The GOP reaction to that effort was more indicative of party attitudes than was the routine Stalwart support for Negro enfranchisement. From 1870 until his death four years later, Sumner introduced a number of bills to destroy segregated schools and to guarantee the freedmen federal protection of their civil rights.\textsuperscript{63} He usually managed to secure the support of a hard core of Radical leaders, but his measures repeatedly suffered from the lack of action by the majority of congressional Republicans.\textsuperscript{64} In a key vote in the winter of 1872 on a mixed school provision, a large block of party members managed to produce the defeat of the measure by refusing to vote.\textsuperscript{65} A few weeks later an even larger group of Republicans abstained from voting against a measure to protect segregation.\textsuperscript{66} In essence the silent representatives by their inaction were securing victories for the conservatives. Sumner introduced a number of bills specifically designed to abolish the segregated

\textsuperscript{63}Congressional Globe, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, p. 3434; \textit{Ibid.}, p. 323.

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., pp. 1054-60; Alfred H. Kelly, "The Congressional Controversy over School Segregation, 1867-1875," \textit{American Historical Review}, LXIV (April, 1959), 546-548.

\textsuperscript{65}Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 882.

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1582.
schools in the District of Columbia. Most of the bills were detained in committees dominated by Republican majorities.67

In 1872 Sumner made a major bid to secure the passage of his civil rights proposals by introducing them as an amendment to a general amnesty bill. His basic plan was to make the enactment of his bill a prerequisite for reconciliation with the South. At first he received the support of the Republican leadership, Cameron, Conkling, Chandler, and others.68 Twice, once early in the year and again in May, the Senate considered an amnesty bill and both times the Massachusetts idealist attached his rider; on both occasions the Stalwarts cast their lot with Sumner.69

In the summer and late spring a new development began to undermine Sumner’s support. The Liberal Republicans were gaining strength through their advocacy of immediate and unconditional acceptance of the former rebels. The Radical leadership began to fear the issue and subsequently decided to abandon the demands for civil rights protections. It would be much easier to obtain the passage of a suitable amnesty bill without the annoyance of Sumner’s rider.70

President Grant was in the forefront of the movement against the civil rights measure. As early as January of

68Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 278; ibid., p. 929.
69Ibid.; pp. 929-930; ibid., p. 3268.
1872 the Chief Executive expressed his opposition to linking forgiveness of the Confederates with a protection of Negroes' privileges.\footnote{Ibid., p. 551.} By May there were strong signs that a majority of the Republicans in the Senate were no longer supporters of Sumner's proposal. A Senate session late in the month produced a compromise between Stalwarts, led by Conkling, and Southern Democrats. The Republicans deleted the most objectionable features from the civil rights bill and promised to pass one of the amnesty bills previously enacted by the House. In return, the Democrats allowed an immediate vote on the weak version of Sumner's bill.\footnote{Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 3731-3735; Kelly, "The Congressional Controversy," p. 551.} When the Massachusetts senator tried to prevent the emasculation of his measure by reintroducing his original proposal, the Republican Senate defeated his motion and adopted the compromise.\footnote{Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 3737-3738.} The House failed to act on the bill and even the weak Senate action became an empty gesture.

Primarily in reaction to Sumner's death, Congress reconsidered some of the civil rights proposals in 1875. The resulting debate was filled with references to the deceased reformer. Many Republicans who had rejected the senator's bill while he was still alive now felt obligated to evoke
the spirit of the old Radical in one last effort for racial justice. The President signed a bill guaranteeing to all races the legal opportunity to use any public facilities. The law prohibited racial discrimination in the selection of jurors. It forbade governments to consider a child's race when selecting the recipients of public education funds. But the act did not contain the key proposal of Sumner's crusade. The measure allowed separate schools for white and black children. When Supreme Court decisions subsequently invalidated much of the legislation, the Stalwarts failed to advocate other civil rights protections.

While the Stalwarts managed to forget much of the Reconstruction program, they remembered most of the old Radical oratory. The Grantites blamed the Democrats for the war and promised vigorous protection for freedmen. The campaign speeches still rang with stories of "rebel outrages." The Republican hierarchy urged publicity, "until after the election," for the "horrible scenes of violence and bloodshed.


75 Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1002-1006; U. S. Statutes at Large, XVIII, Part III, 335-337 (1885). Civil Rights Cases, 109 U. S., 3-62 (1883). Segregated schools, of course, provided an opportunity to discriminate against black children without hurting white students. In reality both races suffered. The Congress dealt a severe blow to education in general when it defeated G. F. Hoar's scheme to create a national school system. See Brock, American Crisis, p. 280.
transpiring throughout the South. . . ."\textsuperscript{76} After the serious
defeats of 1874, however, the Stalwarts avoided the Negro
question and relied heavily on an undiluted "bloody shirt"
theme. Civil war passions which had nothing to do with re-
form were revitalized.\textsuperscript{77} In the Republican jargon, all Demo-
crats were rebels. "Every man that shot Union soldiers was
a Democrat." Every scar on every "heroic" Union body was
inflicted "by a Democrat." The man "that assassinated Abra-
ham Lincoln was a Democrat."\textsuperscript{78}

It may be reasonable to defend the early Radicals for
similar appeals, but no such exoneration is justified in the
case of the later Stalwarts. When Thad Stevens denounced
the other party as rebel-ridden, his proximity to the war
made his sincerity likely. As noted earlier, the Republicans,
perhaps, had ample reason to associate the Democrats with the
Confederacy. But even the most honest mistrusts of the oppo-
sition made less sense with each new year. There was no
justification for the "Bloody-shirt" after the GOP welcomed
former rebels into its ranks. James Lusk Aloorn, former Con-
federate soldier, who served as a Republican senator from
Mississippi from 1871 to 1877, denied the Stalwarts any fair

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Nation}, October 15, 1874, p. 247.

\textsuperscript{77} For example, see \textit{New York Times}, October 28, 1876,
p. 5.

\textsuperscript{78} John Hope Franklin, \textit{Reconstruction: After the Civil
War} (Chicago, 1961), p. 212, citing a speech by Robert C.
Ingersoll.
basis for their partisan war-time passions. 79

The shift in party basis after 1868 was gradual and difficult to detect. The similarities between Radicalism and Stalwartism are extensive, but the differences are significant. The early reformers favored extensions of political democracy. The Grant Republicans adopted measures designed to give Negroes the right to vote, a fair chance to be on a jury, a legal right to hold an elected office. But the original extremists also favored economic and cultural reforms to benefit the ex-slaves. They greatly expanded the Freedmen's Bureau and instituted some programs of land reform. Charles Sumner continued to agitate for integrated schools and open accommodation regulations. The Stalwarts failed to produce any programs of a similar nature. They slowly reduced the demands of Reconstruction; first, deleting the plan to redistribute the wealth, then, after 1872, opposing Sumner's scheme to prohibit segregation of public facilities.

Even before the Liberal Republican campaign the Massachusetts idealist received only mild support for his civil rights bill. The congressional action on a compromise measure in 1875 did not mark the rebirth of Republican idealism. The belated move did indicate that the Grantites still counted some reformers in their party, but the debate on the bill and

its moderate provisions hint that most of the support for
the measure stemmed from sympathy for the dead Sumner. 80

Where the Radicals designed broad reforms the Stalwarts
produced stern measures in behalf of the one aspect of Re-
construction which could best serve party needs. With few
exceptions the freedmen voted for Republican candidates.
By guaranteeing the Negroes the chance to cast a ballot, the
Stalwarts were insuring a large block of support for their
party. In contrast, these same congressmen refused to pro-
duce less rewarding bills. The Grant Radicals failed to
muster enough support for civil rights legislation that could
protect social and economic opportunities. This failure
left the GOP open to the charge that the "Force bills" were
politically motivated, that the Stalwarts were unwilling to
produce any reforms which could not benefit them. The National
Republican, a party journal, may have revealed the true reason
for the legislation. While Congress was considering the
"Force bill" of 1875 the paper concluded that the measure was
"essential to the survival of the party. . . ."; it could
"secure to the Republican party all of the southern states
in the election of 1876." 81

80 Congressional Record, 43rd Congress, 1st Session,
pp. 4174-4176; ibid., 2nd Session, pp. 1868-1870; ibid.,
pp. 1002-1005.

81 Kelly, "The Congressional Controversy," p. 556, citing
the Washington National Republican, February 11, 17, 1875.
The business of speculating about possible motives is risky and, perhaps, useless. The acts of the 1870's are defendable on the same grounds used to justify the measures of the early Radicals. The Grant bills tried to protect Negro suffrage and to eliminate practices that threatened to produce false election reforms. The Republican party was still partially devoted to the enfranchisement of the Negroes. Such considerations, however, should not hide the subtle changes that were occurring in the GOP platform. The Stalwarts were decreasing the demands of Reconstruction and, by so doing, were transforming the nature of the reform movement. The Radical program no longer called for fundamental alterations in the economic and social fiber of the South. It began to confine itself to less engrossing tasks.

Radicalism was a mere shadow of its former self. The Grand Old Party now received direction from men whose dedication to reform was less than unflinching. Reconstruction suffered from amputation. The Stalwarts based their party on just enough of the old principles to be able to claim the mantle of reform. They continued to voice all of the Radical cliches (the routine expressions about Democratic blams for the war and the need to protect the Negro) while half-heartedly pursuing only one aspect of Reconstruction. The shift in basis spelled an end to Radical control.
CHAPTER IV

CONSERVATISM TRIUMPHS

In his account of post-Civil War politics, Matthew Josephson pictures the Radicals as "statesmen who championed . . . Negro suffrage. . . . while being concerned as well with worldly things. . . ."¹ He describes the Reconstructionists as "Jekylls and Hydes," men who "emancipated Negro slaves solely to build a strong . . . central Republican Party Organization."² They used the GOP, in Josephson's words, to pass "measures of high capitalist policy. . . ."³ Sumner, Stevens, Chandler, and Hayes "waved the bloody shirt" only to win support for "a new national banking system. . . . the repayment in gold specie of the national war debt, . . . and a new system of taxation known as the protective tariff . . . ."⁴

This version was a generalization that may have described a few people even in the early Radical years, but it tried to sweep too much into its view, and as a result lost all significance. What Josephson apparently did not realize is

¹Josephson, The Politicos, p. 9.
²Ibid., p. 52.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 9.
that his account came close to being useful only after a great decline of party idealism. The GOP of 1876 was not the conspiracy between politicos and capitalists that Josephson attributed to the entire Reconstruction era, but it was becoming a self-seeking organization, willing to use the Southern question for personal victory and the advancement of conservative policies. The Republicans nominated Rutherford B. Hayes to succeed Grant. In the campaign they evoked Radical concepts and sounded very much like Sumner and Stevens. A close look at their oratory, however, reveals some subtle changes in language that indicate a deep transformation in the party basis. By examining the campaign of 1876, the emerging policies of the GOP, the Compromise of 1877, and the brief courtship of the South, it is possible to see how the party severed itself from the Reconstruction era and embarked on a new course.

The Republicans faced a difficult task in campaigning for Hayes. A depression maintained a tight grip on the economy. The Democrats controlled the House of Representatives and had an excellent opportunity to capture the Presidency with candidate Samuel B. Tilden. Worst of all, every possible position the GOP could adopt on the Southern question had its disadvantages. The public was tired of reform, but any proposal to end Reconstruction threatened to alienate Stalwarts. At any rate the continuing northern hatred and suspicion of the South left a good deal of mileage in the
"bloody shirt" theme, a weapon which the struggling GOP could not afford to ignore. To surmount the dilemma, the Republicans promised something for every side. They made some ambiguous commitments to Reconstruction, generalized the Radical principles into bland, lily-white phrases which promised little for blacks, while occasionally voicing a desire to make friends with the South. The main thrust of the Hayes attack, however, was to wring the last ounces of power from the "bloody shirt" by developing a sectional appeal which excluded the Negro question, rekindled primitive battlefield passions, and concentrated on the economic issues which supposedly divided North from South.

For the record, the GOP pledged continued enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In a letter accepting the Presidential nomination, Hayes explained that he favored reconciliation with the South, but that he also wished to protect the constitutional rights of the Negro. "All parts of the Constitution are sacred and must be sacredly observed," the nominee wrote, "the parts that are new no less than the parts that are old." Benjamin Harrison, a future candidate, concluded that "the freedmen...[should not be left] to the cruel mercy of the rebels." 

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5Vincent P. DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, The New Departure Years, 1877-1897 (Baltimore, 1959), p. 32.
6Ibid., p. 33.
Despite such noble expressions, the Republicans managed to ignore the ex-slaves most of the time. The Radical promises of full emancipation became empty slogans which made no mention of the black man and his peculiar problems. Stewart L. Woodford, ex-governor of New York, spoke only of "personal rights. . . [that] would be endangered by Democratic success . . . ." Theodoré Woolsey, former president of Yale, was barely more specific in referring to "obligations. . . to a race redeemed from bondage. . . ." The campaign speakers usually managed with vague promises of education for "the children of all. . . .," with no hint as to how the GOP stood on the question of integration. The Pittsburg Gazette promised "free speech, free ballots, and free schools. . . .," without any discussion of enforcement procedures. The Washington Commercial wrote of "the issues of the war. . . .," without any space given to defining those issues. The Boston Journal identified the GOP with "law, order, equal rights, peace and safety. . . .," without any advocacy of economic reforms, civil rights bills, or any of the other specific elements of Reconstruction.

8Ibid., July 1, 1876, p. 2.
9Ibid., October 26, 1876, p. 1.
10Ibid., July 1, 1876, p. 2.
11San Antonio Daily Express, November 1, 1876, p. 2, citing Pittsburg Gazette.
12Ibid., citing Washington Commercial.
At the same time, Hayes occasionally suggested forgiveness for the South. In a New York Times interview conducted in 1877, he claimed that he had advocated leniency since his gubernatorial campaign of 1874.\(^4\) In his race for the White House, the Republican nominee often spoke about balancing Reconstruction programs with less federal control. He frequently talked as if he could continue all of the Radical policies by shifting the enforcement burden to the state level.\(^5\) In February of 1877 he wrote in his diary, "... the people of this country earnestly desire a wise and just settlement [of the Southern question]. They want peace—they long for repose."\(^6\)

The mild language on Reconstruction was not, however, part of a campaign of forgiveness and reconciliation. The vague rhetoric simply indicated the ascendancy of sectional issues other than the Negro question. The Hayes forces continued to enflame wartime passions. Accounts of Democratic outrages remained a part of the GOP repertoire. The Republicans evoked raw hatreds of the South. But the appeal was in support of conservative economic policies, and not in behalf of Radicalism. In the GOP oratory, the Civil War suddenly


\(^5\) DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, pp. 68-69.

became a struggle between the pocket books of North and South. The Union voter must not allow the Confederacy, in the person of Tilden, to win the last battle.

In the past, stories of anti-black atrocities formed a call for stronger force bills. The Hayes Republicans used the accounts to arouse righteous indignation among northern voters without promoting any new legislation. The appeal was no longer in behalf of the Negro, it was against the party of violence and terror. The New York Times, a GOP newspaper, carried daily accounts of "Democratic Murder Clubs" and "The shot-gun canvass." Although the Times admitted the Negroes' role as victims of the intimidation, the paper avoided characterizing its crusade as a fight against racial discrimination. In fact, the editorial page rarely mentioned the blacks specifically. Nor did the journal advocate programs to control the abuses. The Times seemingly wished to utilize the sectional animosities aroused by such stories, while avoiding any substantial promises to ex-slaves.

Other Republican spokesmen concentrated on different themes, but they all utilized the ill will that still existed between Union men and Confederates. Many GOP backers did not even bother with the racism or brutality of the Democracy,

18 New York Times, October 26, 1876, p. 1; ibid., October 29, p. 1; ibid., p. 4.
but dealt strictly with the southern tone of the party. A vote for Tilden and Hendricks, claimed the St. Paul Pioneer Press, "will mean . . . just exactly what. . . ." a vote for Davis and Stephens meant. "Is it wise," asked ex-President Woolsey, "or salutary, or safe, to commit the interests of the country to a party in which southerners largely pre-dominate?" The choice, argued the Times, "is . . . between the principles which assailed the Union and the principles which saved it; between men who were rebels and men who were loyal and true. . . ." Such oratory kept alive sectional tensions which were far removed from the struggle for emancipation.

The Tilden administration would serve the South, not at the expense of the ex-slaves, but to the detriment of northern business interests. The Democracy must be defeated, not to save civil rights, but for the sake of "industry, credit, and finance. . . ." Hayes must win in order to protect the gains of the Civil War, but the victory was no longer in behalf of emancipation. It was for the "resumption of specie payments. . . and a strengthening of public credit . . . ." The Republicans no longer spoke of Radical

19 San Antonio Daily Express, November 1, 1876, p. 2, citing St. Paul Pioneer Press.
21 Ibid., October 30, 1876, p. 4.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., October 31, 1876, p. 1.
commitments, but of an "... alliance between the conservative forces of finance and commerce and the essential elements of Republican strength."

Nowhere is the change in party emphasis better demonstrated than in what became the chief issue of the Southern question. Republican supporters claimed that the election of Tilden would require the Union to pay for war damages inflicted on southern property. GOP advocates began to picture a flood of claims descending on Washington and winning payment from a Confederate sympathizing-Democratic Chief Executive. In October the Times carried two different petitions from leading businessmen warning the voter of the financial calamity that would ensue from electing a man who was all too responsive to the southern claims. One letter carried the signatures of 250 businessmen in manufacturing, wholesaling, and banking. The other had the endorsement of John Jacob Astor, William E. Dodge, the senior Theodore Roosevelt, and the presidents of eighteen major banks, among others. Both statements expressed fears that a Democratic administration would pay off southern claims and thereby increase the national debt.

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24 Ibid., October 30, 1876, p. 4.
25 Ibid., October 31, 1876, p. 1.
26 Ibid., October 30, 1876, p. 1.
The Hayes campaign struck the "war-chord" one last time. In light of the vicious oratory, it seems impossible that the Republicans were in fact on the verge of forming an alliance with conservative Democrats. The new basis did not develop until long after November, but there were pre-election signs that beneath the intensified "bloody shirt" talk the GOP was undergoing some fundamental changes. The conservative economic positions emphasized in the campaign brought the Hayes forces close to the ideas of the New South. Perhaps most significantly, the GOP was losing interest in creating a bi-racial equality. Important Republicans were abandoning the assumptions of Radicalism and adopting racist opinions about the ex-slaves and their place in society. No longer hampered by liberal views on the Negro question and in agreement with the South on economic policies, the Republicans began to recognize the possibility of cooperation with their enemies. Hayes received advice from several corners that a union with southern Democrats might be desirable. When the opportunity presented itself, the GOP was ready to abandon the last vestiges of the Reconstruction era and embark on a new course.

The Republicans began to realize that they had much more in common with the Whig element in the South than they did with the Radical minded members of their own party. The

27 See discussion in Nation, October 26, 1876, p. 250.
leaders of the New South rejected the agrarianism of the pre-war years and thought in terms of railroads and factories. Increasingly, they looked to the federal government to help promote industrialization. The northern financiers who had attached themselves to the GOP could certainly find a common cause with any group wishing to make the Congress a sponsor of business enterprise. Chief among the improvements sought was the building of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. After failing to obtain private financing for the project, forces led by Tom Scott sought government support. The scheme won backing from Whiggish southern Democrats and northern Republicans. It incurred opposition from northern Democrats and southern Republicans. In early 1877 the Scott lobby called for the construction of over a thousand miles of trunk line and thirteen hundred miles of possible branches. Union Democrats completely repudiated the proposal. On this and other issues, a new bi-sectional, economically oriented political alliance was emerging.28

Conservative southerners requested other projects which also won more support from Republicans than from northern Democrats. They needed money to repair the mouth of the Mississippi. The waterway was not cared for during the war and by the 1870's it was in bad condition. All along the river there were possible projects for the government.

rebuilding and repairing levees and reclaiming flooded lands. There were numerous proposals to institute a nearly endless line of local projects. In nearly all cases, southern backers of the various measures got aid from the GOP only to face defeat at the hands of their own party. Twice as many Republicans as northern Democrats, for example, voted for the Mississippi levee projects.29

A growing disillusionment with the notion of black equality brought the Republicans closer to the position on the race question espoused by conservative southerners. Many former advocates of Reconstruction began to express doubts about the wisdom of bi-racial democracy. Edwin L. Godkin, once a firm supporter of the reform measures of Stevens and Sumner, was, by 1874, writing disparaging remarks about the capabilities of blacks. The average intelligence of most Negroes, he argued, was "so low that they are slightly above the level of animals. . . . "30 The Negro, as a legislator, was, Godkin concluded, "merely a horrible failure."31 Two years later the Nation decided that the federal government had done all that should be expected in the way of protecting the rights of freedmen.32

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29 Ibid., p. 40.
30 Nation, October 15, 1874, p. 243.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., October 26, 1876, p. 250.
In reality the GOP could easily change its position because it had already abandoned much of Reconstruction. As noted earlier, the Stalwarts had diluted the Radical demands, adopted lax enforcement policies, and failed to adjust their programs to answer the ever-changing discriminatory policies of the South. The Congress had repealed few of the Reconstruction laws, but court decisions had rendered most of them impotent. The verdict in an 1873 case severely weakened the Fourteenth Amendment.33 The Cruikshank and Reese cases of 1875 left the Negroes with the burden of protecting themselves from mob attacks and the obligation to prove that denial of suffrage was based on race and not on some other condition.34 With Congress powerless to protect blacks from private discriminations, the ex-slaves often became the victims of their former owners. With the federal government unable to grant universal suffrage, the South was free to deny Negro voting rights through ingenious subtleties. By 1876 the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were effectively weakened.35

Republicans leaders apparently realized the transformation that had taken place in their party. Hayes received advice from several political allies that he could build an alliance with whiggish southern Democrats. These advisers

33Slaughter-House Cases, 83 U. S., 36 (1872).
34U. S. v. Reese et al., 92 U. S., 214-256 (1875); U. S. v. Cruikshank et al., 92 U. S., 542-569 (1875).
35Swinney, "Fifteenth Amendment," pp. 209-211.
recognized the similarities between the national GOP and their traditional enemies. The new Republican party in the South must be based on a program of federally aided internal improvements for the region, General Grenville M. Dodge of Iowa wrote the Presidential candidate. James Garfield recommended approval of the Texas and Pacific Bill as a way of making Texas a Republican state. Charles Foster, another Ohio representative, urged the same policy for similar reasons. John Sherman envisioned an alliance between conservatives of all regions to build a strong national party.

Much of the business community had long opposed Radical Reconstruction. All through the 1870's the Commercial and Financial Chronicle, the leading voice of manufacturing interests, denounced military control of the South. Allowing the army to control the old Confederacy was the "worst possible condition for social and industrial progress." the paper complained. As early as 1868 the journal supported Johnson in his fight against the Radicals and charged that Reconstruction was "paralyzing all industries." After the panic which began in 1873 the capitalists increased

36 DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, pp. 59-60.
37 Ibid., p. 60.
38 Ibid., p. 94.
39 Ibid., p. 47.
40 Ibid., p. 48.
their opposition to reform. By 1876 the depression was in full bloom. The economic strains and disappointments that occurred strengthened the businessmen's desire to end Radicalism. In early 1877 Hayes received a flood of petitions from industrialists asking him to abandon Reconstruction.41

Despite the "bloody shirt" campaign oratory, Hayes himself expressed some support for local control in the South. His close association with a college classmate, Guy M. Bryan of Texas, drew the candidate closer to an amnesty position. The southerner constantly urged the future President to advocate leniency toward the South. Bryan promised his friend that he would be "... regarded as a benefactor to ... [his] country ... .," if he ended Reconstruction.42 Hayes later acknowledged the influence of the Texan when he wrote to Bryan, "You will see in my letter of acceptance, I trust, the influence of the feeling which our friendship has tended to foster."43

The ingredients needed to form a new party basis were present. The opportunity to halt even the masquerade of Reconstruction and to begin on a new course came with the apparent election of Tilden. In the undisputed returns the Democrat secured 184 electoral votes, one short of winning.

41 Ibid., p. 63.
43 Ibid., p. 164.
Hayes initially claimed only 166 votes. The only hurdle that remained on Tilden's road to the White House was a dispute which developed over the returns of four states, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, and Oregon. Originally, Oregon was wholly in the Republican column, but the Democrats claimed one vote from the state's delegation after the Hayes forces claimed all of the votes from the contested southern states. In South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana both parties claimed victory in the state race. Both sides sent their own version of the electoral returns to Washington. The difficulty in the national election revolved around which returns would be counted when Congress met to declare the new President.\(^{44}\)

The Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, and the Republicans, the Senate. Each side of Congressional Hill had its own ideas about how to solve the dispute. Finally, in January of 1877 an Electoral Commission was created with bipartisan support to settle the crisis. It soon became clear that the Commission intended to accept the returns favorable to Hayes. The Democrats, driven by a fear of losing once again, and by rumors that one Commission member, Justice Joseph P. Bradley, was subjected to undue pressure from railroad lobbyists who wanted Hayes elected, decided not to abide by the Commission's decision. Instead, they agreed to stage

\(^{44}\)For an account of the disputed election and the negotiations which settled the dispute see C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (Garden City, 1956).
a filibuster in the House to prevent the completion of the count of electoral votes. In order for the maneuver to be successful, the Democrats needed all of their numbers, including the southern Democrats. If the Republicans could work out a deal with southern Democrats not to join the scheme, the stalling would fail.

With the aid of several newspapermen, principally Colonel Andrew J. Kellar of the Memphis Avalanche and General Henry Van Ness Boynton, Washington representative of the Cincinnati Gazette, the GOP began to consider the possibility of making such an arrangement. By Inauguration Day Hayes had won the Presidency by agreeing to meet the demands of the ex-Confederates. He promised to abandon the last of the southern Republican regimes, to support certain projects of internal improvement desired by the business community in the South, and to appoint a southerner, Senator Key of Tennessee, to the important patronage position of Postmaster General.

The deal, however, was more than a passing maneuver to win an election. The agreement was the beginning of a new political alliance and the manifestation of the emerging basis of the Republican party. Hayes began to realize that if conservatives of both parties could cooperate in securing the

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45 Woodward, Origins, p. 41.
46 Ibid., pp. 42-51.
47 Ibid.
Presidency, they could also work together during his administration. He saw an opportunity to build a permanent marriage between northern Republicans and whiggish southern Democrats. During the subsequent four years, he worked diligently to carve the new party basis from bi-sectional timber. In the end, the effort failed, but the policies Hayes used to court the ex-Confederates permanently reshaped the Republican party.

There is little doubt about what the President intended to do with the GOP. After a trip to Virginia, Hayes wrote in his diary, "There are thousands of intelligent people... who would like to unite with the conservative Republicans of the North."\(^48\) The Republicans hoped to eliminate the race question from American politics and invite conservatives of every color and region into their fold. "What we wish is to combine, if possible, in harmonious political action... all the producing classes, men who are interested in industry and property," Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman told a Louisiana Republican.\(^49\)

Hayes spared few tactics in his drive to build a new party. Using as the core of his program the agreement which gave him the Presidency, he tempted, bribed, and conjured the southern Democrats to join the GOP ranks. He appeased white racists by withdrawing the last federal troops from

\(^{48}\)Williams, \textit{Hayes}, p. 10.

\(^{49}\)DeSantis, \textit{Republicans Face the Southern Question}, p. 94.
New Orleans and Charleston and giving up any commitment to protect blacks. After appointing Senator Key Postmaster General, he continued to use the patronage to further the proposed alliance. In September and December, 1877, Hayes visited the former Confederacy to add personal diplomacy to his efforts. The President supported some internal improvement projects in the lower Mississippi River valley and elsewhere. His eventual opposition to the Texas and Pacific Bill did not alter the Republicans' conservative direction.

The most immediate obstacles to ending Reconstruction and beginning the new era were the disputed elections in South Carolina and Louisiana. In Louisiana both Democrat Francis T. Nicholls and Republican Stephen B. Packard claimed victory in the gubernatorial race of 1876. According to prior arrangements, Hayes appointed a commission to investigate the situation and to decide in favor of Nicholls. On April 20 the commission announced its decision, and on April 24 the last federal troops marched out of New Orleans. In South Carolina the deadlock was between Democrat Wade Hampton and Republican Daniel H. Chamberlain. Again, a commission was appointed, it made its decision for Hampton, and on April 10 the soldiers left the state house in Charleston.

The end to military Reconstruction meant the abandonment of the civil rights of Negroes. Without federal

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50 New York Times, April 21, 1877, p. 1; ibid., April 25, 1877.
51 Ibid., April 1, 1877, p. 1; ibid., April 10, 1877, p. 1.
interference the South began the process of legal racism that culminated in the complete segregation and dual system of justice of the 1890's. But Hayes did not see his policy as the beginning of the trend. Either from self-deception or a complete disregard of the black man's safety, the President consistently maintained that ex-slaves were best protected by southern leaders. In slogans that would become too familiar in the twentieth century Hayes saw understanding and wisdom in the South's treatment of Negroes. Ending national law enforcement brought "peace... between the races... of the South, and it tends to serve the rights, interests, and safety of the colored people...," he told the New York Times. The new policy "will cause sectionalism to disappear, and... will... wipe out the color line," he confided to his diary.

The new policy promoted responsibility because it gave the former slaveholders a chance to show their good intentions, Hayes was fond of saying. The law would be obeyed, not because of force, but as a result of "love and peace," he told an Ohio group. "We want our nation to be a nation... in

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52 Ibid., April 16, 1877, p. 1; ibid., September 12, 1877, p. 1.
53 Ibid., April 16, 1877, p. 1.
54 Williams, Hayes, p. 77.
which all obey the Constitution . . . not because we have the power to enforce it, but because it is the will of the people that it shall be so."^56

Administration spokesman Secretary of State William Evarts developed the rationalization that since the local people had to live with the results of their own racial poli-
cies, the local government could be trusted to adopt a wise course. "Our domestic affairs should be governed and con-
trolled by the people who were to suffer or enjoy according to the wisdom of their doings with them. . . . ," he theo-
rized.57 "We are able now. . . to trust to every part of this country the management of its domestic institutions."58

Denying any federal responsibility, he told a Tennessee audience, "If you . . . pervert the power, you will be the sufferers, and there is no help in the American Constitution that can save you from the consequences of your own miscon-
duct."59 For whatever reason the Republicans were formulat-
ing a new policy that virtually repudiated their Radical predecessors.

Aside from the end to military Reconstruction, the Hayes plan included the induction of southern Democrats into the

^56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., September 21, 1877, p. 2.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
ranks of Republican appointed officeholders. The designation of Senator Key as Postmaster General was just the first of many such selections. The President described his program as an end to partisan selection of officials, but in practice he was motivated by the same political considerations which moved the spoilsmen. He wanted to appoint as many southern Democrats as possible in order to seduce them into the new alliance. At the same time, he had to take care of those Republicans who formed a part of his Presidential victory. Packard was consoled over the loss of Louisiana by winning an appointment as Consul to Liverpool. Hayes gave government jobs to all members of the Louisiana Returning Board, which had played such an important part in his election. He found places for the Negro legislators in Louisiana who lost their positions as a result of the ascension of the conservatives in that state.

Many important southern Democrats won jobs from Hayes; others influenced a good deal of patronage through the advice the President solicited from them. In his correspondence with Bryan, the Chief Executive repeatedly told of appointments that might please the Texan. "It is not correct,"

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60 DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, pp. 90-91.
61 Ibid., p. 91.
62 Ibid.
Hayes wrote, "that no heretofore Dems. will be appointed." During his last year in the White House, the President reminded his friend that in four months he had appointed "over forty southern Democrats—notably Trescott of South Carolina to China." All across the South Hayes was inclined to consult local Democrats in filling the patronage bill. He sought GOP advice so infrequently that some Republicans began to accuse the President of a sell-out to rebel elements.

After courting the Democrats with such lavish gifts of patronage, Hayes decided to go calling on the former Confederacy. In the fall and winter of 1877 the President made two forays into the South. The first trip came within seven months of the inauguration, and included stops in Nashville, Chattanooga, and Atlanta. Throughout most of the tour Wade Hampton and Postmaster General Key appeared with Hayes. In every city the men spoke of forgetting all of the past differences between the two sections of the country. The war became an unfortunate development, marked by the fine heroics of Union and Confederate soldiers. There were mistakes on both sides, and Hayes was certainly willing to admit the North's error in keeping the South under military control.

63 Ibid., p. 93.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p. 92.
But the war and Reconstruction were over and northerners had learned to trust their former enemies. 66

The President repeatedly voiced his belief that the South would protect the rights of blacks. All interests could be best served by returning control to the local level and ending the conflict and turmoil of the immediate post-war years, Hayes told one audience after another. 67 He promised the Negro population of Chattanooga that "with the bayonets removed from the South the people of color [will] ... be safer in every right ... ." 68 Greeted by a black delegation in Atlanta, he said the interests of ex-slaves were best protected "if this great mass of intelligent white men were let alone by the General Government." 69

Industry and trade were also scheduled to reap great benefits from the end of Reconstruction. "If we regard business, if we regard commercial interests, ... are they not best promoted by friendship... ?" Hayes asked in Knoxville. 70 "Discord, discontent, and dissatisfaction are enemies of enterprise...," he told his audience in

67 Ibid., September 21, 1877, p. 2; ibid., September 22, 1877, p. 2; ibid., September 23, 1877, p. 7.
68 Ibid., September 21, 1877, p. 2.
69 Ibid., September 23, 1877, p. 7.
70 Ibid., September 22, 1877, p. 2.
Apprently, he was talking about the disappoint-
ments of white racists, and not about the frustrations of
southern blacks.

The appeal was evidently what the South wanted to hear.
Large and enthusiastic audiences greeted the President and
Mrs. Hayes at every stop. In Chattanooga there was a large
floral arch with the letters RBH carved into the foliage,
and a key made of flowers suspended from the structure. The
Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle called Hayes "a wise and politic
ruler, a just and generous man." The San Antonio Daily Ex-
press urged its readers to write the President and say, "Well
done, thou good and faithful servant. . . ."

Empty slogans and racist policies in themselves could
not continue to pacify the South, however, and Hayes knew it.
He would have to produce substantial programs that pleased
the southern business community. He wrote in his diary that
the former Confederacy needed "to have encouraged. . . every
description of legitimate business and industry." The
war left the South impoverished and it needed all that "may
constitutionally be done to make it . . . again prosperous.

71 Ibid., September 23, 1877, p. 7.
72 Ibid., September 22, 1877, p. 2.
73 Ibid., July 3, 1877, p. 2.
74 San Antonio Daily Express, September 21, 1877, p. 2.
75 Williams, Hayes, p. 77.
and happy." The Republicans must "... urge a liberal policy toward the South, especially in affording facilities for education and encouraging business and immigration by internal improvements of a national character." Presumably, Hayes meant to provide federal support for the projects he advocated.

On the question of internal improvements, the Hayes administration demonstrated considerable willingness to fulfill its pre-inauguration promises. The South produced a long list of proposed projects. In the last three months of 1877 alone, southern Congressmen submitted over three hundred bills calling for federal support of projects in their region. The President gave every indication that he intended to push for passage of most of the measures. It was not until southern Democrats failed to complete part of their agreement that he turned against many of the building programs. Southern Congressmen betrayed him in voting for a Democrat for Speaker of the House. Hayes responded by opposing several important projects, the Texas and Pacific Bill in particular.

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76 Ibid.

77 Charles R. Williams, editor, Diary and Letters of Rutherford Burchard Hayes, 5 vols. (Columbus, Ohio, 1924), III, 400.

78 DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, p. 88.

79 Ibid., p. 89; Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, pp. 235-269.
By 1878 the desired alliance had no hope of ever flourishing. Aside from the mutual betrayals on the terms of the Compromise, Stalwarts like William Chandler, Conkling, and Blaine refused to give up the "Bloody-shirt." Disputes between the GOP and southern Democrats, including investigations of each other, added to the critical situation. Even more decisive were the results of the election. A virtually solid Democratic South emerged from the canvass to smash Hayes' plans for a strong, conservative Republican party for the region.  

After northern and southern conservatives failed to produce one party, Hayes began to renege on his earlier commitments and even became slightly bitter toward the South. In preparation for the election of 1880 he wrote, "I think an effective speech could be made for Garfield by showing... how the Democratic party sanctions... the practical nullification of the 15th amendment." Warming to his subject, he continued, "The failure of the South to faithfully observe the 15th amendment is the cause of the failure of all efforts towards complete pacification." All of the blame must fall on the "Democratic party of the North... If they would refuse to seat Southern Representatives and Senators whose

80 Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, pp. 263-264.
81 Williams, Hayes, p. 288.
82 Ibid.
seats had been obtained by a violation of the Constitution, the question would be rightly settled.\(^{83}\) If this was a revival of the "Bloody-shirt," it was at least sectional oratory with a new volume. Hayes advised that it should be "calmly done."\(^{84}\)

Despite such rhetoric Hayes could not revive the Reconstruction issue, and he probably had no intention of doing so. The brief flirtation with the South left its imprint on the Republican party. Besides the divorce from Radicalism, the GOP gave up any hope of a strong southern wing of its organization. Henceforth, the party strongholds were exclusively in the North and West. The 1877 Compromise introduces an era of Republican tendency to adopt whatever policies were politically advantageous. In patterns that transcended the struggle between Half-breeds and Stalwarts the GOP was willing to serve almost any popular cause.

In June of 1878 Hayes signed a bill to end the use of troops in supervising elections. Although there were still ways of imposing federal controls on southern affairs, the President did not use them.\(^{85}\) Supreme Court decisions in the late seventies further weakened the Reconstruction Amendments, and the verdicts in the Civil Rights cases of 1883 effectually

\(^{83}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 289.}\)

\(^{84}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 288.}\)

\(^{85}\text{U. S. Statutes at Large, XX, 152 (1878).}\)
nailed down the coffin lid on the Radical era. 86 "The opinion[s] in these cases," Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote in his classic dissent, "... defeat the ends of people... supposed they had accomplished by changes in their fundamental law." 87

After the failure of the Compromise of 1877 the Republican party took little interest in building an effective southern wing. The task was not only hopeless, but also unnecessary to the party's national dominance. Despite a Democratic resurgence, the GOP possessed enough strength in the North and West to offset its losses in the former Confederacy. With the demise of the last Radical regimes, the southern branches of the party were allowed to disintegrate and to become instruments of a small bureaucracy of federal officeholders who depended on Washington patronage for their political power. 88

In direct contrast to the Radical's idealism, the latter-day Republicans served almost any well-paying master. Primarily, they adopted conservative economic policies to win the support of rich contributors like John Wanamaker and Mark Hanna, but they also vulgarized their positions on several minor issues to appease the prejudices and hatred of the

86 Civil Rights Cases, 109 U. S., 3-62 (1883).
88 Mayer, The Republican Party, pp. 245-256.
masses.\footnote{Fred A. Shannon, The Centennial Years, A Political and Economic History of America from the Late 1870's to the Early 1890's, edited by Robert H. Jones (Garden City, 1967), pp. 157-158.} The crass betrayal of Radicals that Hayes carried out in his southern policy set the style for other such actions with new victims. Garfield, Blaine, and Harrison were willing to sacrifice Orientals and Mormons with promises to exclude the former from immigration and to prohibit the latter from practicing polygamy.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 99, 100, 123, 124, 155, 159.} Harrison abandoned civil service reforms by appointing Wanamaker Postmaster General, and Hayes turned his back on the Texas and Pacific Railroad only because he wanted political revenge.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 160.} All of these activities were part of the retreat from idealism.

The Republican party was always a fluid organization, a mixture of ideas, commitments, and strategies. It changed gradually, draining away old components and adding new ones. An account of the party basis requires generalizations, but it should not ignore the diversity and the evolution of the components of the party. The differences between the Radical group and the Hayes administration are best calculated by degrees. In 1865 not all Republicans were dedicated to reform. Some men who voted for the original Reconstruction program later helped change the party basis to a more conservative position. Many politicians who supported Radicalism
were also racists. \(^9^2\) If the party was ever idealistic, it was so only in the person of a few--Sumner, Stevens, and maybe Wade and several others in a smaller way. Nevertheless, the Radicals shaped the direction of Reconstruction. By 1876 there was still a residue of Radicalism in the organization, but the policies were controlled by conservatives. The leaders of 1865 often played politics for the sake of reform, where the hierarchy of the Grant era sometimes reformed for the sake of politics, and the Hayes group abandoned Reconstruction completely.

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