

## **RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH 1865-1877**

The term "Reconstruction Period" designates the years following the surrender of Confederate military forces in April 1865 to the final withdrawal of Union occupation troops in the early part of 1877. During this time the North attempted to reshape Southern government and society according to the goals determined by the victorious North

### **PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC RUIN IN THE SOUTH AFTER THE WAR**

The South, as the battlefield of the war, suffered much destruction. South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia suffered most from the destruction of the campaigns and from the scorched earth policy of Sherman and Sheridan.

Cities were shelled and burned and farmhouses destroyed as the invading Union armies sought to destroy the war potential of the South. Systematic destruction of railroads and bridges and wartime wear and neglect left transportation severely crippled. River shipping, seaports, and country roads were destroyed or left in sad disrepair.

Much private property in the South had been confiscated during the war. Confederate government property, including cotton in storage, naturally became the property of the victors. Many dishonest individuals, either actual Treasury agents or thieves posing as agents, wrongfully confiscated private holdings of livestock, cotton, and other farm commodities from intimidated Southerners.

Individuals in the South suffered disastrous economic losses. Banks all closed their doors and individual accounts were lost. Confederate currency became only a collectors' item. Holders of war bonds lost their investment; the emancipation of slaves meant the loss of valuable property to their owners. Farm land lost most of its value as the result of the loss of slaves and other economic disruption (transportation), and plantations were foreclosed for taxes. The whole country faced the problem of physical rebuilding, and of devising a new economic system under which former slaves might work. The South is the only part of the United States that has experienced the disaster of losing a war.

### **SOCIAL LOSSES AND UPHEAVAL**

About 250,000 Southern men died and uniform and others returned crippled, while many civilians lost their lives as a consequence of the war. The emancipation of the slaves uprooted hundreds of thousands of them and brought sudden freedom, for which they were unprepared. Their labor was lost and they created social problems for themselves and for the South as they wandered about looking for food and trying, like children, to enjoy their new freedom.

### **LINCOLN'S PLAN OF RECONSTRUCTION**

As the armies of the North occupied Southern territory, the North faced the problem of organizing loyal state governments. Lincoln assumed control and appointed as provisional governors Northern military commanders. Lincoln believed the war to be a rebellion of Southern government officials and not a war by the entire South. Also, Lincoln wanted the entire incident to be placed in the history books as soon as possible and let the healing between the two sections begin. Late in 1863 Lincoln formulated a simple and generous plan to achieve a speedy return of the conquered states. 1) Pardons were offered to all residents of the South, except for higher political and military leaders, on the condition they take an oath of allegiance to the United States. 2) As soon as ten percent of those who had voted in 1860 had taken the oath and to support the Thirteenth Amendment, a state government could be organized and send representation to Congress. Some Congressional leaders thought this plan too lenient and spoke of it derisively as the "ten percent plan."

### **BASES OF OPPOSITION TO LINCOLN'S RECONSTRUCTION PLAN**

From the beginning of the Lincoln administration there was a division of opinion within the Republican Party towards the South. While the moderate Republicans, like Lincoln, favored a lenient and understanding policy, the Radical Republicans favored harsh policies to punish the South for war.

Differences between Presidential and Radical plans may be explained as follows: 1) The Radicals feared that the supremacy of the Republican party, a newcomer to the political scene, might prove to be temporary if Northern and Southern Democrats should become united as they were before the war. 2) Conflict over the authority of the President was another cause of opposition to Lincoln. Many congressmen were convinced that the President had exceeded his authority during the war and afterwards in assuming control over reconstruction of the Southern states. 3) There was disagreement with Lincoln regarding the legal status of the South. Lincoln held that the states of the South had never ceased to exist, nor had they left the Union; they could not freely secede. This gave the power of reconstruction to the President because of his power to enforce the laws of the United States. The Congress held that the South was a conquered military territory and should be treated as such. This gave the power of reconstruction to Congress because of its constitutional jurisdiction over the federal territories. 4) Many in the North wanted to punish the South for starting the long and costly war.

Behind most of the measures of Congressional Reconstruction was the desire of Northern business interests to preserve and strengthen the Republican Party as the advocate of business interests. It was planned to keep the South impotent politically until the Republican Party had consolidated its gains and carried out its programs. The control of the African American vote was part of this plan. Reformers in the North wished to promote social changes to humble and weaken the planter aristocracy of the South to advance business as an economy for the South. They unwisely and revengefully sought to give full and immediate equality to the former slaves. The drastic measures they took were to embitter the South and cause hardship to the freedmen, and make more difficult their adjustment to freedom and responsibility (**Thirteenth Amendment here**)

#### **THE WADE-DAVIS BILL (JULY 1864)**

The Radical Republicans challenged Lincoln's plan early. Under their leadership Congress passed the Wade-Davis Bill to give the Radicals complete control over the reconstruction of the South. Lincoln pocket-vetoed the bill. Nevertheless, it demonstrated that Lincoln would have to deal with determined opposition in Congress from members of his own party. Lincoln, however, hoped to restore the Southern states to their former place in the Union before Congress could act.

#### **JOHNSON'S PLAN OF RECONSTRUCTION**

The assassination of Lincoln on April 15, 1865 threw the problem of reconstruction into the hands of the new President, Andrew Johnson. The Radicals assumed that Johnson would go along with their plans, since he had often been critical of the planter aristocrats in the south in favor of more political rights for the common white man of the South. Johnson had remained in the Senate when his own state, Tennessee seceded. However, as a former Democrat and a Southerner, Johnson also favored a more lenient policy. He wished to leave the Southern states free from federal intervention in what he considered internal affairs. He proceeded, therefore, to carry out a policy very similar to Lincoln's. Johnson's plan 1) called for the appointment of Southern civilians as provisional governors. 2) Next, constitutional conventions were to be called by the states and to be made up of delegates who had taken the oath of allegiance. 3) The conventions would be expected to withdraw the ordinances of secession, abolish slavery in accordance with the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and cancel all Confederate war debts.

Having completed these steps, the states could resume their former places in the Union. The Southern states carried out this plan or were well on their way to doing so when Congress convened in December 1865. None of the states made the provisions allowing the former slaves the right to vote; Congress resented this and showed an unwillingness to recognize Johnson's plan. Congress then refused to seat senators and representatives chosen by the state governments under Johnson's plan.

## **THE BEGINNINGS OF CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION**

In order to control and delay the reconstruction of the South until after the Congressional Elections of 1866, the Radicals, who had a small majority in both houses, appointed a Joint Committee on Reconstruction.

## **LEADERS OF CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION**

The outstanding Radical congressional leader was Thaddeus Stevens, a Representative from Pennsylvania long noted for his advocacy of popular reforms (Bill of Rights), his hatred for the ruling classes of the South, and his sincere sympathy for the former slaves. His theory of reconstruction held that the Southern states had become “conquered territories” completely at the disposal of Congress. He maintained his domineering and vindictive leadership in Congress until 1868.

Charles Sumner, from Massachusetts, became the Senate Radical leader on the Joint Committee. In bad health, avowedly due to the beating by Preston Brooks, his mind was obsessed with the single question of the former slave. As an idealist and reformer, he wished to enforce immediate racial equality. These two men exercised considerable power in Congress. Many Congressmen, eager to restore power to the Congress after the war, agreed with Sumner's idea that the Southern states had committed “state suicide” with secession and were now to be treated like any other conquered territory by Congress.

## **MISTAKES OF THE SOUTH**

The Southern states chose many former high-ranking Confederate leaders to represent them in Congress upon their restoration of their state governments under Johnson's plan; this greatly irritated the North.

The “Black Codes” were passed by the Southern legislatures to settle the future status of the freedmen. These laws were meant to protect the former slaves from their own helplessness, to make sure they would go back to work, and to severely restrict their legal, social and economic rights.

Race riots occurred in the early part of 1866 in certain parts of the South with considerable loss of life, especially among the freedmen.

These events played in the South played into the hands of the Radicals, who now contended the South was unwilling to accept the verdict of the war and the North would have to show them how life would be after the war.

## **THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT**

### **CONGRESSIONAL PLAN OF RECONSTRUCTION**

After gaining a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress, the Radical Republicans gave no respect to the opinions of the President and of the Supreme Court. When Congress reconvened in December 1866, the Radicals enacted a series of laws that were vindictive and intended to assure the perpetuation of Congressional rule of reconstruction.

Among the statutes passed were: 1) The Tenure of Office Act forbade the President from removing civil officers without the consent of the Senate; the purpose was to keep Johnson from removing Radicals from the executive branch. 2) The Army Act was passed in order to keep Johnson from having any control over the military. 3) A Civil Rights Act was passed to give the blacks citizenship in the United States and protect them under the rights of the Constitution.

Also, 4) The Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867 a) rejected the new state governments in the South except for Tennessee; b) the South was divided into five military districts, each under the control of a high-ranking Northern army officer; c) in each district all voters were to be registered so as to enfranchise the freedmen and deny the vote to large numbers of white voters for disloyalty to the Union, this was to ensure Radical control over the state governments; d) another provision required the states to provide for black suffrage under newly drafted state constitutions; e) the Fourteenth Amendment had to be ratified by the state legislatures; f) newly elected senators and representatives had to be able to take the “iron-clad oath” that they had never voluntarily aided the Confederacy.

## **THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT**

In the summer of 1866, the Radicals passed the Fourteenth Amendment to fix into law more firmly (not allow for the Supreme Court to rule it unconstitutional) the Civil Rights Act. This “Omnibus Amendment” carried several other provisions to put the Radical program into effect and ensure its success.

- 1) It gave citizenship with full rights to all persons born or naturalized in the country and forbade the states to pass any law to restrict such rights or deny equal protection. This same section forbade any state to deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law.
- 2) The next section, which was to become a dead letter, provided that if any state denied the vote to any of its male inhabitants, it would have its representation proportionately reduced in Congress and in the Electoral College.
- 3) The third section took from the President the traditional pardoning power by which ex-Confederates might be permitted to hold any state or federal offices.
- 4) The fourth section guaranteed the payment of the United States war debt, but prohibited the payment of any debt or obligation incurred by the Confederacy and precluded any compensation for the loss of slave property.
- 5) The power of enforcement of its provisions was vested in Congress, although traditionally the executive is the law-enforcing branch of government. The Radicals would not entrust its enforcement to President Johnson.

## **THE IMPEACHMENT OF JOHNSON**

Although the Radicals had enough votes to override any presidential veto, they were determined to consolidate their strength further by removing Johnson from office by impeachment. Johnson ordinarily was careful to abide by the laws passed by Congress. However, in August 1867, he asked for the resignation of Edwin Stanton, the Secretary of War who acted as a spy for the Radicals in cabinet meetings. Johnson believed the Tenure of Office Act to be unconstitutional and fired Stanton when he refused to resign. When Johnson sent his appointment of Ulysses Grant to the Senate, the Radicals saw this as a violation of federal law and a basis for impeachment.

In February 1868, the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to impeach Johnson ; most of the charges were based on violations of the Tenure of Office Act. The Senate sat as a court to hear the case and judge the guilt of the accused. The case lasted for three months. The President’s lawyers argued about the unconstitutionality of the law. The House Republicans, under the leadership of Thaddeus Stevens, argued the law was constitutional because it was passed by Congress. The Radicals also attempted to pressure the undecided Senators into supporting the removal of the President. Yet they could not muster the one extra vote that was needed to get the President removed. Seven independent Republicans refused to join their colleagues in voting for removal and Johnson was acquitted of the charges by one vote. The trial, however, demonstrated the extremes to which the Radical Congress would go to override the executive branch and dominate the government.

## **RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION IN EFFECT IN THE SOUTH**

After the Radicals won control of the government, they proceeded in 1867 to enforce their extreme measures in the South. The South was organized into five military districts, each under a Union general whose authority was enforced by federal troops. The state governments were supplanted by military governments (Is this constitutional?)

The control over the black vote was the key to Republican control of the Southern states. The blacks were assured the vote by the Fourteenth Amendment and the presence of federal troops to protect them. The Union League, the Radical propaganda arm in the South, worked to cement loyalty of the freedmen to the Republican Party and provided the effective Republican leadership in the South during Reconstruction. The term “carpetbaggers” (type of suitcase) came to be used by Southerners to describe the Northerners who moved South during this time. These men encouraged the freedmen to vote Republican and voted Republican themselves. These men were government officials, missionaries, politicians, and businessmen who came to South to take advantage of various opportunities after the war.

Another Southern group supporting Radical reconstruction was the “Scalawags,” Southern whites who hoped to win office or realize private advantage by collaborating with the Northerners. Blacks leaders among the freedmen also helped indoctrinate their fellows to loyalty to the Republican Party. These groups compromised the main elements of government in the South as long as federal troops were present to support them against the mass of Southern whites. The program of the Reconstruction governments called for enforcing civil, political and social equality of the former slaves with Southern whites. Many white Southerners were denied the right to vote to enable carpetbag governments in power.

### **RECONSTRUCTION GOVERNMENTS IN THE SOUTH**

The Reconstruction “Carpetbag” governments in the states have been strongly condemned for several features. 1) They rejected the educated and politically experienced Southern white leaders and placed many ignorant and illiterate freedmen in office. 2) There was widespread graft and corruption. Cynical politicians and businessmen in both the North and South were responsible during this period for the many flagrant instances of dishonesty in public life. 3) The Carpetbag legislatures levied burdensome taxes upon property holders, indulged in wild spending and saddled the states with heavy debts.

Certain constructive elements resulted from the reforms instituted by these governments. 1) New constitutions provided for more democracy by guaranteeing civil liberties and universal male suffrage. 2) Public works projects provided necessary roads, bridges and public buildings. 3) A system of compulsory, free public education was started. Not only were the blacks helped by the schools, but poorer whites also benefited. 4) Taxes were levied to be more burdensome on the upper classes instead of the poorer classes.

### **THE ELECTION OF 1868**

In 1868 the Republicans were practically assured of victory by their control of the Southern state governments made effective by the presence of federal troops and the control over the registration of voters. The military hero Grant became the Republican nominee; he was completely acceptable to the Republicans who wanted to see the South punished. The Democrats passed up Johnson for renomination and chose Horatio Seymour of New York. In spite of factors favoring a Republican victory, Grant won by only 300,000 votes – a lead clearly due to Union League manipulation of the black vote and army disenfranchisement of Southern whites.

### **THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT**

The slim victory of the Radicals in 1868, even in the South, convinced them of the need to be sure blacks would not be denied the right to vote. (Some blacks were frightened away from the polls in the election.) The danger existed the Southern states would later amend their state constitutions to deprive the black male the right to vote. The result was the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment by Congress in 1869 and its ratification in 1870. This amendment simply provided no one could be denied the vote on account of race, color, or having been a slave.

### **RADICAL DEFIANCE THE SUPREME COURT**

After the radicals had gained enough votes in Congress, they carried out their tough measures against both the executive and judicial branches. Only the Supreme Court stood in the way of complete Congressional domination over the federal government.

Congress manipulated the Court by raising the number of justices to ten during the war. Congress then passed a law that new vacancies in the Court should not be filled until the number of justices was reduced to seven. This was an attempt to keep Johnson from having the ability to appoint justices. When Grant became President, the Congress then again increased the number to nine justices. This guaranteed a Radical majority on the Supreme Court.

## **THE PRESIDENCY OF ULYSSES S. GRANT**

Although Grant was popular and had been successful in his military career, his qualities of character and lack of political experience were not equal to the demands of the Presidency.

### **GRANT'S IMPERFECTIONS**

His military experience in some ways proved a handicap in public office. He expected his political appointees to carry out orders as his military subordinates had done, but his trust was proven misplaced. His lack of experience in public affairs often led to absurd decisions, and the appointment of poorly qualified persons. Among numerous friends and relatives he appointed, there were several dozen of his wife's relatives. Grant was often petty and vindictive in decisions (especially during drinking stages) and favored those who had contributed funds to purchase three expensive houses and the wealthy and grateful who bestowed upon him large money contributions. Having himself failed in business matters, he held in high regard those who succeeded in piling up fortunes. He admired and listened to aggressive, selfish, and tricky businessmen who became his close friends.

### **MORAL CLIMATE OF THE POSTWAR PERIOD**

Grant's administration with its scandals reflects the low moral climate of his time. The spending of vast amounts of money during the war had conditioned those responsible to a large degree of carelessness in handling public funds. The widespread corruption may be explained by the lust for power of cynical politician, the aggressive greed for money by wartime profiteers, and the war-caused letdown in public morals. Both the North and the South suffered from this corruption that began in Reconstruction and would not end until the turn of the century. Because of Congressional power and obsession with punishing the South, Northern businesses were allowed to operate with no regulation and complete protection. A dog-eat-dog attitude prevailed in business life. Businessmen who survived grew fat because they were ruthless, tricky, and by corruption gained special favors from government. Grant, however, was largely unaware of what was going on around him. In fact, during his first term, Americans were unaware of the corruption in the government and re-elected Grant in 1872. Soon after his re-election news of many scandals began to break. All of them made Grant seem like a buffoon.

### **SCANDALS OF THE GRANT ADMINISTRATION**

During his administration Grant found himself involved in a number of scandals that were orchestrated by the people close to him. His administration was the most corrupt up to this point in US history.

### **THE BLACK FRIDAY GOLD CONSPIRACY**

Two notorious and unscrupulous speculators, Jim Fisk and Jay Gould, in September 1869, engineered a plot to take millions in quick profits by cornering the nation's gold supply. Through a brother-in-law the President was convinced by seemingly logical argument that a stoppage of the sale of gold by the Treasury would help farmers by causing a rise in the price of wheat. (However, the logic presented to the President did not include the fact the cost of producing wheat would also rise.) Meanwhile, Fisk and Gould bought up as much gold as they possibly could. Grant's innocent complicity caused the price of gold to skyrocket. Legitimate businessmen were driven to bankruptcy on "Black Friday" when the price of gold was bid up

madly. When Grant realized what was happening, he ordered the Treasury to sell gold and thereby broke the speculative bubble. However, Fisk and Gould had already sold their supply at the high prices and great harm had been done to many honest businessmen.

### **THE TWEED RING**

For several years prior to 1871, "Boss" Tweed at the head of an organization of political crooks in New York City plundered the city's treasury of approximately \$200,000,000. The gang operated through faked payments and grafts. *The New York Times* had the courage to publish the evidence in 1871 and Samuel J. Tilden led the prosecution that convicted Tweed.

### **THE CREDIT MOBILIER SCANDAL**

This scandal reflected badly on the Republican majority in Congress in Grant's first term. The Credit Mobilier was the construction company organized by the Union Pacific Railroad to skim off millions in profits paid to themselves for building the railroad. Oakes Ames, acting as the agent of the Credit Mobilier Company, bribed members of Congress to prevent any action to halt the profiteering made possible by the congressional subsidies for railroad building. The scandal was exposed just after the Election of 1872 and injured the reputation of many prominent members of Congress.

### **THE SALARY GRAB ACT**

In 1873 Congress doubled the salary of the President and voted themselves a salary increase of 50 percent. The worst part of the act was that it made the increase retroactive two years back. This led to the Democrats becoming the majority party in Congress in the Congressional Elections of 1874.

### **THE SANBORN CONTRACT AND OTHER SCANDALS**

In the Sanborn Contract fraud, it was revealed in 1874 that a politician named Sanborn had been given a contract by the Treasury Department to collect \$427,000 in unpaid taxes. He was allowed a commission of 50 percent. However, no one named Sanborn was involved in the collecting of taxes and the commission earned from the collection of the taxes was used to finance Republican political activities.

The Whiskey Ring fraud was a conspiracy between distillers and treasury officials to defraud the federal government of revenue from the excise tax on liquor. Grant's personal secretary accepted favors in the plot, and the President himself accepted gifts he should have suspected. Grant defended his secretary against the investigation.

In still another scandal, Grant's Secretary of War, W.W. Belknap, accepted bribes from a post-trader in the Native American territory. Grant defended Belknap, who eventually resigned or faced impeachment.

### **THE LAST YEARS OF RECONSTRUCTION**

By 1868 the states of the South except Mississippi, Texas, Virginia and Georgia had adopted new constitutions and otherwise had complied with provisions under the Reconstruction acts and were readmitted to the Union. The other four states were required to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment as a further condition of readmission, which they all did in 1870.

### **RESTORATION OF SOUTHERN CONTROL**

After readmission the Southern whites gradually regained the upper hand. Northern opinion softened towards the South as the public began turning away from the extremism of the Republican controlled Congress. The Reconstruction governments lost popularity because of high taxation, increases in indebtedness and corruption. The Southern whites became more united against outside control; and blacks stopped voting. Opinion in the North led to the Congress softening the extreme measures of Reconstruction.

In 1872 Congress passed the Amnesty Act, which restored political rights to most of the former Confederates.

### **THE KU KLUX KLAN**

The Klan was a secret vigilante organization organized in Tennessee by former Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest in the South that had many imitators. The motives of these societies was to maintain Southern white control over important Southern institutions. The South faced a perplexing social problem in that many of the former slaves were encouraged to assert themselves by the Union League. However, because of the lack of education and understanding of Southern society, these former slaves acted ignorantly and often irresponsibly to the touch situation. In response, the Klansmen resorted to the worst forms of intimidation and violence, especially against the blacks. The result was the decrease in government activity by the former slave. Unscrupulous and lawless elements joined or imitated the Klan to achieve their own selfish interests. All of these groups acted at night under masks and robes.

Congress and Grant took drastic measures to suppress the Klan. The Enforcement Acts were passed in 1870 and 1871. The writ of habeas corpus was suspended and troops were used to protect the federal courts; these efforts decreased Klan effectiveness. However, the Klan illustrated the extreme measures the South was willing to use in order to regain control over their society.

### **FACTORS IN THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE SOUTH**

Also aiding in the recovery of the South as an independent region was its economic recovery. 1) One of the most effective government agencies was the Freedmen's Bureau. Originally designed to help the cause of the former slave adjust to the new freedmen, the Bureau eventually helped clothe, feed and care for not only poor blacks, but also poor whites. The only thing that kept the Bureau from being more effective was the lack of funds appropriated to it by Congress. 2) Also helping in keeping the complete destruction of Southern society were the federal troops stationed in the South. Many shared their food, clothing and supplies with the Southerners. Many black troops went out of their way to help their own race. 3) The War department with the Carpetbag Governments rebuilt Southern railroads, bridges, and roads. While these activities cause debts to incur for the governments involves, it provided the needed transportation to restart economic activity in the South. 4) The South promoted its own recovery by establishing new, small businesses in such industries as cotton milling, tobacco processing, and lumbering. 5) Cotton production was revived after a few years against the greatest of handicaps, no free labor.

### **THE ELECTION OF 1876**

A third-term movement for Grant was squelched and the way left open for the magnetic, moderate James G. Blaine to receive the Republican nomination. His nomination would have been assured except for news of the favors he had accepted from a railroad for helping it secure a federal land grant in 1869. Not wanting to relive the scandals of Grant's administration, The Republicans chose the liberal but colorless Civil War general and governor of Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes. The Democrats appealed to the nation's desire to get rid of corruption and liberalism by choosing Samuel J. Tilden, governor of New York and the dragon-slayer who made himself nationally famous by bringing an end to the Tweed Ring in New York City.

The election returns produced the most disputed election in American history. Tilden won 264,000 more popular votes than Hayes and Tilden had 184 of the undisputed electoral votes to 165 for Hayes. Twenty electoral votes were disputed; 19 of these were in the three Southern states of Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida. The Republicans would have to win every disputed elector to win the presidency. These states submitted two sets of election returns, one favoring each party, to Congress.

Congress had no law or precedent to settle such a dispute and the Constitution provided no remedy for the situation. It finally agreed upon to appoint an Electoral Commission of 15 with five members from each – the House, the Senate, and the Supreme Court. The membership of the committee was made up of seven

Republicans, seven Democrats, and one nonpartisan. When the nonpartisan member of the committee resigned from the Supreme Court, he was necessarily replaced by a Republican, since all of the remaining members of the Court were Republicans. The strictly partisan vote gave every point in the dispute to the Republicans and Hayes. However, the Democrats complained about the unfairness of the committee's decision and threatened to boycott the inauguration. A political bargain between the two parties secured the assent of the Democrats to the decision of the Commission in return for the withdrawal of the remaining federal troops in the South. Thus Congressional Reconstruction (military) was terminated.

### **THE EFFECTS OF RECONSTRUCTION**

In the eyes of many Southerners and competent historians, too, Reconstruction has been judged as more destructive to the South and more harmful in its long-lasting consequences than the war itself. Lincoln's generous and moderate policy would most likely have healed quickly the wounds of the war. But it was replaced by a vindictive ten-year policy of trying to force the South into a mold it was bound to reject. The racial problem of the South was aggravated by an attempt to turn society upside down and accomplish a social revolution in a day. Southern whites all felt compelled to unite to preserve their place in the new society. The attempt to create a Republican Party in the South backfired because of the means used by the Republicans. Instead, it created a one-party system in the South controlled by the Democrats. Because of the attempts of social revolution in a day, whites made sure that blacks, who became Republicans, did not vote. This kept a rivalry from occurring, which would have possibly brought better government to the South. The term "Solid South" came to be applied to the unbroken loyalty to the Democratic Party that lasted until 1928.