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March 1877

"RADICALS" AND ECONOMIC POLICIES: The House of Representatives, 1861-1873

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Union officer ever discovered. The Federals, in their campaign to suppress the bushwhackers, used practically every known device—patrols, outposts, terrorism, devastation, depopulation, even "strategic villages" and "search and destroy" expeditions (to employ some modern terminology)—and all were unavailing. In the end the only thing that terminated the guerrilla war in Missouri was the collapse of the Confederacy. By the spring of 1865, if not before, it was clear that a continuation of partisan warfare could serve no valid purpose, but would merely increase the sufferings of the civilian population. Therefore, on May 21, 1865, following the surrender of the main Confederate armies, most of the bushwhackers rode into Lexington, Missouri, and, according to a prior arrangement with the Federals, surrendered their weapons, received paroles, and then headed for home.²¹ Only a few die-hards held out, and these, in due course, either quit, were killed, or else, as in the cases of the James boys and Younger brothers, became outlaws.

Quantrill's bushwhackers fought over a hundred years ago and their favorite tactic of charging on horseback is now as outmoded as their cap and ball revolvers. The same, however, is not true of the basic strategy they employed in their operations, or of the factors which underlay this strategy and made it so effective. These remain as valid today as they were then, for they incorporated the fundamental and essentially timeless principles of successful partisan warfare. By studying the history of Quantrill and his men one can gain insights into the working of these principles. In addition, much can be learned about the character of guerrilla warfare, especially as to the human stresses involved. And finally, there are valuable lessons to be found in the futile efforts of the Federals to crush the bushwhackers. Indeed, in this last connection, it is perhaps not too farfetched to suggest that if certain modern-day American civilian and military leaders had known a few facts about the guerrilla war on the Kansas-Missouri border in the 1860's, they might not have committed so many mistakes and experienced so many unpleasant surprises attempting to cope with the disciples of Ho Chi Minh in the 1960's.

²¹ Liberty, Mo. *Tribune*, May 26, 1865.

IN A RECENTLY PUBLISHED volume entitled *The Politics of Reconstruction*, Professor David Donald urges the use of new approaches to the persistent and complex problems of the reconstruction period. Recognizing the virtual exhaustion of conventional sources—newspapers, documents, manuscripts—he points the way toward a new methodology.

The present little book is intended to suggest an approach which may bypass these road blocks which have done so much to retard the rewriting of Reconstruction history. It consists of three exercises in applying techniques more frequently used in the behavioral sciences to the history of the Republican party during the years from 1863 to 1867, years during which this organization controlled the national government and set forth the conditions on which reunion could occur.¹

He proceeds to examine the voting records of individual Republican representatives in relation to the relative security or insecurity of their congressional seats. In this way he has sought to find a criterion for analyzing the groupings within the Republican party.

The need for a fresh approach to reconstruction is nowhere more obvious than in the continuing controversy among historians over "Radicals" and "Radicalism." In recent years increasing attention has been devoted to this area and yet no real agreement as to the identity of the Radicals or the nature and extent of their programs has been reached.² This can be seen by examining the published views of four prominent Civil War and reconstruction historians—Howard K. Beale, T. Harry Williams, David Donald, and Eric McKittrick.

Beale, in *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (1930), pictured a band of men with fanatical purposes, a minority of the Republican party determined to win their objectives

¹ David Donald, *The Politics of Reconstruction, 1863-1867* (Baton Rouge, 1965), xiii. See the review of this volume by Thomas J. Pressly, *Civil War History*, XII (1966), 267-270.

² Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Re-*

whatever the cost. By the end of the war, "a few earnest men with fanatical perseverance had conquered a nation. With success the objectives broadened, but Thad Stevens and Ben Wade led the same movement in 1867 that Lovejoy and Garrison had served thirty years earlier."³

Williams, in *Lincoln and the Radicals* (1941), wrote that the Radicals were the driving force in Congress during the Civil War years. "The radicals stood for instant emancipation, the confiscation of rebel property, the use of colored soldiers, civil and, when it should become expedient, political equality for the Negro,"⁴ however little they cared for the Negro except as an instrument to fasten Republican political and economic control upon the South. By the end of the war, "They had conquered Lincoln, they would conquer Johnson."

Donald, in *Lincoln Reconsidered* (1956), questioned the validity of this view of the Radicals and stated that they "... were not united upon any positive social and economic program," but "they more nearly agreed about the things they opposed."⁶ Along with millions of other Americans they disliked slavery, fumbling military leadership, and Lincoln's slowness.

McKittrick's study, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (1960), also challenged the traditional concept of "radicalism," arguing that as late as 1865, there was no "hard core" of plotters waiting to throw off the mask and take over the country.⁷ He carefully analyzed the meaning of "radicalism" and stated that the Radical legend was largely the result of Democratic efforts to brand the entire Republican party as fanatical and dominated by a hard core of Radical plotters.

It can readily be seen that there is substantial disagreement as to

construction (New York, 1930); T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison, 1941); T. Harry Williams, "Lincoln and the Radicals; an Essay in Civil War History and Historiography," in Grady McWhiney, *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals* (Evanston, 1964); David Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* (New York, 1956); David Donald, "Devils Facing Zionward," in McWhiney, *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals*; Eric McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, 1960); Robert P. Sharkey, *Money, Class and Party* (Baltimore, 1959); Kenneth Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York, 1965); LaWanda and John H. Cox, *Politics, Principles and Prejudice: 1865-1866* (New York, 1963); and W. R. Brock, *An American Crisis: Congress and Reconstruction, 1865-1867* (New York, 1963).

³ Beale, *Critical Year*, p. 51.

⁴ Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals*, p. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 384. A modification of his views on economic radicalism appears in his article "Lincoln and the Radicals," in which he accepts the Radicals as essentially conventional in their economic beliefs and suggests further research into this facet of Radical policy.

⁶ Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered*, p. 111. A further refinement of Donald's view appeared in "Devils Facing Zionward."

⁷ McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, p. 54.

the unity and purpose of the Radicals in both the political and economic areas. Radicals are pictured as fanatical men seeking extreme ends, yet lacking a positive social or economic program. In order to offer a more precise analysis of this problem, the writer has examined the voting records of representatives in Congress from July, 1861 to March, 1873 (Thirty-seventh through the Forty-second Congresses),⁸ and by this quantitative method, has sought to identify the Radicals by name.

The first step in the identification of political Radicals during the years under consideration was the listing of representatives described as Radical by the authors of several standard histories of the reconstruction era. A more stringent test was the writer's examination of votes on various bills that from their substance may be considered Radical measures.⁹

Thirty-four representatives (all Republicans) and twenty measures were identified as Radicals by the historians cited. To verify this identification of men and measures, the final vote on each bill was examined, and each representative classified as a supporter or opponent of Radical legislation. The results showed that all thirty-four Radical Republican representatives voted 75 per cent or more of the time in support of the Radical measures. However, most of the remaining Republican representatives voted for these same measures; the Democrats voted in a solid bloc against them. Only 8 per cent of the Republicans (23) and 4 per cent of the Democrats (6) failed to vote with their respective parties a majority of the time—of the 276 Republicans and 141 Democrats voting in the period from 1861 to 1873.

In order to identify the Radicals more precisely, amendments to the above measures, plus others considered appropriate by the writer, were examined. A total of seventy-six roll-call votes, ranging from

⁸ A similar treatment of the Senate may be found in Glenn Linden, "Radicals" and Economic Policies: The Senate, 1861-1873," *The Journal of Southern History*, LXXII (1966), 189-199.

⁹ James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the End of the Roosevelt Administration* (New York, 1893-1906); James C. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston, 1961); W. E. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction* (New York, 1935); Robert S. Henry, *The Story of Reconstruction* (New York, 1938); James S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, 1865-1876* (New York, 1937); Paul Buck, *The Road to Reunion* (Boston, 1937); Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *Rise of American Civilization* (New York, 1927); Robert P. Sharkey, *Money, Class and Party* (Baltimore, 1959); Eric McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, 1960); Louis Hacker, *The Triumph of American Capitalism* (New York, 1940); E. Merton Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, 1947); John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War* (Chicago, 1961); T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison, 1941); Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York, 1930).

Table IV (continued)

Name	State	July 1861- April 1865	May 1865- Nov. 1866	Dec. 1866- March 1873
Newcomb, C. A.	Mo.			X
Noell, J. W.	Mo.		X	
Norton, E. H.	Mo.	X		
Polsley, D. H.	W. Va.			X
Van Horn, R. T.	Mo.		X	X
Webster, E. H.	Md.	X		
<i>Democrats:</i>				
Adams, G. M.	Ky.			X
Archer, S.	NR Md.			X
Beck, J. B.	NR Ky.			X
Biggs, B. T.	NR Del.			X
Crittenden, J. J.	Ky.	X		
Dunlap, G. W.	Ky.	X		
Golladay, J. S.	Ky.			X
Grider, H.	Ky.		X	
Grover, A. P.	Ky.			X
Harding, A.	Ky.		X	
Hogan, J.	NR Mo.		X	
Knott, J. P.	NR Ky.			X
Mallory, R.	NR Ky.	X		
McCormick, J. R.	NR Mo.			X
Phelps, C. E.	Md.		X	
Stone, F.	NR Md.		X	X
Trimble, L. S.	NR Ky.			X
Wells, E.	NR Mo.			
<i>OTHER PARTIES</i>				
<i>Conservative:</i>				
Ritter, B. C.	Ky.		X	
<i>Unionist:</i>				
Wadsworth, W. H.	Ky.	X		
<i>PACIFIC COAST</i>				
<i>Republicans:</i>				
Ashley, D. R.	Nev.			X
McRuer, D. C.	R Calif.		X	
Phelps, T. G.	Calif.	X		
Sargent, A. A.	Calif.	X		X
<i>Democrats:</i>				
Axtell, S. B.	Calif.			X
<i>Unionist:</i>				
Bidwell, J.	Calif.		X	

Additional information was gathered concerning the age, geographical section and previous political affiliation of all Radical and Non-Radicals. The average Radical was forty-five years of age; had been a Whig in the earlier part of his life; and came from the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest areas. Few Radicals had ever been Democrats and few came from the border or western re-

gions. The average Non-Radical was forty-three years of age, of uncertain political activity in the pre-Civil War period, and from the border, midwestern and Mid-Atlantic states. Few differences can be seen between the groups in terms of age, geographical section or previous political affiliation.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from an examination of 141 roll-call votes and the individual voting patterns of each representative:

1. 130 representatives have been identified as Radical and eighty-three representatives as Non-Radical in the period from July, 1861, to March, 1873. Their voting records on seventy-six roll-call votes suggested a definite division along party lines on political measures pertaining to the reconstruction of the southern states and treatment of the Negro.

2. Radical representatives, as defined above, did not maintain party unity on sixty-five roll-call votes on selected economic issues. A similar lack of unity was apparent among Non-Radicals. Rather, a crossing of party lines on economic voting did occur, with representatives from the same geographical section voting together irrespective of party affiliation.

3. Many Radical representatives did not vote with representatives of their own geographical area. For example, Hooper of Massachusetts voted with the majority of his geographical section 58 per cent of the time in the first period, 86 per cent in the second period, and 73 per cent in the third period. Also, Baxter of Vermont voted with the majority of his geographical section 65 per cent in the first period and 100 per cent in the second period. Similarly, many Non-Radicals and Non-Aligned representatives voted in the same manner.

Thus, the votes cast in the House of Representatives from 1861 to 1873 constitute evidence supporting the description of Radicals by Donald and McKittrick and contrary to the views of Beale and Williams. It would appear that the Radicals did not pursue clear-cut economic policies and that there was little correlation between their economic and political voting behavior. Economic voting patterns followed geographical, not political party lines. It seems clear that traditional views of Radicals and Radicalism need closer examination and the analysis of voting records offers one way of approaching this problem.