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*Victims of Circumstance: An Interpretation of
Changing Attitudes Toward Republican
Policy Makers and Reconstruction*

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WHO are the best hated men in American history? Until about 1960 Republican congressmen of the Reconstruction era probably held that title. They seem to have favored the right things. They fought to preserve the Union in the face of immense obstacles, destroyed slavery, protected defenseless freedmen, and expanded the constitutional liberties and rights of all Americans. During their own time, most educated northerners regarded them as the principal guardians of the nation. Yet historians generally have sharply, indeed, angrily criticized the methods and motives of Republican Reconstructors. Moreover, historians have condemned them virtually without trial. Historians have only begun to realize that, despite half a century of writing on Reconstruction, they know very little about the attitudes, actions, and aspirations of most Republican congressmen.¹

The reputation of the authors of Reconstruction first began to decline as war hatreds cooled and northern racism began to grow more intense. Respectable northerners who once had supported the Republican policy began to charge that Congress had inflicted undeserved penalties on southern whites and had bestowed unearned rights on uncomprehending southern blacks. Sensitive to these criticisms, several of the Republicans who had helped shape the policy attempted to justify their action.² Their method was simple; they blamed their opponents. Republican congressmen, they insisted, had not hated white southerners. They had been concerned solely

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¹ For an excellent analysis that complements this one, see Harold M. Hyman's "Introduction," in Harold M. Hyman, ed., *The Radical Republicans and Reconstruction, 1861-1870* (New York, 1967), xvii-lxviii.

² James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress: From Lincoln to Garfield* (2 vols., Norwich, Conn., 1884-1886); John Sherman, *Recollections of Forty Years in the House, Senate and Cabinet: An Autobiography* (Chicago, 1895).

with protecting the Union and preserving the freedom of emancipated blacks. They soon had learned, however, that Andrew Johnson and northern Democrats had rekindled the spirit of arrogance in former Confederate leaders. Increasingly certain that they could reclaim their former power in the Union and re-enslave freedmen, those leaders had rudely refused to cooperate with Congress. They also had manifested a growing hatred for southern Unionists, white and black. This intransigence, this lingering "spirit of rebellion," had compelled Republicans to reconstruct southern politics thoroughly on the basis of Negro suffrage. Perhaps the policy had been unwise, but at the time it had seemed essential.³

These apologists were able and persuasive, but at the end of the nineteenth century they could not check the growing northern condemnation of Republican Reconstruction. Northern critics viewed these Republican assertions with extreme skepticism. Relatively removed from the decisions of the era, eager to aid the cause of sectional reconciliation, and steeped in the racial prejudices of their age, William A. Dunning, John W. Burgess, James F. Rhodes, and other "nationalist" historians believed that it was "impossible to say to one side, 'You were right,' and to the other 'You were wrong.'"⁴ They thought that the blame should be distributed evenly among all participants in the controversy.

The nationalist historians did not reject everything that the Republicans had said about themselves and their opponents. They believed that Republican decisions had sprung in part from a genuine concern for freedmen and the Union. They even praised moderate Republicans for their restrained, creative leadership in the early phases of the struggle with Johnson; and they condemned Democrats and, especially, Andrew Johnson for failing to cooperate with moderate congressional Republicans. They also admitted that after the war southerners had done many foolish and a few outrageous things when they should have waited meekly for northern leaders to decide upon peace terms.

Unlike Republican apologists, however, nationalist historians refused to believe that southerners had failed to recognize defeat or thought they could restore slavery. Their actions had been only natural responses to postwar conditions. Certainly those actions had not justified the Republican reconstruction policy, which nationalists considered vindictive, partisan, and, insofar as it established Negro suffrage, misguided and cruel. If southern

³ A few Republicans even declared that Reconstruction had not been drastic enough. George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840-1872* (Chicago, 1884).

⁴ Charles Ernest Chadsey, *The Struggle Between President Johnson and Congress Over Reconstruction* (New York, 1896), 126.

whites were irksome, Republicans were irascible—far too willing to follow the lead of the “radical” advocates of harsh and proscriptive legislation.⁵

By providing a valuable corrective to Republican interpretations of the origins of Reconstruction, nationalistic historians pointed the way to a clearer, less biased understanding of the era. Unfortunately, few of their younger contemporaries could follow their lead.

Between 1900 and 1915, Reconstruction became the concern principally of the young, white southern historians often referred to as the “Dunning School” because most studied with Dunning at Columbia. Actually, the group ought to be called the “New South School.” The interests and interpretations of its members seem to have been shaped largely by the emotional and psychological needs of the “New South.” Born to middle- and upper-class families in the 1870s and 1880s, they grew up in a colonial society that was envious of northern power and prosperity, imitative of northern values, and painfully aware of the South’s apparent backwardness and brutality. Sensitive and intelligent, they were determined to justify to themselves and to a disdainful North the shortcomings of their section. They could not easily point to slavery or the Civil War, since the prevailing mood of nationalism generally compelled southerners to bear quietly the responsibility for both.⁶ Nor could they point to the degrading effects of segregation; it was one of the principal features of southern life that they wished to justify.⁷ Inevitably their attention focused on the one phase of southern history for which northerners seemed almost eager to assume full responsibility—Reconstruction.⁸

⁵ John W. Burgess, *Reconstruction and the Constitution, 1866-1876* (New York, 1902); William Archibald Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction and Related Topics* (New York, 1897); William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic, 1865-1877* (New York, 1907); James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States: From the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877* (7 vols., New York, 1893-1906), VI, VII. For examples of histories of northern decision-making written from a less impartial point of view, see Eben G. Scott, *Reconstruction During the Civil War* (Boston, 1895); Charles H. McCarthy, *Lincoln’s Plan of Reconstruction* (New York, 1901). Eben G. Scott was a conservative Constitutionalist; Charles H. McCarthy was a Republican partisan.

⁶ Some southerners, U. B. Phillips for example, did study slavery and its effect on southern life.

⁷ Those who did attack segregation, like Lewis H. Blair and George Washington Cable, were either ignored or denounced fiercely. C. Vann Woodward, “Introduction,” Lewis H. Blair, *A Southern Prophecy: The Prosperity of the South Dependent upon the Elevation of the Negro (1889)* (Boston, 1964), xi-xlvi; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951), 163-64.

⁸ On the post-Reconstruction South, see Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 107-290; Paul H. Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (Boston, 1937), 170-219; W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York, 1941), 148-92; Thomas J. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (New York, 1962), 187-94, 265. Manifestations of this compulsion to vindicate the South were numerous in the 1890-1915 period. For example, see

The members of the New South School were not primarily interested in how or why Republicans had arrived at their reconstruction policy. They were more concerned with showing how that policy had devastated their respective states.⁹ Most did touch upon the question, however, and a few gave it a good deal of attention.¹⁰ Eventually they managed to revise the nationalists’ view of Republican policy formulation in three important respects. First, they exonerated white southerners from all responsibility for the Republican policy. Convinced that former Confederates had accepted their defeat, the members of the New South School insisted they had posed no threat to the Union. Reconciled to emancipation, the southerners had not dreamed of restoring slavery. Left alone, they would doubtless have dealt justly with the Negroes without the stimulus of northern pressure. True, southern whites had refused to cooperate with Congress, but Republicans had never promised that cooperative states would be readmitted to full statehood. Consequently, southerners had been forced to judge Republican demands on their merits, and they had had none.¹¹ Second, the members of the New South School placed primary responsibility for congressional Re-

the early numbers of *Sewanee Review* (founded 1892) and *South Atlantic Quarterly* (founded 1902); the numerous titles of vindications in Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 488-95, and Buck, *Road to Reunion*, 196-219; and the massive defense in Julian Alvin Carroll Chandler and others, eds., *The South in the Building of the Nation: A History of the Southern States Designed to Record the South’s Part in the Making of the American Nation; to Portray the Character and Genius, to Chronicle the Achievements and Progress and to Illustrate the Life and Traditions of the Southern People* (12 vols., Richmond, Va., 1909).

⁹ Between 1898 and 1915, the following studies by southerners of Reconstruction in the South appeared: James Walter Fertig, *The Secession and Reconstruction in Tennessee* (Chicago, 1898); James Wilford Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York, 1901); Edwin C. Wooley, *The Reconstruction of Georgia* (New York, 1901); Hamilton J. Eckenrode, *The Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction* (Baltimore, 1904); Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (New York, 1905); John Porter Hollis, *The Early Period of Reconstruction in South Carolina* (Baltimore, 1905); John S. Reynolds, *Reconstruction in South Carolina 1865-1877* (Columbia, 1905); William S. Myers, *The Self-Reconstruction of Maryland, 1864-1867* (Baltimore, 1909); Charles William Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas* (New York, 1910); John R. Ficklin, *History of Reconstruction in Louisiana (Through 1868)* (Baltimore, 1910); William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913); J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina* (New York, 1914); C. Mildred Thompson, *Reconstruction in Georgia, Economic, Social, Political, 1865-1872* (New York, 1915). In addition, about a dozen dissertations were written but not published.

¹⁰ Horace Edgar Flack, *The Adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment* (Baltimore, 1908); John Mabray, *The Legislative and Judicial History of the Fifteenth Amendment* (Baltimore, 1909), and Benjamin Burks Kendrick, *The Journal of the Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction, 39th Congress 1865-1867* (New York, 1914). The revisionist interpretation, which these studies eventually produced, is presented most succinctly in Walter Lynwood Fleming, *The Sequel of Appomattox: A Chronicle of the Reunion of the States* (New Haven, 1919).

¹¹ Kendrick, *Journal*, 351.

construction on a single segment of the Republican party, the radical Republicans. Though they did not overlook the moderate leaders or minimize their influence, the New South School insisted that radical Republicans ultimately were behind every important congressional decision, every presidential misstep, every misrepresentation of southerners, black and white. In particular, the New South School emphasized the role of Thaddeus Stevens. In these writings Stevens became what he was in the southern tradition: the "great *Radical* of them all," the "dictator" House Republicans "faithfully followed from the beginning of the struggle over reconstruction until the President was completely vanquished."¹² Third, the New South School managed to simplify drastically the motives of Republican legislators. Reared to hate Reconstruction and its authors, the southerners simply could not believe that Republicans honestly cared either for the Union or the Negroes. Perhaps a few Republican congressmen felt "a sincere or pretended affection for the negroes in the South"; perhaps a few even feared that the return of the southern states would somehow imperil the Union. But it was not likely. Republican professions, the New South School held, had been merely screens to mask their real motives: vindictiveness and hunger for power.¹³

Scholarly interest in Reconstruction had declined sharply by 1915. Northerners generally seemed to regard the subject as one of special interest only to southerners.¹⁴ Southerners, however, generally had lost interest in documenting the horrors of the era. Many topics remained untreated. Many good teachers, including Dunning himself, stood ready to direct the work, but pressures had eased. By 1915, most northerners had acquiesced in the

¹² *Ibid.*, 168, 169. For a comparable literary view of Thaddeus Stevens, see Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (Garden City, 1967).

¹³ Kendrick, *Journal*, 136, 137.

¹⁴ Despite William A. Dunning's efforts to present Reconstruction as a national phenomenon, northern historians refused to take much interest in the subject. In addition to McCarthy and the Nationalists, the following authors published studies of northern decision-making: David Miller Dewitt, *The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson: Seventeenth President of the United States* (New York, 1903); Paul Leland Haworth, *The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Presidential Election of 1876* (Cleveland, 1906); George H. Porter, *Ohio Politics During the Civil War Period* (New York, 1911); Harriette M. Dilla, *The Politics of Michigan, 1865-1878* (New York, 1912); James Schouler, *History of the United States of America Under the Constitution* (7 vols., New York, 1913); Homer Adolph Stebbins, *A Political History of the State of New York, 1865-1869* (New York, 1913); Edith Ellen Ware, *Political Opinion in Massachusetts During Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1916); Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *A History of the United States Since the Civil War* (5 vols., New York, 1917-1922). But these studies did not inspire the same interest among scholars as Reconstruction in the South. Since these books lacked a unifying theme or purpose, they did not inspire a new direction in Reconstruction scholarship.

South's solution to the race question and acknowledged the region's handicaps. In the South, rising prosperity had eased social and economic tensions. Southern Democrats were playing a vital part in the Progressive movement, and a southern historian was President of the United States. No longer on the defensive, young southerners abruptly lost interest in detailing the harm done to the South when the North and the Negro had tried to rule.¹⁵

Between 1915 and 1930, despite the paucity of substantive work on Reconstruction, the historical reputation of Republican decision-makers nevertheless continued to decline. Principally, this development sprang from the growing influence of the Progressive historians, who generally shared several characteristics. Like the men of the New South School, they were usually young and assertive spokesmen of a colonial region—the Midwest—who resented the economic imperialism of the Northeast. Progressive in their politics, they saw themselves as the champions of the people (that is, of the substantial middle class) engaged in a war to save democracy and economic opportunity from the corporate giants of finance capitalism. Witnesses to the corruption and conservatism of regular party organizations, they regarded professional politicians as the cynical agents of the plutocracy. Deeply involved in an age of economic abuse and influenced by Marxist thought, they believed that economic self-interest lay at the base of most human actions and of all great political movements. Convinced that history properly understood could be a powerful agent of change, they wanted to write a history of America that would help the nation achieve a greater degree of social and economic justice.¹⁶

¹⁵ George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 1-32; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 456-81; Cash, *The Mind of the South*, 193-243. Between 1915, when Mildred Thompson's study of Georgia appeared, and 1932, when Francis Butler Simkins and Robert Hilliard Woody published their revisionist study, *South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, 1932), only six scholars wrote monographic studies of Reconstruction in the South: Ella Lonn, *Reconstruction in Louisiana After 1868* (New York, 1918); Richard L. Norton, *The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1865-1902* (Charlottesville, 1919); Thomas S. Staples, *Reconstruction in Arkansas, 1862-1874* (New York, 1923); E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill, 1926); A. A. Taylor, "The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History*, IX (July, Oct. 1924), 241-364, 381-569; A. A. Taylor, "The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia," *ibid.*, XI (April, July 1926), 243-415, 425-537; Walter L. Fleming, *The Freedmen's Savings Bank: A Chapter in the Economic History of the Negro Race* (Chapel Hill, 1927). Of these authors, Ella Lonn was a northerner, A. A. Taylor was a Negro, Walter L. Fleming was one of the early founders of the New South School. Thomas S. Staples, a southerner, actually began his study before 1915.

¹⁶ John Higham, "The Rise of Progressive History," and "The Ascendancy of Progressive History," John Higham and others, *History* (Englewood Cliffs, 1965), 171-97. John Higham's discussion should be supplemented with David Easton, *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science* (New York, 1953), 171-99; Charles Crowe, "The Emergence of Progressive History," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVII (Jan.-

Their writings reflected these attitudes. Though determined to transcend the "barren" political history" written by their elders, their perception of reality was severely limited.¹⁷ Accustomed to thinking in terms of the muck-raking literature of the era, they believed that reality was sordid, hidden, and grounded on economic self-interest. The Progressive historians viewed American history as an unfolding conflict among three sections—the South, the Northeast, and the West—and three economic classes—the southern plantation aristocracy, the northeastern capitalists, and the farmers and mechanics of every region, but primarily of the West. Generally, before the Civil War, western farmers and southern planters had cooperated to restrict northeastern capitalists. During the 1850s, however, the capitalists managed to win western support and to oust the planters from control of the national government. Their instrument was the Republican party. When the planters tried to escape the economic vassalage that the election of Lincoln presaged, civil war resulted. Before it ended, the plantation aristocracy virtually was destroyed.

If Reconstruction is approached from this direction, the role of Republican legislators in the Progressive synthesis is obvious. They were the agents of northeastern capitalism who used their political power to consolidate the economic and political gains the capitalists had made as a result of secession and war. Taking advantage of the South's helplessness and the gulf that war had placed between the South and the West, they kept the former Confederates out of Congress while they secured for big business higher tariffs, more subsidies, more favorable currency and banking legislation, and the protection from state legislatures provided by the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment. Then they enfranchised black men in the South to prevent southern whites from disturbing the new economic system that Republicans had created.

By the end of the 1920s, this interpretation of Reconstruction had appeared in at least two influential surveys of American history and was being presented with increasing frequency in college and university courses. As it gained wider acceptance, the reputation of Republican policy-makers of the Reconstruction era declined apace.¹⁸

March 1966), 109-24; Richard Hofstadter, "Charles Beard and the Constitution," Howard K. Beale, ed., *Charles A. Beard: An Appraisal* (Lexington, 1954), 75-92; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York, 1955), 173-212; Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's* (New Haven, 1950), 277-309; Morton White, *Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism* (Boston, 1957), 11-58, 107-27.

¹⁷ Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York, 1935), 19.

¹⁸ A. M. Simons, *Social Forces in American History* (New York, 1926); Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (2 vols., New York, 1927).

A second cause of this continuing decline was the appearance in the late 1920s of four unabashedly partisan historians who set out to rescue the historical reputation of Andrew Johnson. The three most influential of these Johnson revisionists—Robert W. Winston, George F. Milton, and Claude G. Bowers—shared several significant characteristics.¹⁹ All three were active Democrats, strongly committed to the agrarianism of Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and Andrew Johnson. All three had deep southern sympathies, particularly Winston, who lived in Johnson's birthplace in North Carolina, and Milton, who lived near Johnson's adopted state, Tennessee. Finally, all three were professional journalists who eagerly catered to the tastes of the new mass history reading public of the 1920s, which preferred easily understood, vivid history, with a biographical emphasis. Consequently, they shared a tendency to oversimplify, over-dramatize, and over-personalize complicated social and political processes.²⁰

In view of these similarities it is not surprising that the tone, arguments, and conclusions of these writers also were strikingly similar. Convinced that Johnson was perhaps the most poorly understood, poorly treated figure in American history, they stressed that he had suffered defeat and disgrace because he had fought to achieve the generous peace Lincoln had envisioned. Determined to vindicate the President from Republican slanders and the accusations of historians, they uniformly minimized the importance of Johnson's errors, blamed them on others, or insisted that they were not errors at all. Just as uniformly they condemned the actions and motives of congressional Republicans. Satisfied that the struggle to control Reconstruction was essentially a contest between good and evil, they cleared away distracting, confusing ambiguities, complexities, and nuances, and reduced the politics of Reconstruction to a personal war between an honest, generous, statesmanlike President and dishonest, hateful, partisan "Radicals" (a word which, unlike previous historians, they consistently capitalized). In the pro-

¹⁹ George Fort Milton, "Canonization of a Maligned President," *Independent*, CXXI (Sept. 1, 1928), 200-02, 217; George Fort Milton, *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (New York, 1930); Lloyd Paul Stryker, *Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage* (New York, 1929); Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln* (Cambridge, 1929); Robert W. Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot* (New York, 1928). In tone and content, Lloyd Paul Stryker's study is like the others, but he was born and reared in Chicago and became a lawyer and a minor Republican party-worker.

²⁰ Higham, *History*, 74-82. For discussions of changing attitudes toward Andrew Johnson, see Willard Hays, "Andrew Johnson's Reputation," *East Tennessee Historical Society, Publications*, No. 31 (1959), 1-31, and No. 32 (1960), 18-50; Carmen Anthony Notaro, "History of the Biographic Treatment of Andrew Johnson in the Twentieth Century," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (Summer 1965), 143-55; and Albert Castel, "Andrew Johnson: His Historiographical Rise and Fall," *Mid-America*, XLV (July 1963), 175-84.

cess, they virtually ignored moderate Republicans, though earlier historians generally had assigned them a prominent part in at least the early phases of Reconstruction politics.²¹

The historical reputation of Republican legislators did not long remain at the low point it had reached by the end of the 1920s. Soon it sank lower. During the 1930s, Reconstruction became once again a popular subject. Scholarly interest in Republican congressmen and their decisions increased sharply. By 1940, the Republican authors of Reconstruction had become easily the most despised men in American history.

The historian who did most to revive scholarly interest in Republicans and their policy was Howard K. Beale, who was by background and training the very model of a second-generation Progressive historian. Born in 1899, Beale grew up in Chicago during the blustering, bracing period when it was the center of an exciting intellectual subculture. At the University of Chicago, where he spent his undergraduate years, Beale read Charles A. Beard's startling discoveries about the economic origins of the Constitution and Jeffersonian Democracy. There, too, he came into close contact with the South's leading Progressive historian, William E. Dodd. From Chicago, Beale went to Harvard, where he was captivated by Frederick Jackson Turner.²²

These facts provide the key to understanding the principal purposes of Beale's now classic monograph, *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, which first appeared in 1930. First, Beale wanted to show that the struggle between Republican leaders and Johnson only incidentally concerned the "South and its post-war problems." Primarily, "here was really in a new phase the familiar American struggle of East against West, old settled region against frontier, business against agriculture, city against country, 'haves' against 'have nots,' that made a civil war of the American Revolution, that turned Jeffersonians against Hamiltonians, Jacksonian Democrats against Whigs, and more recently farm bloc against Wall Street."²³ Second, he wanted to establish Andrew Johnson as a proto-Populist—a champion of the agrarian masses—who had tried to protect the people from the exploitive aims of the northeastern business "aristocracy."²⁴ Finally, he wanted to explain why so many of the northern

²¹ The best, or worst, example of all these tendencies appears in Bowers, *The Tragic Era*, which became by far the most popular book of the group.

²² In the "Foreword to the 1958 Edition," Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York, 1930), ix-x, Beale speaks of the influence that both William E. Dodd and Frederick Jackson Turner exerted upon him.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5, 145.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-50.

masses ultimately deserted their champion to vote for the Republican representatives of their exploiters.²⁵

Beale's answer to this last problem takes up over half of the book. It may properly be regarded as the central thesis of *The Critical Year*—a fact of fundamental importance in assessing the validity of the Republican image that prevailed in the 1930s. Mistakenly, historians commonly assume that Beale's central thesis is that Republican legislators kept the southern states out of Congress and reconstructed the region to protect the economic interests of "the rising industrial groups of the North."²⁶ Actually, this is not his thesis. It is his main assumption. Beale made this assertion repeatedly, but he never tried to prove it. It remains an untested working hypothesis.

Beale's failure to test such a damning accusation, though surprising now, is not difficult to explain. He was so steeped in the conclusions of the New South School and so committed to the Progressive point of view that it just never occurred to him that the assumption might be incorrect. When he discussed the motives of "the people" in the North who finally opposed Johnson, Beale generously and perceptively suggested a dozen sources of sincere if misguided commitments to Reconstruction.²⁷ But he could not believe that professional politicians could be affected by the same fears, emotions, and hopes as honest folk. Unable to blink away the apparent sincerity of Charles Sumner's devotion to the cause of the Negro, Beale traced it to anti-southern "bigotry." As for the others, "the two major issues motivating their campaign were their stand on various economic questions and the desire to secure the Republican Party in power." Perhaps a few Republicans were sincere, "but not many of the leading campaigners could honestly have believed that the Radical Party was the nation and that opposition to it constituted treason. With them the terms 'traitor' and 'Copperhead' were mere party catchwords."²⁸

This conviction enabled Beale to join the Johnson revisionists in simplifying reconstruction politics. Beale believed that virtually all Republican legislators were cynical agents of northeastern capitalism. Consequently, differences that separated Republicans were relatively insignificant. Some were more "extreme" than others, of course, but, compared to Johnson, all were "Radicals." This attitude permitted Beale largely to ignore the moder-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 59, 64, 112, 114, 145.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 225.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 140. Then overlooked and since forgotten, these suggestions provide a splendid starting point for future attempts to understand the emotional and psychological roots of Republican radicalism.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 145, 360.

ate Republicans and intraparty quarrels. Like the Johnson revisionists, he told the story as a struggle between Johnson and the "Radicals."²⁹

Blinded by his biases, Beale was highly vulnerable to criticism. Had American historians been so inclined, they could have challenged every important proposition in *The Critical Year*. But historians did not receive the book critically. Despite Beale's apparent biases and unproved assumptions about the motives of Republican legislators, his contemporaries welcomed the book with enthusiastic praise. Within a short time, it became the single most respected work on the origins of Reconstruction. Its arguments and assertions went largely unchallenged for twenty-five years.³⁰

This astonishing success can also be traced to the Great Depression. In the intellectual climate generated by the massive failure of American capitalism, the ideas and attitudes that originally had produced the Progressive point of view hardened. Most historians soon acquired anti-Republican and anti-business prejudices that made Beale's seem mild by comparison. Suddenly the weaknesses of the book became its principal strengths, and historians found it enormously difficult to doubt Beale's assertions. Soon other scholars amplified and reiterated Beale's hypothesis. By the end of the 1930s, it was almost universally believed to be true.³¹

Even as Beale wrote, however, emerging attitudes were eroding the foundations upon which the total condemnation of Republican policy-makers rested. Perhaps the most important development was the revival among northern intellectuals of a general contempt for southern institutions and habits. Since the first decade of the twentieth century, this hostility had been in abeyance. Northerners generally had accepted southerners on their own

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51, 54, 74-75, 80, 82-83, 88-90, 212. Indicative of the tendency to minimize the power of moderates is Beale's treatment of William Pitt Fessenden, whom he mentions less than half a dozen times and only in passing. Beale did not even mention that Fessenden was chairman of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction.

³⁰ See Charles R. Lingley in the *American Historical Review*, XXXVI (Oct. 1930), 171-73; Homer C. Hockett, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVII (March 1931), 635-37. Both Charles R. Lingley and Homer C. Hockett suggest that Beale may have given too much weight to the economic motive, but neither really challenges Beale's assertions. The only writer seriously to object to the economic interpretation was W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York, 1935), 182, 185-87, who insisted that some Republican politicians were moved by idealistic considerations.

³¹ Particularly influential articles were William B. Hesseltine, "Economic Factors in the Abandonment of Reconstruction," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXII (Sept. 1935), 191-210; Helen J. and Harry Williams, "Wisconsin Republicans and Reconstruction, 1865-70," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (Sept. 1939), 17-39. Unquestionably, the most influential book in which Beale's idea was incorporated was J. G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston, 1937), 736-37, 748, which became the standard work on this subject for 20 years. See also J. G. Randall, "Radical Republicans," James T. Adams, *Dictionary of American History* (6 vols., New York, 1946), IV, 395.

terms and attributed to Reconstruction the aspects of southern life that they found distasteful. By the middle of the 1920s, however, Reconstruction seemed very remote; the South's political and religious conservatism and its virulent anti-intellectualism seemed quite immediate. Increasingly young northern intellectuals saw in the South the clearest expression of all that they found objectionable in American society and culture.³²

Two other important developments in the North concerned black Americans. First, during the late 1920s, the racism of some northern intellectuals began to diminish, and they began to recognize that black people had been abused and degraded because of a prejudice that scholars had shared and nourished. Gradually this realization led some northern intellectuals to question long accepted ideas about the past actions and the future capabilities of black men and women.³³

Second, at about the same time, young black scholars began to develop a complementary attitude. Before World War I, W. E. B. Du Bois and a few other black writers had attempted to modify the New South School's picture of Reconstruction. When white scholars ignored these efforts, they had lapsed into silence.³⁴ But in the 1920s, black students at Howard University and other northern graduate schools picked up where Du Bois had left off. Filled with a new confidence and encouraged by the changing attitudes of some northerners, they set out to dispel the shadow that southern tradition had cast upon their right to participate fully in American democracy.³⁵

Another significant development occurred in the South itself. After World War I, many intelligent young southerners became disillusioned with the values and traditions of their region and with the excuses that had satisfied their fathers. Embarrassed about the South's history and by the resurgence of reactionary attitudes in the region, they pretended indifference and remained silent through most of the 1920s. As the decade drew to a close, however, their need to speak became overwhelming. Before the na-

³² Arthur S. Link and William B. Catton, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's* (New York, 1963), 272-338; Tindall, *Emergence of the New South*, 184-253.

³³ Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas, 1963), 409-53; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York, 1947), 498-571.

³⁴ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "Reconstruction and Its Benefits," *American Historical Review*, XV (July 1910), 781-99; John R. Lynch, *The Facts of Reconstruction* (New York, 1913); John R. Lynch, "Some Historical Errors of James Ford Rhodes," *Journal of Negro History*, II (Oct. 1917), 345-68; John R. Lynch, "More About the Historical Errors of James Ford Rhodes," *ibid.*, III (April 1918), 139-57; Powell Clayton, *The Aftermath of the Civil War, in Arkansas* (New York, 1915).

³⁵ The first of these black scholars was Alrutheus A. Taylor. For a listing of the others, see Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 736.

tion's energies were channeled into World War II, they produced a remarkable literature of self-criticism, which included works as various as William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, Erskine Caldwell's *God's Little Acre*, Rupert Vance's *Human Geography of the South*, W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South*, and C. Vann Woodward's *Ton, Watson*.³⁶

These developments did not cause historians immediately to reevaluate Republican Reconstruction, but they did spur several historians to reexamine the picture of Reconstruction in the South painted by the New South School. During the 1930s and 1940s, Francis B. Simkins, Alrutheus A. Taylor, Horace M. Bond, David Donald, Vernon Wharton, Beale, and others revealed that Reconstruction had not been so cruel, disruptive, expensive, long lasting, or traumatic as members of the New South School had believed. They also learned that the prevailing impressions of the freedman, carpetbagger, and scalawag were largely inaccurate stereotypes born in political controversy and kept alive by the political and economic needs of conservative white southerners. Gradually historians began to realize they had been betrayed by their eagerness to believe southern arguments and assertions.³⁷ This realization in turn caused misgivings about the accuracy of the prevailing view of the authors of Reconstruction.³⁸

After World War II, these misgivings increased rapidly. As the concerns of the Cold War displaced those of the Depression, young historians began to doubt the value and validity of the entire Progressive synthesis of American history.³⁹ At the same time, the acceleration of the civil rights movement swept most historians toward a more sympathetic understanding of Republican Reconstruction. Spurred by the knowledge of the final consequences of racism in Germany, encouraged by a liberal Supreme Court, and

³⁶ Lindell, *Emergence of the New South*, 575-606, 650-85; Cash, *The Mind of the South*, 244-294. See also C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge, 1969), 27-39.

³⁷ For an assessment of the revisionist literature produced up to 1940, see Howard K. Beale, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," *American Historical Review*, XLV (July 1940), 807-27; Francis B. Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History*, V (Feb. 1939), 49-61; A. A. Taylor, "Historians of the Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIII (Jan. 1938), 16-34. For a recent assessment of the literature, see Bernard A. Weisberger, "The Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography," *Journal of Southern History*, XXV (Nov. 1959), 427-47; and Vernon Wharton, "Reconstruction," Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick, eds., *Writing Southern History: Essays in Historiography in Honor of Fletcher M. Green* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 295-315.

³⁸ Beale, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," 818-19; T. Harry Williams, "An Analysis of Some Reconstruction Attitudes," *Journal of Southern History*, XII (Nov. 1946), 469-86. W. E. B. Du Bois' work, which credited some Republicans with idealistic motives, also contributed to these misgivings in a minor way. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 182, 185-87.

³⁹ See Higham, "Crisis in Progressive History," 198-211.

inspired by increasing black militancy, they found themselves committed with increasing fervor to securing equal rights and opportunities for Negroes. When white southerners responded to these demands with obstruction and violence, the national mood veered closer to that of Reconstruction than it had been in nearly a century.⁴⁰

The current reevaluation of Republican actions and motives, which began in the early 1950s, is largely a result of this new mood. Liberated from the assumptions and attitudes that so warped the vision of their predecessors, scholars have rushed to rewrite the history of the politics of Reconstruction. They have discredited the Progressive historians' picture of a Republican party united behind the common goals of a monolithic "northeastern capitalism."⁴¹ They have tried to show that Republicans in general and radicals in particular were genuinely worried about the harm that returning former Confederates might do to the Union and the Negro. They have argued that moderate—or cooperative—Republicans were more numerous and more influential than Radical—or uncooperative—Republicans when the

⁴⁰ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1966), 111-91.

The first scholars to begin to reassess Republicans and their purposes were constitutional historians. Howard J. Graham and others had established that the Fourteenth Amendment was intended primarily to protect people, not corporations. Howard Jay Graham, "The 'Conspiracy Theory' of the Fourteenth Amendment," *Yale Law Journal*, 47 (Jan. 1938), 371-403, and *ibid.*, 48 (Dec. 1938), 171-94; Howard J. Graham, "The Early Antislavery Backgrounds of the Fourteenth Amendment: II Systemization, 1835-1837," *Wisconsin Law Review* (1950), 479-507, 610-61. In 1951, a Canadian scholar spoke of abolition as the *raison d'être* of the Republican party, the party that looked "straight ahead, into the future with nationalism and manifest destiny. Positive national power, the dominance of humanity over property, the expansive tendencies and material enrichment of a society of free and equal men—these were the motivating ideals and the clear demand of the party." Jacobus ten Broek, *The Antislavery Origins of the Fourteenth Amendment* (Berkeley, 1951), 130. The impact of the constitutional historians on the prevailing views of most other historians seems, however, to have been slight.

More influential were two essays by David Donald, "The Radicals and Lincoln," *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* (New York, 1956), 103-27, and "Why They Impeached Andrew Johnson," *American Heritage*, VIII (Dec. 1956), 20-25, 102-03, which challenged nearly every significant feature of the prevailing interpretation of the politics of Reconstruction.

⁴¹ Robert P. Sharkey, *Money, Class, and Party: An Economic Study of Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baltimore, 1950); Stanley Coben, "Northeastern Business and Radical Reconstruction: A Re-Examination," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVI (June 1959), 67-90; Irwin Unger, "Business Men and Specie Resumption," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXIV (March 1959), 46-70; Glenn M. Linden, "Radicals' and Economic Policies: The Senate, 1861-1873," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXII (May 1966), 189-99; Glenn M. Linden, "Radicals and Economic Policies: The House of Representatives, 1861-1873," *Civil War History*, XIII (March 1967), 51-65; Peter Kolchin, "The Business Press and Reconstruction, 1865-1868," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXIII (May 1967), 183-96. The work of Stanley Coben, Irwin Unger, and Peter Kolchin was inspired and supervised by Donald. For a brief summary of the conclusions of most of these analyses, see B. P. Gallaway, "Economic Determinism in Reconstruction Historiography," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, 46 (Dec. 1965), 244-54.

struggle between Congress and Johnson began. They have insisted that the President was the aggressor in the struggle and that his stubborn refusal to work with moderates was a basic cause of the failure of Congress to adopt a gentler Reconstruction policy. Finally, they have pointed once again to southern intransigence and argued that it prompted the relatively drastic policy Congress finally did adopt.⁴²

Today, because of the work of recent revisionists, historians no longer believe that Republican Reconstructionists were the most villainous crew in American history. On the contrary, they appear to be in danger of falling into the opposite error. Committed to achieving racial equality, most historians now applaud Republican efforts to move in that direction, however halting their steps may have been. At the same time, historians no longer care much about the avowed concerns of the conservative opponents of Reconstruction and they disapprove of their attitudes and actions. Consequently, they increasingly believe the things Republicans said about themselves and their opponents and dismiss the protests, accusations, and complaints of Johnson and his allies. More and more, historical writing on Reconstruction politics resembles late-nineteenth century Republican apologetics.⁴³

This trend underscores the importance of abandoning the barren task of apportioning praise and blame. All of the principal participants in the struggle to control Reconstruction have been both defended and con-

⁴² Eric L. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, 1960), more than any other book, has inspired the current interest in Republican decision-making and shaped the current point of view. See also LaWanda Cox and John H. Cox, *Politics, Principle, and Prejudice, 1865-1866: Dilemma of Reconstruction America* (New York, 1963); W. R. Brock, *An American Crisis: Congress and Reconstruction, 1865-1867* (New York, 1963).

On the question of Republican motives, see the following, all of which argue that Republicans were genuinely concerned about the Union and the Negro: Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold Hyman, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York, 1962); Hans L. Trefousse, *Ben Butler: The South Called Him BEAST!* (New York, 1957); H. L. Trefousse, *Benjamin Franklin Wade: Radical Republican from Ohio* (New York, 1963); Fawn M. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South* (New York, 1959); Charles A. Jellison, *Fessenden of Maine: Civil War Senator* (Syracuse, 1962); Patrick W. Riddleberger, *George Washington Julian, Radical Republican: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Politics and Reform* (Indianapolis, 1966); Hans L. Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice* (New York, 1969); Herman Belz, *Reconstructing the Union: Theory and Policy during the Civil War* (Ithaca, 1969). See also Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York, 1965); Ira V. Brown, "William D. Kelley and Radical Reconstruction," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXV (July 1961), 316-29; Ira V. Brown, "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro: 1865-1887," *Pennsylvania History*, XXVIII (Jan. 1961), 45-57; LaWanda and John H. Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXIII (Aug. 1967), 303-30; David Montgomery, "Radical Republicanism in Pennsylvania, 1866-1873," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXV (Oct. 1961), 439-57.

⁴³ See Thomas J. Pressly, "Racial Attitudes, Scholarship, and Reconstruction: A Review Essay," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXII (Feb. 1966), 88-93.

demned. Now historians ought to give their attention to the much more important and enduring work of discovering why congressional Reconstruction emerged and why it was allowed to lapse.

The emergence of that policy is an immensely perplexing development. On the eve of the Civil War, not even the most hopeful abolitionist would have predicted that, by 1865, most northerners would favor granting American citizenship and civil equality to emancipated blacks. Few even spoke of emancipation as a realistic hope. Yet between 1865 and 1875, two Civil Rights Acts, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, the Military Reconstruction Acts, and the Enforcement Acts became national policy.

Until the last decade, historians generally attributed these revolutionary policy decisions to the quasi-conspiratorial activities of a relative handful of politicians—the radical Republicans. Now, however, the absurdity of this view is apparent. These decisions were not made hurriedly behind closed doors, but in full public view, after exhaustive discussion, and over the course of a decade. They received the nearly unanimous support of Republican legislators in session after session of Congress. Three of the most important of the policy measures—the amendments to the Constitution—gained the approval not only of three fourths of the members of Congress but also the votes of a majority of the legislators of three fourths of the northern states as well. Repeatedly Republican party leaders went to the northern voters on these questions, and repeatedly they received substantial majorities. Though deeply divided on many questions and often on the verge of exceeding the willingness of their constituents to penalize southern whites and aid southern blacks, Republican politicians managed to stand together through recurrent crises and to retain the allegiance of a sizeable northern majority, even when party leaders flirted with near revolutionary methods.

Why did Republicans adopt their startling Reconstruction policy? How did they maintain such extraordinary unity in support of the policy? How did they manage to retain such a high level of support among a basically racist northern population which was eager to return to normality?

To answer these questions, historians need to know more about several topics. First, they need to know much more about the Republican party. What were the socio-economic backgrounds of the organizers and leaders of the party? What groups and classes in the North did Republican leaders appeal to? How and why were they able to rise to dominance in the North so quickly? What ideas did they share about the Negro, the South, slavery, and the proper paths of national development? How did these ideas evolve dur-

ing the political struggles that culminated in the secession crisis? To what extent and in what ways were the ideas and interests of party members affected by war and the struggle with Johnson that followed? How did the postwar acceleration of industrial growth affect the evolution of Republican policy?

Second, historians need to learn more about the political ideas and activities of other groups in northern society. The Democrats, the conservatives—who really were not at home in either major party—labor organizers, reformers, religious leaders, agriculture spokesmen, businessmen, teachers, newspaper editors, ethnic groups, Union League members, all contributed in one way or another to the Republicans' decision first to pursue Reconstruction and then to abandon it. Consequently, historians will not understand the evolution of Reconstruction until they understand the contributions of these groups.⁴⁴

Third, historians should carefully analyze the important legislative decisions that cumulatively and collectively formed the national Reconstruction policy. Several times during and after the war, the ideas, emotions, and objectives of northern groups and individuals were channeled into Congress and hammered into Reconstruction laws and constitutional amendments. This intense concentration of needs and pressures makes these moments of decision extraordinarily illuminating. Furthermore, the processes which produced these decisions—the dynamic interaction of the aims and emotions of legislators, the attitudes and objectives of their constituents, the pressures of rapidly unfolding events—often played a critical role in shaping the final decision. Yet historians only understand adequately the Republicans' decision to break with Johnson and draft the Fourteenth Amendment. About the other decisions, we know relatively little.⁴⁵

Finally, historians need to study the implementation of these legislative decisions. Policy is more than the decision that a thing ought to be done. It is also the extent to which the thing is done and the methods used to do it.

⁴⁴ Already historians are beginning to recognize the need to understand the attitudes and activities of such groups. James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton, N.J., 1964); David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* (New York, 1967); Richard O. Curry, "The Union as It Was: A Critique of Recent Interpretations of the 'Copperheads,'" *Civil War History*, XIII (March 1967), 25-39; Ralph E. Morrow, *Northern Methodism and Reconstruction* (East Lansing, 1956).

⁴⁵ Aside from the Fourteenth Amendment and the rupture between Johnson and Congress, only two of the important legislative decisions of the Reconstruction era have received monographic treatment in recent years: C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (Boston, 1951); William Gillette, *The Right to Vote: Politics and the Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment* (Baltimore, 1965); Belz, *Reconstructing the Union*.

Did the army officers and other government officials charged with implementing the Republican policy understand what Republicans wanted to accomplish? Did they sympathize with Republican objectives as they understood them and work earnestly to achieve them? What obstacles did they encounter, and how effectively did they cope with them? What of the many private citizens who wandered South to help implement Reconstruction? Did they strengthen the policy, or weaken it? If Reconstruction is to yield up its fullest meaning to the present, these questions, too, must be answered.

This work amounts to a massive excavation of the records of northern thought and action during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. But the effort is easily justified. The tangled social, economic, and political events and ideas that led first to Reconstruction and then to its abandonment make up perhaps the richest single chapter in American history. The culmination of a generation of sectional and partisan conflict and four years of civil war, the northern Reconstruction policy sums up the issues, attitudes, and emotions that produced war and that war, in turn, intensified. The abandonment of the policy reveals northerners disentangling themselves from old concerns to grapple with new problems generated by urban and industrial growth. An objective analysis of the era unburdened by attempts to distribute praise and blame should yield valuable knowledge about the nation's painful transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial society.⁴⁶

An even more compelling justification exists. Thirty years ago, at the conclusion of *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois asked: "What is the object of writing the history of Reconstruction? Is it to wipe out the disgrace of a people which fought to make slaves of Negroes? Is it to show that the North had higher motives than freeing black men? Is it to prove that Negroes were black angels? No," he answered, "it is simply to establish Truth, on which Right in the future may be built."⁴⁷ This answer remains pertinent. Study of the evolution of congressional Reconstruction il-

⁴⁶ The best sort of "objective" analysis is described by E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York, 1962), 163-64: "When we call a historian objective, we mean, I think, two things. First of all, we mean that he has a capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation in society and in history—a capacity which, as I suggested in an earlier lecture, is partly dependent on his capacity to recognize the extent of his involvement in that situation, to recognize, that is to say, the impossibility of total objectivity. Secondly, we mean that he has the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be attained by those historians whose outlook is entirely bound by their own immediate situation. . . . The historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future." See also *ibid.*, 174-75.

⁴⁷ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 725.

luminates the sources of the North's war-born commitment to emancipation and the reasons for the eventual abandonment of southern black men and women. Hopefully a thorough understanding of this initial effort to establish racial equality can help concerned Americans keep the "Second Reconstruction" from failing as miserably as the first.

John Powers and the Italians: Politics in A Chicago Ward, 1896-1921

HUMBERT S. NELLI

IN his nearly forty years as boss of Chicago's Nineteenth Ward, John Powers (known to his Italian constituents as Johnny De Pow and Gianni Pauli) proved himself a practitioner par excellence of all political expedients. The major concern of Powers and other inner-city bosses consisted of retaining political control in wards where the ethnic composition was undergoing rapid and extensive changes from Irish, German, and Scandinavian to Italian, East European Jewish, and Slavic. Methods that seemed corrupt to reform-minded residents eased the achievement of the boss' goal. Bargains, compromises, connections, patronage, and favors were the essential ingredients of practical politics. Ward politicians found jobs and did favors for constituents, obtained franchises for companies, and, in the process, boodled or profited at the public's expense. In addition, by relying on the criminal elements in their wards, bosses used intimidation and trickery to prevent the rise of rivals from new ethnic groups who might threaten their own positions.¹

To Jane Addams of Hull House, Powers represented the forces of evil and corruption which prevented essential reforms; and in the 1890s she battled the ward boss in three highly publicized aldermanic campaigns. Italian leaders saw Powers as an insurmountable obstacle that barred the election of Italian candidates and denied to them control of a ward that contained the largest Italian group in the city. Newspaper editors and other reformers in the Italian colony seemed unable to recognize or accept the realities of politics in Chicago. Reflecting their middle-class orientation, they looked on

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¹ J. T. Salter, *Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics* (New York, 1945), 17-21; Charles Edward Merriam, *Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics* (New York, 1929), 141. Alessandro Mastro-Valerio, who edited and published the Chicago *La Tribuna Italiana Transatlantica*, originated the name Gianni Pauli for John Powers, as well as Gimmi Bolla for Powers' lieutenant James Bowler and Cristo Mimo for the Nineteenth Ward's Republican boss Christopher Mamer. *La Tribuna Italiana Transatlantica*, July 21, 1906, Feb. 28, 1920.