

JWH
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NORTHERN PREJUDICE AND NEGRO SUFFRAGE
1865-1870

A confused and contradictory quiet underlay the frothy excitement which followed Appomattox and Ford's Theater. The victory of Grant and the death of Lincoln in a sense symbolized the mixture of gladness and gloom which marked deeper Northern feeling about the most serious human problem to come out of the war: what to do about the Negro? While the ante-bellum and war years had produced climactic spasms of Negrophilism with some tangible benefits in the form of emancipation and education, the North had not yet loosed itself from the fetters of prejudice and discrimination. Ahead lay real tests. Could the North so conquer its race bias as to eliminate segregation, freely extend its educational opportunities, offer employment without color restriction, and enfranchise its Negro minority? Of these the suffrage question was the first to receive national publicity amid the general clamor over the rights and abilities of the race.

Gladness and gloom indeed characterized the attitude of persons interested in the status of the Negro. Many could proudly proclaim the coming of a new day, as did a white officer with the 32nd United States Colored Troops: "This prejudice that has flourished for a season . . . and has been so strongly grounded in the hearts of our countrymen, is being slowly, but surely abandoned."¹ Exhortations like that of Theodore Tilton were received with attentive good humor:

I ask that the Negro shall receive the respect of the best society. . . . Ask him into your pew at church. Let him ride at your side in the cars. Give him the right hand of Fellowship—as indeed,

¹ Letter from Fred S. Eaton, August 9, 1864, *The American Missionary*, VIII (1864), 273-374.

God ordained, for he made the inside of the Negro's hand white, for clasping a white man's hand (laughter).²

Lydia Maria Child urged the further use of colored orators so that people could see for themselves the abilities of the race and she cited the statement made by a white person in John D. Gurley's Massachusetts audience: "I tell you what, folks are changing. Some begin to think that a man like Mr. Gurley might as well be trusted to vote as some white folks."³ From the Bay State to the nation's capital, from New York and Philadelphia to Missouri and Michigan, it looked to many as if "folks are changing."⁴

Less sanguine observers spoke out in tones edged with despair. E. L. Godkin preached "The One Humanity" in an early issue of the *Nation*. The basis of political society, he wrote, lay in "the education and elevation of our humanity." Ancient states failed because they were founded on the principle of race; the Christian idea, the closest approximation to perfection, denies racism and preaches the raising of all peoples. Even so, in the enlightened days of 1865, the dangers which menaced antiquity have cropped up again:

We are reluctant to concede to the African man what we boast of giving to others . . . presenting no higher claims, apparently, of intellectual or of moral worth. The doubt is openly avowed by some; it lies as an unsatisfied query in the minds of others; it lingers unconsciously, or semi-consciously, with many whose philanthropy or political consistency holds them back from confessing it even to themselves; it haunts the soul as a ghostly prejudice, even when philosophy and religion have made us reject it as a dogma. We do not fully and heartily believe that the Negro is a

² Theodore Tilton, *The Negro; A Speech at Cooper Institute*, New York, May 21, 1863 (New York, 1863), 2.

³ Reprinted in *New York Independent*, July 27, 1865.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1864, June 2, 1864, January 19, 1865, February 9, 1865, April 13, 1865; *Boston Transcript*, May 10, 1865; John A. Andrew to Charles Sumner, November 21, 1865, Andrew Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Increase N. Tarbox, "Universal Suffrage," *The New Englander*, XXIV (1865), 165-166; *Freedmen's Bulletin*, I (1865), 89-90.

man. We could not act or reason as we do unless this were the case.⁵ Evidence from all over the North added substance to this and like charges.⁶

This schizophrenia of fervent hope and foreboding was transformed into cold fact in the political arena. Here the Negro had been an issue as a slave since before the Constitutional Convention, as a man since 1863. The fruits of emancipation tasted bitter to North and South alike. When, in June, 1864, Senator Waitman Willey of West Virginia offered an amendment to the Freedman's Bureau bill, authorizing the Bureau head to correspond with Northern Governors and municipal authorities to find employment for colored people on farms and in industries in their localities, Northern Democrats and Republicans alike fought to reject it. They argued that the publicity involved would place the local officials in a vulnerable position. An obvious device for political embarrassment, the amendment was whittled down and finally disappeared in a joint congressional conference.⁷ The next year Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois placed the Negrophobe element on the defensive with a measure extending the Bureau's jurisdiction to refugees and freedmen all over the country. The opposition clawed and scratched. "What is office without social rights and social distinctions?" cried Senator Edgar Cowan of Pennsylvania afraid that this extension would lead to suffrage and office-holding. "Nothing, nothing," he answered emphatically, for himself. The black, he asserted, is different, inferior, and cannot be washed white by debates, petitions, and laws.⁸

In both of these cases, the Radical Republicans dis-

⁵ I (1865), 520-521.

⁶ *New York Independent*, March 24, 1864, February 8, 1866, August 15, 1867; *Boston Herald*, May 10, 1865; *The Liberator*, May 26, 1865; *The Old Guard*, III (1865), 142.

⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., 2934, 3329-3330, 3334, 3335, 3337, 3349, 2 sess., 1348, 1409, Appendix, 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 129, 316, 318, 320-321, 334-335, 343, 344.

patched the forces of gloom. Their real passion, however, was the suffrage, their key weapon in reconstructing the former Confederate states. Here was a legal and non-violent means of control which could be dressed in appealing moral clothes. Their effort to seize this all-important tool began in 1865 and encountered Northern opposition from the first.

The Radicals depended to some extent on humanitarian propaganda to whip up sentiment for the Negro voter, and publicists like Theodore Tilton, Increase Tarbox, Gerrit Smith, Frederick Douglass, John Langston, and Lydia Maria Child worked diligently to this end.⁹ Behind the scenes, men who engaged in politics scurried about to bring the North into line behind the Radical program. The crucial contest in 1865 came in Connecticut, the only New England state which excluded colored men from the polls. The Legislature passed a bill to submit the question of Negro suffrage to the voters at a special October election. By September, Republicans realized the necessity of carrying the state. Connecticut was one of the few states where the issue squarely faced the voters, and, as the Washington correspondent of the *New York Independent* pointed out, an enthusiastic affirmation there might swing President Andrew Johnson into the Radical fold.¹⁰ By September also, Republicans woke up to the difficulty of winning. "Earnest Republicans," wrote William Grosvenor of New Haven to Charles Sumner, "feel that the influence of a defeat here in retarding the course elsewhere would be disastrous." They

⁹ Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year, A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York, 1930), 68, 68 n, 73. Beale gives adequate emphasis to the relationship between Northern prejudice and the Radical desire for suffrage in 1865 and 1866 in *ibid.*, 178 ff. For the above propagandists see *New York Independent*, January 19, 1865, April 20, 1865, July 19, 27, 1865; George L. Stearns, comp. *The Equality of All Men Before the Law* (Boston, 1865), 35-39; *Cleveland Leader*, August 17, 1865 in *Annals of Cleveland*, XLVIII, 219.

¹⁰ *American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year, 1864* (New York, 1865), 354; *New York Independent*, September 14, 1865.

could not back out now, despite the gloomy prospects. Prejudice, Grosvenor reported, had even infiltrated the ranks of the politicians:

A great many Republicans flinch, especially in country towns, and curiously enough in abolition districts. Some of our oldest radicals are more weak on this issue than the late converts from Democracy. . . . In some towns the Committees are hostile. One of the State Committee, Agard of Litchfield, is not favorable, absented himself from the meeting, and his name is being used in the hope that he will not have the pluck to disavow it. All this is unpleasant.¹¹

The mayor of Norwich expressed the same fears to Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts in a letter asking him to speak for Connecticut Republicans. Negro suffrage must win there, he told Andrew, for the sake of the state and "the influence the vote may have upon the question in other States. . . . Republicans need to be set on fire—will you do it? It's worth \$100 to them."¹² As election day approached, the voters received appeals from all sides. A minister flung the Christian argument against prejudice at them: "The unseen Christ will stand by the ballot box watching every vote you deposit," while a Radical editorial blamed all the opposition on a minority of Democrats and pleaded for a Republican vote to support Reconstruction measures in the South.¹³ When the smoke had cleared, a substantial majority had decided against the Negro.¹⁴

The Ohio Democrats tried to make Negro suffrage a campaign issue to embarrass the Republicans, but the latter's convention refused to insert a franchise plank in the platform, realizing, as one orator put it, the "unsettled

¹¹ September 5, 1865, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹² James Lloyd Greene to Andrew, September 22, 1865, Andrew Papers, MHS.

¹³ *New York Independent*, September 28, 1865.

¹⁴ Edward McPherson, *The Political History of the United States of America during the Period of Reconstruction* . . . (2nd ed., Washington, D. C., 1875), 120.

state of opinion even among Union men."¹⁵ Jacob Cox, the Union gubernatorial candidate, had instructed his manager at the convention not to permit his nomination if the party declared for suffrage. Pinned down by Western Reserve radicals after his nomination, Cox walked the equivocal line of separate but equal privileges, proposing a segregated colony on the South Atlantic coast. The problem, he added later, was a national one to be handled on a national basis:

The few colored men whom we have amongst us at the North may be regarded as the waifs and strays of the great body which is a nation in numbers and in its isolation by mental and physical characteristics. It is as a unit that we must deal with them. . . .

Should the people of the state accept the Negro voter, he admitted still later in the campaign, he would not object.¹⁶ The Union party's evasion of the issue gained them the victory although Cox ran about 1500 votes behind his ticket in the radical Western Reserve area.¹⁷ The state supported the party which had avoided the suffrage issue.

Elsewhere in the North politicians moved cautiously around the controversy. Thaddeus Stevens, in control of the Pennsylvania Radicals, explained to Charles Sumner that the Republican convention at Harrisburg had passed over the question "as heavy and premature."¹⁸ The New York State Republican platform, like its Democratic counterpart, ignored the issue. In New Jersey, Republicans in convention decisively defeated a resolution endorsing it while Democrats went on record opposing it. Indiana's governor, Oliver P. Morton, stated the position of his state organization:

¹⁵ William Cox Cochran, *The Political Experiences of Major General Jacob Dolson Cox* (Mss. in Oberlin College Library, 1940), II, 808-809, 813-815; *Cleveland Leader*, June 23, 1865, *loc. cit.*, 217.

¹⁶ Cochran, Cox, II, 803-804, 821-822, 848, 898-899. For comments on Cox's campaign see *The Old Guard*, III (1865), 431, 481-484; *Nation*, I (1865), 429-430; Senator Thomas A. Hendricks of Indiana, *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 369.

¹⁷ *Cleveland Leader*, November 27, 1865, *loc. cit.*, 132.

¹⁸ Stevens to Sumner, August 26, 1865, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

freedmen should wait for fifteen or twenty years before receiving the franchise. In addition to preparing Negroes for political responsibility, this would enable whites to build up majorities in the South with the help of Northern and foreign immigrants. Morton admitted that this proposal relieved Indiana Republicans of the obligation to advocate Negro suffrage at home.¹⁹

Charles A. Dana, writing to Charles Sumner early in September, warned that only a reading and writing qualification would make Negro suffrage palatable to voters in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan.²⁰ While Illinois had no contest, Wisconsin voters rejected the colored voter and accepted the Republican slate. Michigan's legislature enacted and then repealed a law to submit to a referendum a constitutional amendment enfranchising the race. Instead they laid plans for a convention to rewrite the whole document. In Minnesota, Republicans stumped for manhood suffrage and gained control of the state government. The electorate, however, simultaneously repudiated equal voting privileges by a margin of almost ten per cent of the votes cast.²¹

During the campaigns publicists had made plain the issue's intimate connections with Reconstruction in the South. Horace Greeley had appealed to rational men on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line to work for it as a *sine qua non* of the Radical program. An anonymous Philadelphia correspondent to the *Nation* had asked some "Plain Questions" about the feasibility of requiring of the South that which the North did not grant.²² After the canvass this

¹⁹ *Cleveland Leader*, September 22, 1865, *loc. cit.*, 133; *New York Independent*, November 2, 16, 1865; Charles P. Smith to John A. Andrew, September 23, 1865, Andrew Papers, MHS; William C. Gerichs, "The Ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, IX (1913), 132, 137.

²⁰ September 1, 1865, Summer Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

²¹ *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1865), 823, 577, 566, 598; *Cleveland Leader*, September 19, November 2, 1865, *loc. cit.*, 306; Cochran, Cox, II, 914.

²² *New York Independent*, May 11, 1865; *Nation*, I (1865), 171.

sensitive spot was further exposed. The *Springfield Republican* twitted Thad Stevens for not pushing his pet project through his home state first.²³ Senators and Congressmen made use of the returns during the debate on suffrage in the District of Columbia.²⁴ "They who desire the Right of Suffrage for the Blacks of the South," summed up the *New York Tribune*, "oppose the extension of the same right to the Blacks of the North."²⁵

In spite of the vicissitudes of suffrage, however, the first session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress began propitiously for the Negro. Boston's *Christian Register* felt that "the interests and best good of this class will be cared for."²⁶ A group of influential Negroes numbering Frederick Douglass and George Downing among them stated that they were in Washington "charged with the duty to look after the best interests of the recently emancipated."²⁷ According to the *New York Tribune*, these "outside representatives" were paid for their attentions to Congress, probably the first Negro lobby.²⁸

In January, 1866, a civil rights bill came up for action before Congress which eventually passed it twice, the second time over Johnson's veto. Then, to insure that the Southern states should discover no constitutional loopholes to climb through, the legislators started the Fourteenth Amendment on its way. The Civil Rights Act made United States citizens of all native-born persons except untaxed Indians, and guaranteed to all citizens regardless of color, race or previous condition of servitude the right to make and enforce contracts, to sue and be sued, to give evidence, to hold and handle property, to enjoy "full and equal benefit of all

²³ Quoted in *New York Independent*, October 11, 1866.

²⁴ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 245-246, 250, 176-177, 201.

²⁵ December 14, 1865.

²⁶ December 9, 1865.

²⁷ "Memorial of a Delegation Representing the Colored People of the Several States. . . ." *Senate Miscellaneous Documents* #56, 39 Cong., 1 sess.

²⁸ December 13, 1865.

laws and proceedings, as [are] enjoyed by white citizens."²⁹ The first section of the Fourteenth Amendment provided the same assurances in more general terms.

The opposition to the Civil Rights Act came chiefly from the Democrats; for the most part they took the constitutional ground that Congress lacked the power to make citizens of non-citizens. Occasionally the debate turned on the possible consequences to the North.³⁰ This type of civil-rights protection, as contrasted with guarantees of equal treatment in public vehicles, theatres and restaurants stripped the issue of emotion. The right to hold property, to sue or be sued in court can arouse the enthusiasm of a constitutional lawyer; the property owner does not get excited until the Negro family moves in next door.

Negroes did not accept the Act as the ultimate. A Chicago mass meeting resolved its gratitude to Congress for the legislation, but they wanted more, they wanted the elective franchise. The Negro lobby memorialized Congress to discountenance a proposal of James G. Blaine which became the second section of the Fourteenth Amendment, because it extended Congressional approval to the principle of disfranchisement.³¹ The representatives of the colored people had their eyes on the suffrage in 1866.

The elections that year placed Republicans solidly in control of Congress. While some Radicals like Horace Greeley, George Boutwell of Massachusetts, and William D. Kelley and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania pressed for Negro suffrage, the campaign had centered on the Fourteenth Amendment, accepted by Conservative and Radical Republicans alike, and the fight between the President and

²⁹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, ch. XXXI, 315, 316.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 500, 602, 1156, 1271, 1291.

³¹ "Address of the Colored Citizens of Chicago . . .," *House Miscellaneous Documents*, §109, 39 Cong., 1 sess.; "Memorial of a Delegation Representing the Colored People . . .," *loc. cit.*

Congress.³² Section two of the proposed amendment left the decision on suffrage with the states, its framers fearing the adverse Northern reaction to a direct enactment.³³ "It was our opinion," said Senator Jacob Howard of Michigan, of the Committee of Fifteen where the bill originated, "that three-fourths of the states of this Union could not be induced to vote to grant the right of suffrage, even in any degree or under any restriction to the colored race."³⁴ Northerners easily met the charge that Section two would decrease Northern Congressional representation by pointing out that there were not enough disfranchised Negroes in any Northern state to affect the representation.³⁵

In spite of the outcries of extremists, the politically-wise worked hard to keep the suffrage issue out of the campaign. Former Governor Andrew Curtin of Pennsylvania and Representative Norman Judd of Illinois exerted strenuous efforts to prevent the united Southern Loyalist Convention at Philadelphia from publicizing the issue.³⁶ The conservative *New York Times* observed that

neither in this state nor in Pennsylvania, nor in Ohio, nor in Indiana, nor in Illinois, has Negro suffrage been generally presented as an article of party faith. On the contrary, in each of these States, the Constitutional Amendment has been approved as an official embodiment of terms presented by the victorious North to the defeated South.³⁷

In the state campaigns Iowa Republicans alone came out strongly for enfranchisement. Pennsylvania and Con-

³² *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1866), 760; *New York Times*, September 11, 26, October 8, 11, November 7, 1866.

³³ Robert Dale Owen, "Political Results from the Varioloid," *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXV (1875), 662-664; Horace Greeley to James R. Lawrence, December 16, 1866, Greeley Papers, New York Public Library.

³⁴ *New York Independent*, May 31, 1866.

³⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 579.

³⁶ *New York Times*, September 8, October 16, November 3, 1866; Cochran, Cox, II, 1043; Beale, *Critical Year*, 185-187; *New York Independent*, September 13, 1866; *Annual Cyclopaedia*, (1866), 758-759.

³⁷ October 5, 1866.

necticut Republicans replied vaguely to Democratic attacks on the proposition; the Michigan legislature, which had scheduled a referendum on the question, replaced it with a proposal for a new constitution to be drawn up in convention, a suggestion which the voters overwhelmingly approved.³⁸ In no other Northern state was the colored vote an issue. The Republican sweep in 1866 grew out of other causes than a popular cause for Negro suffrage.

The flush of victory caused joy and concern. The *Nation* forecast more agitation: no written compact "will ever blind a large body of the Northern people to the outrageous absurdity in a democratic republic, of making the color of a man's skin a reason for denying him anything which he or other men value."³⁹ Enfranchisement was gladly endorsed by Radicals, some of whom had cautiously avoided it during the campaign. On the other hand, elements in the Republican party worried over the possibility that the suffrage issue would jeopardize their future at the polls.⁴⁰ An adjudication of these two points of view would have to await the next Presidential election, but until that time the weather-cock pointed confidently in the direction of compromise.

Influential proponents of Radical strategy showed surface signs of cooling off on Negro suffrage. Schuyler Colfax, soon to be Republican nominee for the Vice-Presidency, told a Detroit audience that "I never believed in Negro equality. I believe God made us, for his own wise purposes, a superior race. . . . But God forgive me if while I think so I would endeavor to grind down lower this oppressed race. Our principle is liberty to all. . . . But I think I can say without any impiety, I wish He had made all these races white, for had he done so, there would not be a Democrat

³⁸ *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1866), 407-409, 613-615, 254-255, 508.

³⁹ III (1866), 250-251.

⁴⁰ *New York Independent*, January 24, 1867; James A. Doolittle to Oliver H. Browning, November 8, 1866 in Browning, *Diary*, (James G. Randall, ed.) Illinois State Historical Society, *Collections*, XXII, Lincoln Series, III, Springfield, Ill., (1933), II, 107 n. 1.

today."⁴¹ Such equivocation was more than matched by the illuminating metamorphosis of the *Nation's* editorial policy in the spring of 1867. It gradually abandoned the extremists in favor of a more moderate approach. Its treatment of the Northern suffrage question in April, 1867, combined the condemnatory phrases of the Radicals with the evasions of the party in 1868. Later articles increasingly reflected more caution. By August, the weekly could engage a Radical journal in a quick, spirited debate over Negroes in high office.⁴²

By 1867, the franchise issue came before the voters or legislatures of several Northern states. Connecticut again placed a manhood-suffrage clause on the ballot in a special April election and with the same result; a thousand more people voted against than for the Negro and the Radicals became alarmed:

It is fashionable to criticize the quality of Connecticut Republicanism [wrote the Washington correspondent of the *New York Independent*]; but it will compare favorably with the same article in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and other states. If anybody doubt it, let him put manhood suffrage into the canvass, as a prominent issue, in any of the states mentioned. The fact will appear in other states that there is a small class of Republicans who are narrow, mean and low. They need education to bring them upon the platform of manhood suffrage; but they will eventually be compelled to stand upon the side of equality and justice.⁴³

Since there was no mistaking the issue here, said Horace Greeley with prophetic, if not informed insight, the answer lay in a federal suffrage measure.⁴⁴

The same conclusions could have been drawn from events in Minnesota and Ohio. In November, 1867, the electors of Minnesota refused by a bare majority to allow its few col-

⁴¹ *Boston Evening Transcript*, November 8, 1866.

⁴² III (1867), 294-295, IV (1867), 519-520, V (1867), 90-91, 232-233. Cf. *Harper's Weekly*, XI (1867), 483, 531.

⁴³ April 11, 1867.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, April 11, 18, 1867.

ored men to vote. Ohio Republicans, split on the question of presenting the issue to the voters for resolution, finally, after two refusals, hesitantly placed the problem on the ballot. Impartial suffrage fell under the majority burden of 38,000 hostile votes and the Democrats swept into office.⁴⁵

New York during this year concentrated its political efforts on writing a new constitution. In the convention, the Republicans controlled the 160 delegates with a majority of 14. The franchise issue, revolving primarily around the Negro, took up roughly three weeks of debate. By and large, the Democrats pinned their hopes of excluding the colored man on a separate submission of the question to the voters. Realizing the dangers implicit in this direct appeal, Republicans fought to include an unqualified franchise in the document, the whole constitution to be placed before the people for acceptance or rejection. In convention, the Radicals were successful but the state senate in 1868 refused its assent to a law placing the constitution before the voters. The following year the Republicans compromised with their opponents and submitted the suffrage clause along with other controversial measures to a referendum. The voters threw a 52,601 majority against the Negro, rejected the whole constitution except for one article and swept the Democrats into office.⁴⁶

In Michigan, where the Republican-controlled constitutional convention of 1867 produced a manhood-suffrage document, the Democrats in the convention adopted tactics similar to those used in New York by calling for a separate submission of this clause. They charged that the Republican victory of 1866 did not indicate popular support for the colored voter, that Republican insistence on its inclusion

⁴⁵ McPherson, *Political History*, 257, 354; *New York Independent*, February 21, March 21, April 11, 1867; Cochran, *Cox*, II, 1088-1089; *Cleveland Leader*, January 1, 1867, *loc. cit.*, 708.

⁴⁶ *New York Independent*, April 25, August 1, 1867; *Proceedings and Debates of the Constitutional Convention*. . . . (Albany, 1868), I, 200-263, V, 3560-3586, 3959; *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1868), 544. (1869), 489-490.

smelled like a plot to uphold Radical policy in the South. With foresight they argued that the constitution would not appeal to their constituents with a change in suffrage. Republicans halfheartedly answered these charges as they steam-rolled every attempt to refer the question to the voters separately. The electorate then refused to ratify the convention's handiwork, in part because of the franchise clause.⁴⁷

New Jersey and Pennsylvania did not push very far towards Negro suffrage. In April, 1867, the lower house of the New Jersey legislature refused to strike the word "white" from the state constitution by a 38-20 vote. State Republicans resolved the following fall to work for equal suffrage and assumed their place, as Harper's Weekly put it, among the "advanced guard" who must educate the people by agitation and discussion to the acceptance of the doctrine. State Democrats in convention took a firm stand against this proposal in an address of September 5, 1867, and in the November elections happily welcomed New Jersey back into their fold.⁴⁸ Pennsylvania's lawmakers did no more than discuss the proposition during 1867, but the next year they defeated by a vote of 64-14 a motion to amend the constitution. "The Republican majority acted in a base and cowardly manner bringing disgrace upon themselves and their party. Shame on them!" cried the *Independent*.⁴⁹

Of the remaining Northern states, Illinois and Indiana took no action, while in Iowa an act to submit the question to the voters, which had passed the 1866 legislature, was

⁴⁷ *New York Independent*, August 15, 1867, March 26, April 16, 1868; Mary Joice Adams, "The History of Suffrage in Michigan," *Publications of the Michigan Political Science Association*, III (1898), 30; *Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention*. . . . (Lansing, Mich. 1857), II, 712-718, 786-789, 857-858.

⁴⁸ *New York Independent*, March 21, April 18, 1867; McPherson, *Political History*, 258; *Harper's Weekly*, XI (1867), 498-499; *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1867), 540.

⁴⁹ February 21, 1867, March 12, 1868.

delayed to 1868 in accordance with constitutional procedure. Wisconsin in 1867 prepared for a referendum on the subject, but the Supreme Court intervened with a decision that the Negro had had a legal right to vote since 1849.⁵⁰

In the fall elections of 1867, Democrats captured the New Jersey and Ohio legislatures, one house in New York, and the chief justiceship in Pennsylvania. Observers in and out of Congress joined these results to Republican efforts to obtain equal suffrage,⁵¹ while Horace Greeley noted the peculiar pattern evolving from state elections since the end of the war. The Northern voter, Greeley pointed out, tended first to reject the colored elector when directly faced with him, and then turn around and support the party behind him.⁵² Others drew the obvious conclusion to which a few Radical leaders had probably come privately: federal action must replace state inaction in this area. Despite the unpopularity of the issue at the North, Congress must deal with this in 1868. With candor the *New York Independent* warned against those who, looking forward to victory in 1868, sought to equivocate on suffrage as an issue in the Presidential campaign:

We observe, with mingled pain and indignation, that many conservative Republican Journals in various Northern states, are putting forth tentative articles with a view to the framing of a presidential issue in which the Negro shall have no place.⁵³

Stick to principles, Editor Tilton urged, and beware of the political enigma Grant, who does not himself know where he stands.

More politic Radicals won this military hero to their

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, April 18, 1867, October 15, 1868; *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1866), 407-409; Carl H. Erbe, "Constitutional Provisions for the Suffrage in Iowa," *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, XXII (1924), 208-211.

⁵¹ *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1867), 545-546, 605, 620; *Nation*, V (1867), 396, 414, *New York Times*, September 14, 1867, *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., 40-49-50.

⁵² *New York Independent*, November 21, 1867.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, November 14, 1867.

cause early in 1868 and they shaped their strategy around him. His nomination on the first ballot at their convention in Chicago manifested the confidence they had in the drawing power of his name.⁵⁴ Their platform demonstrated how they intended to tiptoe around the issue of Northern suffrage. The second plank guaranteed equal suffrage at the South but otherwise left it to the "people" of the loyal states.⁵⁵

The campaign of 1868 ignored the problem of Northern Negro suffrage and concentrated on other issues. Questions of currency, debts, and taxes occupied the attention of some campaigners, but the popular subject of the day related to the position of the South in the Union. Republican stump speakers and propagandists did little more than praise the existing policy based on the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments interjecting dire prophecies of the evils of a Democratic victory.⁵⁶ While this emphasis satisfied the majority of Northern Republicans, extremists like Tilton raged at the betrayal. The moderates in defense advised the new administration to follow Frederick Douglass' counsel and let the Negro alone as quickly as possible. "The ballot," expostulated the *Nation* early the next year, "is no panacea for political ills."⁵⁷

In two Northern states Negro suffrage received special attention at election time. Iowa Radicals had pushed through the state convention of 1865 a plank committing

⁵⁴ G. F. Milton, *The Age of Hate, Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (New York, 1930), ch. XX; McPherson, *Political History*, 366; Charles Sumner to the Duchess of Argyll, July 28, 1868, in Edward L. Pierce, *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner* (Boston, 1893), IV, 359-360.

⁵⁵ Adams Sherman Hill, "The Chicago Convention," *North American Review*, CVII (1868), 175.

⁵⁶ *New York Times*, September 10, 11, 17, 1868; Charles H. Coleman, *The Election of 1868, the Democratic Effort to Regain Control* (Columbia University, *Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law*, #392, (New York, 1933), 286-292, 305-310.

⁵⁷ *New York Independent*, November 12, 1868; *Nation*, VII (1868), 386-VIII (1869), 124.

the party majority in the state legislature to support it. After much hesitancy, the legislature submitted to the pressure in 1866 and two years later the people ratified the amendment to the constitution. Granted the ballot, however, colored Iowans were still denied the privilege of running for Congress. Twice rebuffed in Minnesota on this issue, Republicans tried again in 1868 and won by a 6,000 vote majority. They were forced to use deceptive methods on the ballot, concealing, for example, the nature of the constitutional amendment with the label "revision of Section 1, Article 7." Undoubtedly these tricks in Minnesota, plus the excitement of the Presidential canvass in both states, helped carry equal suffrage.⁵⁸

Horace Greeley perhaps set the tone for Radicals in interpreting the elections. He asserted that the triumph had vindicated the Congressional plan of Reconstruction and paved the way for a suffrage amendment to the Federal Constitution. Ignoring the obvious fact that Negro suffrage in the North had not been at stake, that the party had specifically come out against a Federal measure that would coerce the loyal states, Republican leaders, with the exception of Charles Sumner, turned to the circuitous method of a constitutional amendment to accomplish what they considered necessary ends in the South. A Congressional statute was liable to invalidation by the judiciary. A new constitutional article needed only the assent of 28 of the 37 states, a simple process since the party controlled the South by military force and the Northern legislatures by the election. Northern prejudice against the Negro, long the stumbling block to an adequate policy in the rebel states, was finally to be circumvented.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Erbe, "Constitutional Provisions for the Suffrage in Iowa," *loc. cit.*, 208-211; *Annual Cyclopaedia* (1866), 407-409, (1868), 504-505; *New York Times*, November 7, 1868.

⁵⁹ *New York Independent*, December 3, 1868; *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., 986.

The debate over the proposed Fifteenth Amendment confronted Radicals with the dilemma of the platform they had supported the previous fall. Senator James A. Doolittle of Wisconsin, now in the Democratic fold, denounced it as a two-faced pledge showing a white mask to the North and a black one to the South. Senator Jacob Howard, a Radical from Michigan, tried to amend the proposal to leave the question of Northern equal suffrage to the loyal states. Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana defended the platform and Senatorial action by emphasizing that the plank of 1868 referred only to Congressional action, while the Senate was considering a constitutional amendment. With this tortured hairsplitting, Morton could reassure his Radical colleagues against charges of inconsistency and twinges of conscience in voting for it.⁶⁰ A year and a month after the two houses of Congress agreed on the form of the amendment, Secretary of State Hamilton Fish notified the legislators that twenty-nine states had ratified it. Of the Northern states involved, New Jersey, Ohio, Rhode Island, Michigan, Indiana, and belatedly New York showed some reluctance to follow the party line.⁶¹ In Illinois, the constitutional convention in session tactfully tabled debate on the suffrage issue until the future of the Fifteenth Amendment had been determined.⁶²

By 1870 the Radical Republicans had erected the basic structure of Reconstruction, almost five years after the submission of the architects' blueprints. The key element of the plan, a solid bloc of voting Negroes in the South, had been held up again and again by the refusal of the loyal states to countenance the colored man at their own ballot boxes. As early as 1865, Northern prejudice generally con-

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1012, 985-987, 990-991.

⁶¹ McPherson, *Political History*, 545-546, 495-496, 559-560, 562; *New York Independent*, April 22, June 3, 1869; Gerichs, "Ratification in Indiana," *loc. cit.*, 153-163; Adams, "Suffrage in Michigan," *loc. cit.*, 30-31, 31 n.

⁶² *Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of . . . Illinois . . .* (Springfield, Ill., 1870), I, 157, 159, 160, 855-856, II, 1280-1282.

fronted and surprised politicians, first and most effectively in Connecticut. This reluctance dictated policies of expediency and even deceit. The campaign of 1866 had concentrated on the character of Andrew Johnson, and the Fourteenth Amendment. The party correctly interpreted the victory as endorsing most of the Radical program in the South, adding with less truth that "a majority of the successful party undoubtedly favor universal suffrage but that question has been left by the people to the decision of Congress."⁶³ The platform of 1868 had specifically promised no Federal action in the loyal states, but the Fifteenth Amendment resulted from that election triumph.

Although race prejudice is infrequently as influential in obstructing national policy as it was in this half-decade, the effort took its toll. Without doubt, the bias against colored voters retreated before the wave of moral and political attacks: Right and Republicanism marching shoulder to shoulder. The tenor of the debates in New York, Michigan, and Illinois and the silent agreement which greeted the final amendment demonstrates that this form of racial prejudice bowed, if slowly, to the inevitable.

This post-war era was the colored man's first real entry into federal politics. Obviously a neophyte, he was to some extent manipulated by the Radicals, but in a large measure he struck out on his own through organization, petition, and lobbying. Alive to all race issues, the Northern Negro placed too much dependence on the ballot. Though a step in the right direction it did not bring with it the equality he sought and deserved. The rewards were slow in coming, and fell short of the desires of the race. Many other manifestations of prejudice remained.

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⁶³ *Nation*, III (1866), 390.

MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

During the two years preceding the outbreak of the Civil War a most eloquent friend of the slave, Sarah Parker Remond of Salem, Massachusetts, lectured in many of the large cities and towns of England, Scotland and Ireland. Her avowed mission was "to extend the active sympathy of the whole British nation toward the cause of abolitionism in America." In pleading the cause of her black brothers, Miss Remond generally avoided the sensational and the sentimental. She might mention that female slaves were "liable to the brutality of the vilest wretches," but the purposeful young miss from Salem was not a four-handkerchief speaker; she did not specialize in heartrending tales of Tom and Topsy. She made her points, wrote one of her admirers, by a "clear elucidation of just principles—no claptrap."

Despite her failure to fire her audience with tales of slave derring-do, or to dissolve them in tears, Miss Remond was a most persuasive advocate. An educated young woman, she had a beguiling air of refinement—a genteel pattern of manners so highly esteemed as an ideal of womanhood in Victoria's England. Her speech was dulcet-toned and quiet, and her fluent vocabulary was pure of unladylike turns of phrase. She had an air of high seriousness, and she conveyed to others her own belief that tomorrow's sun would set upon a better world. For these reasons the Leeds Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society, at its December 1859 meeting,^{*} hired her as its agent.

The Society gave her a crowded schedule. On December 23 she spoke at Leeds, followed four days later by an appearance at Wortley, where she addressed an audience composed of "working men and factory operatives." Just before the old year was snuffed out, she went to Bramley where she won all hearts at the "large and commodious"