

⁴⁷ Louis Filler, *The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860* (New York, 1963), pp. 28-47; Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, pp. 317-60.

⁴⁸ Walter Merrill, *Against Wind and Tide* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 322.

⁴⁹ Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, pp. 161-3.

⁵⁰ *Le Moniteur Universel*, April 5, 7, May 2, July 7, 1851.

⁵¹ Ernest Legouvé, *Soixante Ans de Souvenirs* (Paris, n. d.) pp. 410-11.

RADICAL REPUBLICAN MOTIVATION: A CASE HISTORY

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After¹ open war erupted between the Republican party and President Andrew Johnson over Reconstruction policies, a party leader reported to Senator Zachariah Chandler that Michigan Republicans unanimously supported their delegation in Congress. "Since I have been acquainted at all with the politics of Michigan," he related, "I have never known greater unanimity in the Republican ranks than today." Not a single federal officeholder, he added, supported the President's policy.²

Seldom in American political history does unanimity occur; never has a political party enacted a major program over the strenuous opposition of a President—except during the Reconstruction period.³ A political party declares war on its own presidential administration only under the greatest provocation and because of the most compelling reasons.

Republicans believed that such a situation prevailed after the Civil War. Since Michigan was a stronghold of Radical Republicanism, a detailed examination of Michigan opinion might be helpful in understanding why Radicals so violently opposed Johnson's Reconstruction program. In this paper references to public opinion or partisan views refer to Michigan; references to national opinion are specifically labeled.

Opposition to Johnson's program was not mere obstructionism, for the Radicals developed a program of their own. Its salient elements included Congressional control of Reconstruction, delay in admission of Southern states to full rights under the Constitution, punishment of Confederate leaders, repudiation of the related doctrines of state sovereignty and secession, the destruction of slavery, protection of "loyal" men in the South, and establishment of Southern state governments conditional upon the support of a substantial number of voters.

This program evolved from the Republican view of the causes of the Civil War and, indeed, from the very reason for

the formation of the Republican party. The party had sprung into existence in 1854 for the stated purpose of fighting the extension of slavery. Republicans believed that they were actually fighting "slave power" and "aristocracy," but because of constitutional limitations could legally attack slavery only in the territories. Successful in mobilizing freedom-loving and democratic Northerners against these reactionary forces, Republicans in 1860 elected Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States. Unwilling to accept this decision of the electorate, the "slave power" brought about Southern secession and thus precipitated the Civil War. Although the South lost the war, the "slave power" did not give up but continued the struggle in a different form.⁴

Recognizing the continuing and persistent menace, Michigan's Governor, Henry Crapo, warned in 1866:

It is not *slavery*, but the *spirit* which seeks to make slavery the corner stone of empire, that we have now to guard against—that element of hatred to freedom and equality that instituted the conflict. . . . That spirit is neither dead nor sleeping. . . . Having failed so utterly in the resort to force, it will but recuperate its energies for a more insidious attack in a different method of warfare.⁵

However incomplete or inaccurate they might be, such views were to constitute the bases of the Radical Republican program for a decade after the Civil War. Not only did these beliefs furnish the context within which political actions occurred, but they gave a peculiar cast to Reconstruction controversies, a doctrinaire flavor unusual in American politics. The identification of the Republican party with the promotion of freedom and democracy against "slave power" and "aristocracy" gave the Republicans a messianic sense of destiny. Republican identification of the Democratic party with slavery and treason made Republican control of the national government a patriotic necessity. Further, Republicans viewed the struggle as occurring between ageless, eternal principles—"slave power" and "aristocracy" were resilient, crafty, and powerful. Far reaching and drastic measures were necessary to extirpate their roots.

Thus Republicans willingly accepted the appellation of "Radical." In American political life party leaders usually

attempt to personify moderation and reasonableness. During the Civil War era, however, Republicans engaged in a titanic struggle against the monstrous evils of slavery and treason. In such circumstances moderation and reasonableness were not virtues.

Because of the fundamental importance of the problems involved, Radical Republicans vigorously debated Reconstruction problems even while the outcome of the Civil War was still in doubt. Indeed, Radicals had developed much of their program long before Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

One of the key constitutional issues revolved about the status of the seceded Southern states. In April, 1862, Congressman Fernando Beaman claimed that as a consequence of rebellion a Southern state "ceased to be a member of the Union . . . as a State." Therefore, Beaman reasoned, Congress must establish a provisional or territorial government in each of the seceding states before it could again exercise full power. One of the first to take "an advanced and correct position on the question of reconstruction," Beaman was congratulated by Charles Sumner for his views.⁶

Because of its emphasis on the Presidential role in Reconstruction, Lincoln's 10% plan inspired scant respect among Michigan Congressmen. John Longyear claimed that Lincoln's scheme was "incomplete for lack of constitutional power," since only Congress had the authority to admit new states. The Southerners, stated Longyear, should be treated as subjugated enemies.⁷

Senator Jacob Howard not only agreed that the power to reconstruct belonged "exclusively" to Congress, but he also wanted a genuine loyalty in the South as the basis for readmission to the Union. "The people of the North," he prophesied,

are not such fools as to fight through such a war as this, to spend so vast an amount of treasure as they must necessarily spend in bringing it to a successful termination—that they are not such fools as to sacrifice a hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand lives in putting down this rebellion, and then turn round and say to the traitors, "All you have to do is to come back into the councils of the nation and take an oath that henceforth you will be true to the Government." Sir, it would be simple imbecility, folly . . .⁸

No Southern state should be readmitted, maintained Howard, until "there shall be the free consent of a reasonably numerous portion of the people of the rebellious States."⁹ Howard later defined "a reasonably numerous portion" as a "decided" majority of the voting population of a state. Until a majority became loyal, Howard advocated keeping it out of the Union and in "tutelage" up to twenty years.¹⁰ Howard reasoned that a hostile and belligerent community could not claim the right to elect members of Congress. "Are public enemies," he asked, "entitled to be represented in the Legislature of the United States?"¹¹

Delaying restoration of full rights to the seceded Southern states was related to the problem of protecting the minority of loyal men in those states. They would need protection after the war was won; they could not protect themselves; federal laws protecting them would not be sufficient, since laws are not self-enforcing. The conclusion seemed inescapable: only through provisional or territorial governments established by Congress could the Congressional policy of protecting the loyal men in the South become a reality.¹²

If protection of loyal Southern Negroes would disturb Southern secessionists, such protection did not disturb Senator Chandler. A "secession traitor," he growled,

is beneath a loyal negro. I would let a loyal negro vote. I would let him testify; I would let him fight; I would let him do any other good thing, and I would exclude a secession traitor.¹³

Characteristically, Chandler was more radical than his colleagues. No other Michigan Congressman is recorded as advocating Negro suffrage in Congressional discussion before 1865.

Thus the necessity of preparing a far reaching Reconstruction program was recognized long before the Civil War came to an end. While the war from one point of view might be considered tragic, Radicals believed that it furnished an opportunity to make America's political system just. "If we fail to embrace" the opportunity, warned one Congressman, "the golden moment will have escaped for years, if not forever."¹⁴ After winning victory on the battlefield, Radicals

were determined not to lose the peace. These two elements—the Radical belief that Reconstruction politics were an extension of wartime issues and the Radical determination not to lose the fruits of military victory—are crucial in understanding Radical motivation.

Lincoln's assassination confirmed these ideas. "My God Gov.," wrote a friend to ex-Governor Austin Blair, in an almost indecipherable scrawl, "My heart is too full to write. Poor Lincoln a victim to his own goodness & *Leniency. Death to all Traitors.*"¹⁵ Another of Blair's correspondents reacted similarly:

Poor old Abraham has yielded up his life at last a sacrifice to the very Class of friends in whose interest he has often almost perilled his standing with the loyal people. They have committed the worst folly they have perpetrated since they took up arms against the lawful authorities—Let justice now be meted out to the remorseless villains who led the people into rebellion, by a man of their own household—a man who knows and fully realizes the depths of their depravity & has no mawkish sympathy for them when conquered.¹⁶

Senator Chandler reacted in a more calculating manner. "I believe that the Almighty continued Mr. Lincoln in office as long as he was useful," Chandler wrote to his wife, "& then substituted a better man to finish the work." Had Lincoln's policy been carried out, he believed that Jefferson Davis and his followers would be back in the Senate; "but now," gloated the senator, "their Chance to Stretch hemp are [sic] better than for the Senate. . . ."

Despite Chandler's happy expectation of Davis on the gallows, an element of foreboding runs through Chandler's letter. Needed in Washington, the grim Michigan Senator substituted someone else to accompany Lincoln's remains to Springfield. "Johnson is *right* now," he reported; "thinks just as we do & desires to carry out radical measures & punish treason & traitors, but much depends upon his Surroundings." A few days later Chandler described Johnson: "as radical as I am & as fully up to the mark. If he has good men around him there will be no danger in the future." He was convinced that the composition of the Cabinet was particularly important, and he was dismayed when moderates

sought to gain the President's ear. "What the result may be," sighed the Michigan Senator, "God knows."¹⁷

Chandler and his Radical friends drew considerable comfort in Johnson's statements soon after his succession to the Presidency that "treason must be made odious and traitors punished"; only thus, claimed Johnson, could rebellion be made so costly and painful that it would never recur.

Sobered by the responsibilities of office, however, Johnson abjured stout remarks about the efficacy of hemp and fashioned a Reconstruction policy which continued Lincoln's mild program. On May 29, 1865, Johnson spelled out his terms for "restoration" of the South to the Union. In the first of two proclamations on that day Johnson granted amnesty for participation in the war to all Southerners with certain exceptions; among whom were high Confederate officials, those who had mistreated Federal prisoners, and those with property worth more than \$20,000. The excepted classes, who numbered approximately 50,000 individuals, were merely denied political rights. Even these, however, could be pardoned by special Presidential order, and, as events were to prove, Johnson generously extended pardon to almost everyone who requested it.

In the second proclamation Johnson set in motion the organization of a state government in North Carolina. He appointed a provisional governor, provided for elections to choose officials, and spelled out his conditions for that state's restoration into the Union—abolition of slavery, nullification of the ordinance of secession, and repudiation of the Confederate debt. In the following weeks similar proclamations were issued for other Southern states.¹⁸

During the summer of 1865 in virtually all ex-Confederate states, constitutional conventions met and substantially acquiesced to Johnson's terms. Under their new constitutions elections were held, governors and other state and local officials chosen, and representatives to Congress elected. Johnson did not appear disturbed that Southerners consistently elected prominent ex-Confederates to office. When Congress assembled in December, 1865, the President proudly notified the legislators that restoration was complete, though, he conceded, Congress alone could determine whether to

admit representatives from the southern states into the halls of Congress.

Some writers have argued that if the President's mild program had been accepted, the nation would have recovered easily and without rancor from the Civil War. They further argue that the Radical Republicans with their bitter and vindictive program brought on the heartache and agony of Reconstruction, which still poisons intersectional relations.

Such assertions, however, raise more questions than they answer. If Johnson's program exhibited wisdom and statesmanship, as his defenders claim, why did it arouse controversy and receive little support in the North? Why did defenders and opponents—notably in Michigan—split along party lines?

The second question indicates that attitudes toward the Johnson reconstruction program were, at least in part, politically motivated. An examination of contemporary beliefs demonstrates why the Democrats supported Johnson.

Michigan Democrats charged that the Civil War resulted from the "fanaticism" of Republicans, their unconstitutional attacks on slavery, and their refusal to satisfy the legitimate desires of the South. In short, Republicans caused the war through their assault on slavery.¹⁹ With slavery dead, there existed no further reason for sectional disturbance. Southerners, who had suffered from unconstitutional assaults of black abolitionists before the war and had been defeated in the war, should now be treated in a kindly and conciliatory manner. Thus harmony would be restored.

Further, Democrats were pleased that Johnson's program required only a minimum of constitutional tinkering—repudiation of slavery and secession. An elder statesman of the party noted that Democrats opposed "all innovations upon the permanent institutions of our country,—for the restoration of the union and the constitution (as it needs restoring), and opposed to separation and every thing that even tends to mar the symmetry of our beautiful fabric."²⁰ The only flaw which the Democratic *Detroit Free Press* found in the Johnson Reconstruction program was the requirement that Southern states ratify the 13th Amendment as a condition for restoration of full constitutional rights. The news-

paper believed slavery was dead, therefore ratification of the amendment was immaterial. But requiring a state to act in accordance with a federal dictate should be resisted "to the bitter end."²¹

Finally, Democrats approved the results of Johnson reconstruction. The *Detroit Free Press* calmly noted the election of "Secessionists" in Virginia. Every election in the South, it said, would turn out the same way. The people there should have self-government; since virtually all people in the South had supported Secession, the Southerners would naturally vote for secessionists. Because Southerners sincerely intended to be loyal to the United States, the *Free Press* hoped that elections there would "continue to result in favor of those who were Secessionists. . . ."²²

Thus Johnson's mild reconstruction program appeared wise to Democrats because of their view of the causes of the Civil War, their belief in the unconstitutionality of revamp-in Southern institutions, and their approval of the results of the program. On each of these points Republicans took a sharply different position. It has been shown that Republicans viewed the Civil War as occurring because of a deeply entrenched and aggressive slavocracy. Consequently they believed that a fundamental reordering of Southern institutions was necessary. Republican opposition to Johnson's program grew slowly, however, and took considerable time to develop.

From Johnson's accession to the Presidency until the assembling of Congress in December, 1865, Republican opinion neither openly opposed nor was antagonistic to Johnson's program. Writing in the *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, "Equal Rights" claimed that Johnson adopted his policy, not because it was just, but "as an experiment to test the temper and disposition of the people."²³ A month later "Loyalist" writing in the same newspaper called the Presidential policy "an ignominious failure,"²⁴ but this was not typical. Newspaper opinion characteristically was either silent, critical of specific features, or ambivalent. Republican disapproval, it should be noted, was confined to policy. There was no denunciation of Johnson personally.

The absence of criticism of administration policies in the months immediately after the new President came into office

can be easily explained. Johnson enjoyed his "honeymoon" period, prolonged perhaps because of the North's searing experience of a bitter fratricidal conflict and the assassination of Lincoln.

Doubtless another reason for softening criticism of Johnson policies was political. The *Free Press* chortled that the President's program "completely knocks the Sumner platform from under the feet of all the fanatics who, from every variety of bad motive, pretend to coincide with him. . . ."²⁵ So often did the *Free Press* portray the Republican party as hopelessly split and the President in opposition to its radical wing, that one might conclude the wish was father to the thought. Disturbed at Democratic praise of Johnson, one Republican charged that there was a "conspiracy" among Northern Democrats "to blast the good name of the President, and bring upon him the suspicion of loyal people, by besmearing him with their damaging laudation."²⁶ Overt Republican criticism of Johnson and his policy would give and comfort to Democratic foes.

Above all, Republicans believed that Johnson's policy was flexible. It was an "experiment," which would be adjusted in light of Southern reactions, Northern public opinion, and Congressional sentiment. Republicans had not forgotten Lincoln's proclivity to take important action by executive power; but they also remembered that he was ever fully cognizant of public opinion. The staunchly Republican editor of the *Flint Wolverine Citizen* thus explained his position on Johnson after the break occurred between the President and the Radicals. The editor had previously maintained silence not because he believed Johnson right or that his policies would speedily unite the country, but because of trust in his patriotism, avowed sentiments, flexibility, and responsiveness to public opinion.²⁷

Perhaps a Grand Rapids editor best expressed Michigan Republican opinion:

We advise all to wait and watch, and not be in haste to condemn or approve. . . . We have been taught by experience the wisdom of patience, and the folly of hasty judgment. Let the President's policy have a fair trial: let us trust him as he trusts the South: let the result and his action thereon approve or condemn his course.²⁸

The papers of Michigan's political leaders provide no evidence of either approval or condemnation of the President's policy in the weeks before Congress convened in December, 1865. But undoubtedly, among the politically knowledgeable, tension was rising. Statements by Republican leaders that there would be no clash between President and Congress indicate that such a clash was a distinct possibility.²⁹ The President's annual message to Congress was expected to clear the air. "No state paper," wrote Michigan's Civil War governor Austin Blair, "has been looked for with greater interest in our day. . . ."³⁰

Certainly Johnson had good reason to be pleased with his message. Public reaction to it was overwhelmingly favorable. The principal Democratic organ termed it a conservative document and predicted that it would bring "a howl of indignation from all Republicans who are not officeholders."³¹ Likewise, almost all Republican newspapers lavishly praised the message, though, ominously, there were signs of future opposition. A Washington correspondent charged that the message "does not come up to the mark of Union members, [but] no ill, feeling is excited. . . . And since he [Johnson] leaves the future to Congress, an amicable feeling prevails, while the probability of a collision with the President, seems to vanish from the public mind."³² Austin Blair more directly suggested the probability of collision by sharply criticizing fundamentals of the Presidential program. He ridiculed Johnson's contention that the Southern states still existed as sovereign entities. Blair contended that Johnson did not follow his own theory "but flies in the face of it at every step." Johnson had appointed governors, prescribed qualifications for voters, and generally controlled civil administration. Why could not Congress do the same? Blair also noted omissions in the message—notably the lack of protection for the freedmen. The President proposed turning them over "to the tender mercies of their former masters, the rebels." If Congress possessed no power under the Constitution to grant them suffrage, "is it much short of mockery," queried Blair, "to tell them that they may shortly get it as a free gift from their old masters?"³³

The *Advertiser and Tribune* believed that Johnson's mes-

sage showed that the President "sees things as he wishes them to be, rather than as they are." Naturally, he would not declare his policy a failure, though it obviously was. The paper ticked off the proof:

1. in the South "devotion to the Union is a cause of ostracism and defeat";
2. every step in reconstruction was taken under protest;
3. freedmen are without protection of law;
4. representatives sent to Congress were selected because of prominence in the rebellion.³⁴

Despite such evidence, knowledgeable men shrank from a break with the President. A man close to the Michigan Congressional delegation concluded that only harm could ensue from assaults on Johnson. A rupture between Congress and President would not improve the condition of freedmen; improvement could best occur through "harmonizing matters" between them. Although the Republican convention of 1864 had made a "poor move" in nominating Johnson, he was the President nonetheless. Many good men, reported the Washington observer, "have an abiding confidence in Andrew Johnson—more, I confess, than I have. Still the weight of evidence here is that he is all right. For the present I believe the evidence."³⁵

But the situation in the South, Johnson's actions and speeches, and public opinion influenced this correspondent—and other Republicans—to break with the President.

Numerous army officers, Freedman Bureau officials, and visitors to the South wrote their Congressmen early in 1866, all pouring forth their dismay at conditions in the former Confederacy. North Carolina, reported one Michigan soldier, was "as disloyal as before the war."³⁶ General George Custer reported that in Texas the "feeling of hostility" to the United States was "deep rooted and bitter." All who had been secessionist during the war remained secessionist. Even yet, he claimed, Texas citizens would engage in open armed hostility to the government if such opposition were practicable. An identical situation existed in Louisiana.³⁷ In Tennessee, remarked another soldier, the "Spirit of the Rebels is just as bitter as it ever was."³⁸ In Mississippi the rebel spirit was rampant: even if Christ "clothed with all the Paraphen-

naliam of Heaven with Angels for his Staff Officers was here he could not please the *Rebels*," reported one Freedmen's Bureau official, "the war closed too soon—they ought to be killed—with few exceptions every cussed one of them."³⁹

As a result of this rebellious spirit, neither loyal Southerners or Yankees were safe. According to Custer, one patriot in Texas raised the stars and stripes over his home. A hostile committee of Texans demanded that he lower the "obnoxious emblem," declaring, "We are willing to acknowledge ourselves whipped," but raising the stars and stripes was "a little too d—d strong." When the owner of the flag refused to lower it, he was killed.⁴⁰ Upon arrival at his station in Tennessee, a Freedmen's Bureau official was attacked, and two of his ribs were broken; he received many threats and pistols were fired into his room. Two prominent lawyers advised him to resign for his own good; but the Michigan veteran of 17 battles said he would stay.⁴¹ The only friends of a Mississippi Freedmen's Bureau officer were "the *poor degraded ignorant down trodden Negroes*—"⁴²

The freedom of these downtrodden Negroes was dubious. Without federal troops for protection they would again be reduced to slavery. Indeed, reported Custer, they were still being bought and sold and many were being murdered.⁴³

Because of the disorganized condition of the South after the Civil War, evidence could be marshalled to support almost any conclusion. Yet certain generalizations seem valid. Southerners could scarcely be expected to repudiate cheerfully the doctrines for which they had fought and died. Neither could they be expected to welcome as an equal, the ex-slave, or the Yankee who came to teach him. Yet Southerners readily acknowledged that they "accepted the situation." Unfortunately, however, Northern and Southern definitions of "the situation" did not coincide, notably in the matter of elected public officials. Southerners naturally turned to a man to their old leaders, former Confederates. To the victorious North, such choices demonstrated an unrepentant spirit.

Russell Alger, cavalry officer, prominent Republican, and later governor of Michigan, drew a sharp distinction between the Confederate as a battlefield foe and the ex-Confederate as an elected official.

The preservation of the union has cost too much to be thrown away now or given into the hands of its enemies.

All soldiers respect an honorable foe in the field *as a foe*. But it by no means follows that because they fought well they should now be given the power to govern. . . . On the contrary I hope they will be left where they are until they give proof of their sorrow for their sins and guarantee good behavior for the future.⁴⁴

Michigan people preferred "to see those rebels hung than to see them members of Congress," said a Michigan man, and he added, "there is no doubt the people are opposed to any such men running or helping run this government."⁴⁵ Yet President Johnson insisted that Southern representatives, many of whom were ex-Confederates, be seated in Congress. With conscious irony, newspapers repeatedly quoted Johnson's statement that treason must be made odious and traitors punished.

Michiganians were further disturbed over Johnson's in-temperate outbursts against Radical leaders. His speech, on February 22, 1866, in which he accused Radicals of conspiring to assassinate Abraham Lincoln, was particularly disturbing. "What a hell of a thing it is," blurted one constituent to his congressman.⁴⁶

Finally, Johnson's vetoes of the Freedmen's Bureau bill in February and the Civil Rights bill in March made "the separation complete."⁴⁷

These vetoes brought into focus the thorny question of Negro rights, an issue which sharply divided Michigan Republicans. A thorough examination of newspapers and letters of the period can lead to but one conclusion—only a minority of citizens advocated rights for Negroes simply because they were human. Much more typical was the abrupt demand of a disgruntled businessman: "When do you Hon Gentlemen propose to get Through Talking Nigger & give Some Little attention to public & financial affairs."⁴⁸

Many people were convinced, however, that the North had an obligation to the "loyal men" of the South and believed that it would be monstrous to turn them over to the "tender" mercies of their former masters. Hence, Congress should provide guarantees for their rights. According to a leading Michigan newspaper, such discussion about Negro rights

missed the point. "The question of mere justice to the Negro is one of minor importance," claimed the *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, and added, "it is the Union which is in need of negro suffrage. A loyal majority in the South is absolutely necessary, and it can only be obtained by making the freedmen a part of it."⁴⁹

The editor of the *Flint Wolverine Citizen* agreed. As he viewed the situation, the whites in the seceded states were traitors "in their convictions, hopes, and hates. . . ." Their defeat in the war did not change their convictions and make them loyal. Reconstruction, he insisted, should have started with the notion of "regeneration" of the people, by securing a majority of loyal people in the insurrectionary states. This could be accomplished by inducing loyal whites to emigrate to the South or by enfranchising the Negroes. Of necessity the latter method involved a gradual and conditional extension of the franchise to freedmen, reasoned the editor, to "meet the views of . . . our loyal people who have intense prejudices to deal with. . . ."⁵⁰

Obviously President Johnson and Michigan public opinion differed sharply on Reconstruction. Michigan Republicans were convinced that the South was disloyal, and that she should not have her representatives admitted into Congress until a loyal majority was created and that the status of the Negro defined by federal action. Johnson's disagreement on such fundamental issues made bitter strife inevitable.

In Washington the struggle was characterized by impassioned exchanges on the floor of Congress and ultimately by the attempted impeachment of the President. No less intense was the battle at the local level, in which the local postmaster was a key participant. A thoroughly loyal party man, he performed the function of a modern Gallup Poll, reflecting and conveying public opinion to Congressmen. Playing more than a passive role, the postmaster was also expected to mold public opinion.⁵¹

In the early stages of the conflict between President and Congress some of them counseled restraint by Congress. The Marshall postmaster, undoubtedly concerned about his own position, feared "a full grown rupture between the President and Congress, and a general beheading of all Federal office-

holders by the President. . . ." Rather than sacrifice the principle, however, he declared that he would leave the "P.O. with ease." No "true Republican" he added "serves the President."⁵²

Soon worried officeholders were reporting rumors of removal. The Ypsilanti postmaster claimed that "every copperhead" was discouraged by the President and Democrats were "scheming to supersede all Federal officers in the North." The plan was to evoke sympathy "for some poor wounded Soldier," and then urge that a federal job be found for him. An appointee for the Ypsilanti post reported he had already been selected a man who voted for Lincoln in 1860 but for his opponent in 1864 a man whose intimates were of the "bitterest Copperhead 'Stripe.'" Though sympathy for a "maimed soldier is the color & pretense, claimed the Ypsilanti official, "control of the offices in the interest of Copperheadism is the real object." Since the election in the fall of 1866 might hinge on having the right men in the right places, the incumbent postmaster expressed his concern over "this crafty & wide spread movement to get the 'sinews of war' into their [the Democrats'] own grasp."⁵³ In Monroe the scheme reportedly involved the appointment of a war Democrat and former army officer as postmaster. By this tactic the Copperheads expected to gain support for the President in his battle with Congress.⁵⁴

As a matter of fact, wholesale proscriptions of officeholders opposed to Johnson's policy did take place. Since officeholders were assessed for campaign contributions,⁵⁵ Republicans professed to be hard pressed to finance the campaign prior to Congressional elections of November, 1866. At the same time Democrats rejoiced in the fruits of patronage. A wise appointment to the postoffice at Coldwater, wrote one correspondent, "would do the *President up brown in this country.*"⁵⁶

Though Johnson failed in his efforts to swing Michigan into the Democratic column through manipulation of the patronage, nevertheless the war for the postoffices bears further examination. The unwavering stand of Republican officeholders in support of their delegation in Congress is more significant than a reflection of local public opinion.

Even more important was the willingness of officeholders to invite removal from office because of support for Radical policies. Those who held office were political sophisticates who doubtless expected to receive appointments in the future. When they tested the political winds and accepted removal, they were not only making a deliberate judgment on present public opinion, they were also making a shrewd assessment of the future. Finally, in view of the importance placed on patronage at this time, the wholesale proscriptions indicate the intensity of political warfare between President and Congress. The proscriptions convinced Republicans that President Johnson was attempting nothing less than the destruction of their party. To loyal partisans the Republican party and its goals of freedom and union were as sacred as Holy Writ: Johnson's assault on the vitals of party organization elevated the conflict to something far more important than mere politics.

Governor Crapo was never more in earnest when he addressed a July 4th gathering of veterans and civilians in 1866. The war was not over, he told the assembled multitude; the conflict had simply entered another phase. Having lost on the battlefield, the aggressive slavocracy had shifted to the political arena. The Republican party, the party of freedom and union, was still locked in mortal conflict with the forces of slavery and disunion.⁵⁷

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² S. Y. Cutcherson to Zachariah Chandler, Ypsilanti, Michigan, May 29, 1866, Zachariah Chandler Papers, Library of Congress. Microfilm examined in Clarke History Library, Central Michigan University.

³ See W. R. Brock, *An American Crisis* (London and New York, 1963) pp. 6-7.

⁴ For an illustration of this historical theory, see the speech by Congressman John Longyear, *Congressional Globe*, 38th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 2013-14.

⁵ In a lengthy 4th of July oration Crapo presented Republican views on the war and Reconstruction. For the speech, see (Flint) *Wolverine Citizen*, July 14, 1866. For background of the speech, see my "A Fourth of July Portrait," *Detroit Historical Society Bulletin*, XXIII (summer, 1967) 4-10.

⁶ Edward W. Barber, "The Story of Emancipation," *Michigan Pioneer and*

Historical Collections, XXIX (1901), 596-97. Beaman's speech may be found in *Congressional Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 1551-55.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 2011-14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-96.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2459.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38th Cong., 2nd sess., p. 554.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2903.

¹² See speech by Fernando Beaman, *ibid.*, 37th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 1551-55.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 38th Cong., 1st sess., p. 3349.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., p. 1016.

¹⁵ John Driggs to Austin Blair, E. Saginaw, April 15, 1865, Blair Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

¹⁶ Samuel Lacy to Austin Blair, Marshall, April 21, 1865, *ibid.*

¹⁷ The various quotations from Chandler are in Zachariah Chandler to his wife, Washington, April 23, 25, 1865, Chandler Papers.

¹⁸ For these proclamations, see James Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, (10 vols., Washington, 1909) VI, 310-14. A perceptive analysis of the proclamations may be found in Kenneth Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York, 1965) pp. 62 f.

¹⁹ *Detroit Free Press*, March 20, 1866.

²⁰ Robert McClelland to James Miller, Detroit, October 4, 1862, Wendell Papers, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

²¹ *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1865.

²² *Ibid.*, July 26, 1865. Of necessity the role of Northern Democrats in the reconstruction of the South was limited. Hence, the *Free Press* urged Democrats to be "the eagles of the nation, soaring far above the scramble for government pap," scanning every move made beneath them. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1865.

²³ *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, July 20, 1865.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1865.

²⁵ *Detroit Free Press*, May 31, 1865.

²⁶ Letter to the editor by "Plymouth," *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, May 26, 1865.

²⁷ *Wolverine Citizen*, February 24, 1866.

²⁸ Jeremy W. Kilar, "The Lost Alliance: Michigan and the Presidency of Andrew Johnson," (unpublished), M. A. Thesis, Central Michigan University, 1967), p. 51, quoting *Grand Rapids Daily Eagle*, September 15, 1865. The editorial was entitled "The President's Experiment."

²⁹ For example, see the statement by Senator Howard, *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, November 23, 1865.

³⁰ Blair wrote under the pseudonym "Walsingham" in *ibid.*, December 11, 1865. Blair was employed to write a narticle a week at \$10 per column. The offer to Blair was triggered by news that Senators Chandler and Howard were starting a rival paper, and the *Advertiser & Tribune* wished to retain its ascendancy as a leader of the press in the state. To Blair was offered the opportunity of influencing the politics of the state and also adding "to the income of our (at present) barren & profitless profession." E. C. Walker to Austin Blair, Detroit, October 4, 1865, Blair Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

³¹ *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1865.

³² *Wolverine Citizen*, December 17, 1865.

³³ *Detroit Advertiser & Tribune*, December 11, 1865.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, December 21, 1865.

³⁵ Edward W. Barber to Blair, Washington, January 8, 1866, Blair Papers.

³⁶ This soldier sought to keep the Michigan press "posted up in regards to North Carolina *Copperhead* ticks, Loyal ticks and all other kinds of ticks which are 'legion' [in] North Carolina today." A. H. Proctor to John Longyear, Raleigh, North Carolina, March 16, 1866, Longyear Papers, Historical Collections, University of Michigan.

³⁷ George Custer to Zachariah Chandler, Austin, Texas, January 8, 14, 1866, Chandler Papers.

³⁸ John Seage to Chandler, Murfreesboro, May 16, 1866, *ibid.*

³⁹ John Knox to Green, Meridian, Mississippi, January 20, 1866, Longyear Papers.

⁴⁰ Custer to Chandler, January 8, 1866, Chandler Papers.

⁴¹ Seage to Chandler, May 16, 1866, *ibid.*

⁴² Knox to Green, January 20, 1866, Longyear Papers.

⁴³ Custer to Chandler, January 14, 1866, Chandler Papers.

⁴⁴ Russell A. Alger to Chandler, Washington, June 25, 1866, Chandler Papers.

⁴⁵ E. Longyear to John Longyear, Lansing, February 16, 1866, Longyear Papers.

⁴⁶ H. B. Shank to Longyear, Lansing, February 26, [1866], *ibid.*

⁴⁷ An editorial on Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Bill was titled "The Separation Complete"; Lansing *Republican*, April 4, 1866.

⁴⁸ David Whitfield to Longyear, n. p., January 27, 1866, Longyear Papers.

⁴⁹ *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, July 3, 1865.

⁵⁰ *Wolverine Citizen*, March 10, 1866.

⁵¹ See, for example, the *Detroit Free Press*, February 19, 1866.

⁵² Seth Lewis to Longyear, Marshall, March 21, 1866, Longyear Papers. For a discussion of the role of postmasters, see Eric McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, (Chicago, 1960), pp. 377-94.

⁵³ D. B. Greene to Longyear, Ypsilanti, March 28, 1866, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Isaac Christiancy to Chandler, Monroe, March 15, 1866, Chandler Papers.

⁵⁵ A printed statement from Republican State Central Committee, dated October 4, 1866, claimed that "Heretofore the State Committee have mainly depended on assessment of Federal office holders to meet the unavoidable expenses of an election contest." With such resources unavailable, candidates for office had to be assessed. The deputy superintendent of the Sault Canal was assessed 5% of his salary. Scranton Papers, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

⁵⁶ W. A. Jackson to John Parkhurst, Coldwater, July 20, 1866, Parkhurst Papers, Historical Collections, University of Michigan.

⁵⁷ *Wolverine Citizen*, July 14, 1866.

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN AND RACISM

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"'Let the people rule' is a slogan for which our people can afford to stand—those who advocate this doctrine are traveling toward the dawn." So wrote William Jennings Bryan in January, 1918.¹ This was one of the central ideas of the Great Commoner which he stressed not only during the "war to make the world safe for democracy" but again and again throughout his adult life. "As I understand democracy," he stated many years earlier, "it means the rule of the people—a democracy that is founded upon the doctrine of human brotherhood—a democracy that exists for one purpose, and that the defense of human rights."² It would be extremely difficult to select from his political career, 1890 to his death in 1925, a concept which he emphasized more than this.

In this light it is surprising and ironical to discover a contradiction in his life that certainly did not square with his much-vaunted talk about democracy and rule by the people. This was Bryan's attitude toward race relations. There is a further paradox and contradiction in his attitude in that he was not a consistent racist. In some respects, as the following pages will indicate, he was generous and broad-minded; and in others, especially as regards the Negroes, his attitude was acceptable to the strict segregationist. This phase of Bryan's social ideas has been touched on very little by his biographers and other writers, and the purpose in this paper is to explore the Commoner's attitudes on race, particularly Negro-white relations.

Bryan of course was not unique in his failure to square his racial ideas with the contemporary emphasis on democracy and rule by the people. Many of his fellow-progressives shared the contradiction. In fact, one of the ironies of American history is that at the same time that progressivism was reaching its height—the second decade of the twentieth century—Negro rights, in terms of the expectations of the Civil War and reconstruction period, were reaching a new low. At