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Re: Outline/Notes

An End of an Era
(Abandonment of Reconstruction)

I. Withering Away of Northern Support(1868-1874)

A. General Statement: Burden of the failure of Reconstruction to deal with the central issue of Reconstruction--the role of the black man in American society--has to rest largely w/ the North, and the Republican party in particular.

B. Changing Profile of the Republican Party

1. advent of Grant and "Grantism" The Republicans were running scared in the election of 1868 and they elected the greatest Union War hero--U.S. Grant.(the hero of Cold Harbor, The Wilderness, Vicksburg, etc. This was a continuation of the American penchant to reward her military heroes by awarding them the White House.) In Grant's case, the General sort of expected this national recognition and treated his ascendancy to the Presidency as a gift from the American people.

2. His talents. Grant knew horse flesh but he knew nothing about human nature and even less about politics. He was probably the worst president of the 19th century.

3. Death of some of the dedicated Republicans and supporters of Lincoln and Congressional Reconstruction--Stevens(1867) and Sumner(1874), Chase(1873).

In their place came a new breed of Republican--sometimes called the Stalwarts. Men whose chief (and only concern) was office and to enjoy the spoils of office (Spoilsmen). To them the greatest end of politics was party victory. They sneered at the idea of principle in politics. In place of principles and ideals they looked to support issues that were popular. They aligned themselves and the party generally with programs that supported northern business interests. For them the war was over and it was time to get about the business of postwar America which was business.

C. Liberals dissent the party

1. in the 1872 election former Republican liberals bolted the party in reaction to Grantism (see Text for all the scandals surrounding the President and his advisers). Of course they lost in their attempts to return the Republican party to reformers

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and left the party in the venal hands of the Stalwarts. . .

II. Counterrevolution in the South

A. Rise of the Klu Klux Klan

1. Klan got its beginnings in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866. It was originally founded as a kind of social club for former Confederate officers. But it time it soon changed into a paramilitary organization to reek terror and havor against the Reconstruction Governments in the South. Grant and the Federal Government took some action against Klan terror prior to the 1872 election. In 1870-71 the Congress passed the Enforcement Acts (Giving the federal govt. the right to suspend habeus corpus and declare martial law in those areas where Klan terror threatened the normal processes of government. Grant and Republicans were alert enough to realize that if the Republicans were to remain in control of the White Hose they needed to protect the party in trhe South.

But this was the last intercession by the federal govt. in the South.

B. The "Mississippi Plan" (1875)

1. The South was determined to achieve home rule in the region. This was made easier after the 1872 election and becuae of the removal of numbers of federal troops from the South.

1867--20,000 Union troops in the South
1876--6,000

KKK had pretty much of a freeride in their campiagn of terror. The only resistance they faced was from local militia forces of armed groups of Republicans. In those states where Republican Governors authorized the formation of politically reliable militia companies Republican govt. might hold off the Klan terror.

The Klan took many forms: Regulators, Knights of the White Camelia (La.), the Black Calvary (Alabama). . . While the names changed from state to state and region to region there purpose was the same--the restoration and maintenance of white supremacy in every aspect of Southern life. In time the Kln became in effect the terrorist arm of the Democrtatic party in the South.

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Dominat^H white opinion supported its bloody actions or were afraid to oppose it. It was impossible to get a sheriff to arrest, a grand jury to indict, a district attorney to prosecute, a witness to testify, and a jury to convict Klan terrorists.

In the history of Reconstruction there is much to demonstrate the extent that government is founded on force, and stable government on overwhelming force.

III. The Compromise of 1877

A. The Setting: The Disputed election of 1876

B. The Compromise of 1877