

Introduction:

Mantell's thesis is that Grant has been underestimated in the histories of Reconstruction . . . Touted as a General who was the plaything of others political ambition. Or as a wily political-general who hid behind Stanton and watched the direction the political winds were blowing so he could set his own political bark upon the waters with the wind to his back.

M points out that 1866 was not the Critical Year. . . He opts for the period 1867-68 when the first Reconstruction acts were passed. . . Still it was not certain whether the Republican program would work. Because the day to day workings of these acts depended upon the control of the army. Here the situation was uncertain. As long as Johnson was Commander-in-chief he could frustrate their efforts unless they could threaten him with impeachment. Or unless they could win the loyalties of General Grant. . .

The result was that through the years 1867-8 the President and the commanding general engaged in an intricate dance on a tightrope . . . with AJ using all of the powers of the presidency to hinder the completion of the congressional program as much as possible without giving the Republicans the grounds for his own impeachment. Grant was trying to enforce that same program in the way desired by Republican leaders while avoiding direct insubordination to his c-in-c.

On this point Mantell comes around to the Benedict position about impeachment. He argues that it was not a matter of vindictiveness or sheer emotion (as does McKittrick). In short, historians who see 1866 as the real victory for the Radicals look to other reasons than for the impeachment. But since the radicals were not out of the woods with the 1866 election victory, and would not be until the 1868 elections, Johnson was still a menacing presence. Impeachment was essentially political in which the major concern of Republicans was the success of the Reconstruction program they had established.

Mantell--contrary to Trefousse, argues that with the president's acquittal the Republicans had won their victory. . . He sees it as a victory for the party and not the beginnings of the erosion of Radical influence as is the case with Trefousse. . . For after the trial the Republicans enjoyed what they were after in the South--Republican controlled govts in all of the ex-Confederate states except three. . .

Mantell's other views: He believes that the RP north of Dixie was essentially strong. . . He cites the record of a party that pushed through the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments and the civil rights acts of 1866 and 1875. . . This was quite a "revolution" when we remember what the original party war aims were in 1861. . . If the RP faced a problem in the postwar years it was not internal division or inability to find a reason for existence. But the fact that it had only minor support within the dominant white segment of the population in the ten southern states. It was this that endangered the party's control. . . Republicans could and did generally carry the northern states despite the tightness of the races. . . But to achieve success in the South the party had to see to the enfranchisement of the southern blacks. . . Certainly by 1867-8 the south was now solid i

in opposition to the Republicanization of the region . . .

L. The Problem of Reconstruction

For the texts of the Freedman Bill and the Civil Rights act and the veto messages see Edward McPherson, Political History of the US of America during the Period of Reconstruction . . .

Mantell varies in his estimate of Johnson's reactions from those of the Coxes. . .He believes that AJ collapsed on his original demands to the South because he could see no other course. If he refused to accept their political appointees then his whole program would be in jeopardy. He notes the political benefits for Johnson from a lenient program with Southern and Northern Democrats. . .But he argues too that Johnson's strict Constitutional and states rights position played an influential rôle as well . . .

2. Grant, Johnson, and Reconstruction

The passage of the Reconstruction Acts presented an anomaly in US history-- legislation affecting more than 1/3 of the nation was to be carried out without the President's support and with his active opposition.

the success of Congressional reconstruction in 1867-68 relied then upon the support of the Army. M points out that Republicans were certain in this choice. No body had more interest in protecting the results of the war than the army. They had considerable experience with Southern politics since 1865 in the capacity of an occupying force. The army leaders were aware of the forces loose in the South. . .Of the confederate recriminations against the Union men in the South and retribution and terror used against the freedmen. .

Where did commander of the armies U.S. Grant stand in this congressional-executive fall-out. After the passage of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867--the Second act was made law in September 1867. Upon this the Congress convened until the December 1867 session.

Grant kept his own counsel. But privately he was appalled at Johnson's actions. He called the President's conduct on the "swing around the circle" in 1866 a "disgrace" to his wife. He thought AJ's veto of the 14th Amendment "ridiculous" . . .And he privately intervened with the commanding general in Arkansas to try and encourage that state to ratify the 14th amendment. He was even apprehensive lest AJ declare Congress itself unconstitutional. For fear of some military action or flare up by AJ against the Congress, he had all the federal arsenals in the South emptied and the ordinance brought into the North . . .

Johnson was aware of Grant's disapproval . . . He tried to remove him by sending him on a mission to Mexico and replacing Grant with General Sherman. Grant refused the assignment on the grounds that he could not be forced to accept a diplomatic mission. This occurred in October 1867.

What were the circumstances of the relations between AJ and the Commanders of the Five Military Districts.

AJ received the power as commander-in-chief to appoint the district commanders. But this power resided in him by virtue of his office was hedged with Congressional threats of impeachment if he tampered with the appointments for political reasons. AJ was sensitive to this threat. . . In the 3rd Reconstruction Act, also passed over AJ's veto, the powers of the Army commanders were made more complete and explicit, Grant was given supervisory powers over the appointments and removals made by them. The disenfranchisement provisions of the previous acts were clarified. Now registration boards were given the authority to decide who was eligible to vote and who was not. In addition, all future appointments to the office of the provisional govts were to take the "iron clad" oath of office, . . . that they never supported the Confederacy.

Generals Pope, Sheridan, and Sickles were anathema to Johnson. Schofield and Ord were considered moderates.

But Johnson did not go after the generals he went after the Secretary of War Stanton . . .

He replaced Stanton with Grant. Mantell points out that historians have confused this by believing it revealed that Grant was uncommitted or apolitical; or, in fact, actually supported Johnson's policies. He makes it clear that nothing was farther from the truth. Johnson may have appointed Grant for several of his own reasons (1) that with Grant in the Cabinet he could influence the General (2) that the removal of Stanton (the last anti-Johnson in the Cabinet) would not stampede radical reaction as much if Grant were his replacement, etc. But Johnson knew that Grant was not an admirer or even a supporter of his policies.

After this he removed Sheridan and then replaced Sickles. . . And issued a sweeping amnesty proclamation to former disenfranchised southerners. But all of this Fall offensive (1867) made little difference. The new Generals still took their clues from Grant. And the amnesty was without any immediate impact on the disenfranchised southerners since the President let it be known that he could not order that the commission boards register those pardoned unless he wanted to face impeachment. This matter he said would be left to the courts. . .

3. Reconstruction in the South

Deals with the complex issue of southern strategy and attitudes toward the 1867 election of delegates to the new constitutional conventions. This issue is dealt with in the Perman book. . .

Mantell seems to agree that the South's reaction was mainly to boycott the elections. In most of the states the majority of the white males stayed home. . . Only a small minority of southern whites supported the convention election and reconstruction. Blacks turned out in great numbers. . . ~~Some of the figures available are~~ cited in this chapter. . . . In any case, the conservatives lost their states and now would have to place their entire reliance on their Democratic allies in the North. *Chalk over*

4. Northern Politics and the Election of 1867

The issue of Negro suffrage in the North. Mantell does help destroy the argument of Republican hypocrisy on this issue. He notes that in 1865 in some of the MW states the Republicans placed this issue on their state platforms. It was defeated in each state. In 1866 the issue was held back because of the importance of the election.

But in 1867 the issue of black suffrage appeared on all state convention platforms except for California and Pennsylvania, In Tennessee the franchise was granted blacks by legislative action. Republican-controlled legislatures or constitutional conventions in Ohio, Michigan, Kansas, NY, Missouri and Minnesota all voted to place referendums for Black suffrage on the ballot. In addition, Congress provided for Negro suffrage in the District of Columbia and the federal territories . . . This was a long way for the party that simply wanted to keep slavery out of the territories in the 1850s. . . . The major difference between moderates and radicals was whether the enfranchisement should come by congressional action or by state referendum.

The results of the 1867 elections in the North--a significant victory for the Democracy. Democrats use of the Black Fear. . . Political equality was but the first step toward social equality, etc. . . There were other issues in the campaign. But the Democrats made the most on the Negro suffrage issue. It was defeated in most of the northern states.

Mantell makes the interesting point that the victory was regarded by the Democratic press and politicians as a victory for the party and not for Johnson. He was more and more regarded as inept and really of no political account.

5. Reconstruction and Impeachment: The Crisis

The backdrop to the Stanton affair: Mantell goes over the reasons why Republicans were growing anxious about their Reconstruction policies and their abilities to enforce them. . . The elections of 1867 were a key consideration here. . . What did they pretend for the 1868 Presidential election. Then there was the renewed opposition in the south to the

to the coming elections in the South and acceptance or rejection of the work of the constitutional conventions. Mantell leaves the impression that the South's former policy of sitting out the returns had changed under the impact of the Democratic victory in the North. Now southern conservatives were mobilizing to try and defeat the work of the Republican-controlled conventions. . . Or, at least these were reports from southern Unionists. See esp. the results of the voting in Alabama. Here the conservatives successfully boycotted the election The McCordle Case had come up. . . Date. The Supreme Court that ruled in favor of McCordle would be the same court to rule on the constitutionality of the Reconstruction Acts.

Finally, the Union Generals who were in command of the military districts had all changed from the original Republican-minded generals to more moderates. Although Mantell leaves the impression that fear on this account was over-hasty since Grant was still able to exercise maximum influence of these men.

But with AJ's efforts to remove Stanton--to have his removal upheld and him permanently out of the office and the office vacant. This represented a threat for then Johnson could fill the office with someone completely loyal to him and ready to carry out orders that would obstruct the Republican party's Reconstruction programs. . .

In this chpt Mantell delves with the details of the Grant-Johnson maneuverings over the dismissal of Stanton . . . Mantell defends Grant from any charges of treachery or bad faith. He dismisses, as he has all along, the charges that Grant broke with Johnson for expediency and for political reasons that pointed to his own nomination by the RP in 1868.

Mantell concludes the chpt. He characterizes the impeachment vote in the House as being on shaky grounds. He places the RP action in context of several factors (1) Democratic resurgence in the North (2) conservative resistance stiffening in the south (3) the S Court threatening to strike down the legislation. All this could be changed by the removal of AJ for a president who supported their policies and use the patronage to strengthen the party rather than to oppose it.

6. Reconstruction and Impeachment: The Settlement

In this chpt Mantell outlines one of the basis for the settlement of the impeachment--those working toward acquittal. He notes that there were more than seven Republicans ready to acquit. Others in the party stated after the vote that they would have voted acquittal had the occasion called for their vote to prevent the indictment and conviction. Part of this rose from the arrangement that Johnson's lawyers had made with Party moderates. This was the choice of a mutually satisfactory secretary of war. In this case it was General Schofield. Schofield agreed to accept the position only with the understanding that he was acting at the request of the Republican seators and with the pledge that President Johnson would make no effort to interfere with his enforcement of the Reconstruction Acts. . .

He notes too that the outcome of the impeachment trial did not seem to hang fire. . .It was generally believed that AJ would be acquitted. . .

9. The Election of 1868

Mantell details the results of this election. All but three of the former Confederate states voted in this election.

Grant's handy victory revealed that the party could overcome the setbacks of 1867. The victory was a national referendum demonstrating support for the war and for Republican Reconstruction. . .The RP used the war-related symbols in the campaign to good effect. Grant it was argued would bring peace and harmony. . .The Democrats if victorious would use the mandate to carry on the "civil war" etc. . .There was some evidence that public opinion was shifting more favorably toward the advanced racial policies of the Republicans. For the first time ever equal suffrage referendums were adopted in Minnesota and Iowa. . .

But the Democracy showed that it was a party with a possible future. . . Its successes in border states. . .There was indication that this strength would grow. . .Disenfranchisement of former ex-Confederates would prove more difficult in time. . .And the ability of southern conservatives to systematically exclude blacks from the polls in states like Tennessee, Georgia, So. Carolina, etc. . .during the 1868 election augured bad news for the Republicans. . .Although the RP carried most of the South in 1868. . .How long could they expect to have a biregional party?

The process of Congressional reconstruction begun in 1867 had been completed with the election of 1868. But the struggle simply passed from one stage to the next--the political struggle for control of these states. It continued to be bitter and terror-ridden. In this way Grant did not bring peace and harmony to the nation. . .