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SOUTHERN ATTITUDES TOWARD NEGRO VOTING
IN THE BOURBON PERIOD, 1877-1890

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DONALD NORTON BROWN
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SOUTHERN ATTITUDES TOWARD NEGRO VOTING

IN THE BOURBON PERIOD, 1877-1890

APPROVED BY

John S. Egerton

Edwin C. McReynolds

Archibald

Max S. Woodward

Rufus L. Hall

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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SOUTHERN ATTITUDES TOWARD NEGRO

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CHAPTER I

RECONSTRUCTION: THE NEGRO AND THE SOUTH

It was December of 1863 and the Confederacy was dying. During the summer months of that fateful year the gray-clad Southern armies, outnumbered and poorly equipped, had seen their dream of a successful invasion of the Northern heartland evaporate in the heat and smoke of the battle that was Gettysburg. They had also gone down to defeat in the war's western theater as Vicksburg finally succumbed to the long siege imposed by the Union forces under command of Ulysses S. Grant. The capitulation of this bastion severed the Confederacy by cutting off Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas from effective communication with their sister states. Southern arms had also failed, in this year of crisis, to contain the Federal forces operating in Tennessee. Confederate control of this key state was also lost in this fateful summer when the Northern troops emerged victorious in the bloody affrays at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. Defeat of the Southern soldiers in these "battles in the clouds" opened the way for the Northern host to launch a successful invasion of the heartland of the Confederacy. Over a year of death and destruction,

heartache and horror, trial and tribulation remained to be endured, but for all practical purposes the month of December in the year 1863 saw the death of the Confederate States of America.

In Washington, D. C., during that month, President Abraham Lincoln was more and more turning his thoughts to the possibility of utilizing political experiments to assist the Union armies to bring a satisfactory and rapid conclusion to the rebellion. One such experiment had already resulted in eventual Confederate success being much less likely. This experiment had been employed in 1862 when Southern victories had made it appear probable that the nations of France and England would accord recognition to the Confederate States of America. Such an act would have removed the conflict from the category of a fratricidal dispute and bestowed upon it the aura of a war for independence on the part of the South. After recognition was granted the European powers could offer arms, money, and other articles to the Confederacy without violating the rights of the United States under international law. Such an event would enhance the power of the Confederacy and increase the possibility that success would attend Southern efforts to loosen the shackles of union. Consequently, Lincoln, realizing that there existed among many of the English people a feeling of repugnance toward the institution of slavery, decided to bestow upon the war the character of a crusade to free the millions held in bondage. Such an act would require the English government, generally regarded as being sympathetic to the South, to take into consideration the attitude of its electorate and possibly withhold recognition. As England went so would go France, and if these nations did not recognize

the South they would be reluctant to violate international law by giving overt assistance to the Confederacy. With this in mind Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation of emancipation on September 22, 1862, and followed it with a formal proclamation on New Year's Day, 1863. The primary provision of the definitive statement was that in those areas still in rebellion all of the people held in bondage were free and the United States would recognize and seek to maintain their freedom.¹ While no slaves were actually freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, it did fulfill the purpose for which it was really intended--it contributed to the decision of the government of England to refrain from recognizing the Confederacy.²

The success attendant upon the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation was undoubtedly one of the reasons for Lincoln's effort to take advantage of the fact that in some areas of the Confederacy there existed a non-vocal element which was essentially loyal to the Federal government. After Union troops overran portions of Louisiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee in 1862, the President appointed provisional governors for those states and charged them with the responsibility of encouraging the loyalists to assert themselves for the United States.

¹Omitted from the effect of the Proclamation were Tennessee, the areas of Virginia and Louisiana then under Federal control, and the border slave states. For the text of the Emancipation Proclamation see Henry Steel Commager (ed.), Documents of American History (Two volumes in one, 4th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), I, 420-21.

²Southern leaders undoubtedly realized that this was the purpose of Lincoln's pronouncement, but they couched their opposition to it on a different plane. The Richmond Whig, October 1, 1862, said that it openly invited the slaves to rise in insurrection. The Richmond Examiner echoed this sentiment and characterized the Proclamation as the "most startling political crime . . . yet known in American history." Jefferson Davis warned that it made restitution of the Union forever impossible. Quoted in James G. Randall, The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1937), p. 498.

Lincoln realized that the sowing of distrust and discord in these states would rust the armor of the Confederacy and would mean as much to the eventual success of the Union cause as would another victory in the field. In North Carolina the provisional governor did not find Union sentiment strong enough to subvert the Confederate cause, but some measure of success was achieved in Louisiana, Tennessee, and, after the fall of Vicksburg, in Arkansas.³

To solidify the gains made in these states and to provide a more definite procedure for the establishment of loyal governments, Lincoln issued a proclamation on December 8, 1863, which granted a pardon to all except a specified few of the residents of those states still in rebellion. This plan also looked forward to the calling of constitutional conventions and the establishment of loyal governments in the states which had rebelled.⁴

During the following year constitutional conventions were held and loyal governments were established under Lincoln's plan in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Louisiana. Establishment of new governments raised the question of whether the privilege of casting a ballot should be bestowed upon the freed Negroes. Before the convention was convened in Louisiana, the President wrote a letter to Michael Hahn congratulating him upon becoming the first free-state governor of that commonwealth. The President

³William A. Dunning, Reconstruction, Political and Economic, 1865-1877, vol. XXII of The American Nation: A History, ed. A. B. Hart (28 vols.; New York: Harper and Bros., 1904-18), p. 14.

⁴James D. Richardson (comp.), A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1896-99), VI, 214.

noted in his letter that the forthcoming convention in Louisiana would probably define the franchise qualifications. He therefore suggested, for Hahn's "private consideration," that some of the colored men be granted the ballot--"as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks."⁵ The Louisiana convention chose not to heed this suggestion and no Negroes were enfranchised. Actually, there was little precedent for Lincoln's proposal because members of the colored race had only rarely been privileged to vote in any of the states prior to the Civil War.⁶

Establishment of new state governments continued the question that had faced the Louisiana convention--whether or not the recently freed colored man should be endowed with the franchise. While Lincoln had deemed it necessary to suggest a limited amount of Negro suffrage in his letter to Hahn in 1864, the idea had not been accepted and was more or less ignored when the war ended. Certainly in 1865 the belief that the colored man should be endowed with the ballot was not a part of the

⁵Letter of Abraham Lincoln to Michael Hahn, March 13, 1864, in Roy P. Basler (ed.), The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, VII (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 132.

⁶At the outset of the American Revolution only Georgia and South Carolina denied the ballot to the free Negro. After that conflict North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia allowed all free men, regardless of color, to exercise the franchise if they possessed the requisite amount of property. By the 1830's, however, the constitutions of these states were changed so that even free Negroes were excluded. Maryland prohibited voting by colored men in 1810, and no other Southern state permitted persons of color to vote before the Civil War. The only states which apparently had no race restrictions in regard to voting were Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. For a complete discussion of this subject see Stephen B. Weeks, "The History of Negro Suffrage in the South," Political Science Quarterly, IX (December, 1894), 674-81.

national policy of the Republican party. While some leaders of this party expounded the view that enfranchisement was necessary, for the most part they considered it to be an unwise and perhaps even dangerous expedient. One such Republican leader, Oliver P. Morton, summed up the prevailing attitude in a speech at Richmond, Indiana, shortly after the end of the war. It was his contention that to say "men just emerged from slavery are qualified for the exercise of political power, is to make the strongest pro-slavery argument I ever heard. It is to pay the highest compliment to the institution of slavery."⁷

Morton's belief that the colored man at the moment of his freedom was incapable of understanding the responsibilities attached to the exercise of the franchise was not unanimously accepted by the party leadership, but it was the view apparently held by most party leaders in the last months of the war. There was not, for instance, any provision for Negro suffrage in the plan of Reconstruction promulgated by Lincoln on December 8, 1863, nor did the Congressional answer to his program, the Wade-Davis bill, give consideration to the subject.⁸ The same situation prevailed when Lincoln was assassinated and was succeeded by the Southern Democrat, Andrew Johnson of Tennessee.

Lincoln's death at the hands of an assassin meant that Recon-

⁷Quoted in ibid., 681.

⁸The Wade-Davis bill provided for the enrollment of all white males in the seceded states, and, when a majority of those enrolled took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, the election of delegates to a constitutional convention. Delegates were to be chosen by "the loyal white male citizens." No mention was made of Negro eligibility to vote in the elections. Richardson (comp.), Messages and Papers, VI, 223-26.

struction policy would be directed by a Southerner who had opposed secession and who had long been hostile to the Southern aristocracy. Because Johnson had been an enemy of the Confederacy he was considered by the Radical Republicans as being attuned to their view that the South should be punished for its experiment in secession. The responsibilities of office, however, soon revealed Johnson in a new light, and it was not long before he adopted the essential elements of his predecessor's ideas.⁹ Much to the disgust of the Radicals, Johnson became fairly liberal, but, like Lincoln, he was never overly anxious to see the recently freed colored men enfranchised.¹⁰

Under Johnson's plan of Reconstruction constitutional conventions were held throughout the South in the fall of 1865.¹¹ Conventions in

⁹Like Lincoln, Johnson soon adopted a liberal plan. He called for the provisional governors to provide for a constitutional convention. Delegates were to be chosen by those who had taken an oath of allegiance to the United States, but there was no requirement that a certain percentage of the electors, as in Lincoln's plan, must take the oath before a convention could be assembled. Such conventions were called upon to repudiate the Ordinance of Secession and the Confederate debt, and were to define qualifications to vote and eligibility to office. For provisions of the various plans see Walter L. Fleming (ed.), Documentary History of Reconstruction: Political, Military, Social, Religious, and Industrial, 1865 to the Present Time (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, Co., 1906-07), II, 118-70.

¹⁰Johnson did suggest to Governor W. L. Sharkey of Mississippi that the convention in that state might extend the franchise to literate Negroes and to those who owned property in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars. Johnson said that this would foil those Radicals who were wild on the subject of Negro suffrage in their efforts to prevent the Southern states from renewing their relations with the rest of the Union. Ibid., p. 177. Evidently the President's suggestion of even limited Negro suffrage was simply a matter of political expediency. His real attitude was undoubtedly expressed on October 31, 1865, when he said that "it would not do to let the negro have universal suffrage now; it would breed a war of races." Ibid., p. 117. It might be noted that before Johnson assumed the presidency loyal state governments had already been established in Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia.

every state but Texas completed their work before the end of November. All but South Carolina fulfilled the requirements laid down by Johnson; that state refused to repudiate the Confederate debt. The action taken by South Carolina, and the quibbling in some conventions as to whether their Ordinance of Secession should be "repealed" or declared "forever null and void" contributed to the increasing Northern suspicion that the South had not yet accepted the fact of her defeat.

An important factor in the development of this attitude on the part of many Northerners was that none of the Southern conventions seriously considered granting the franchise to the Negro. A few months earlier even the Republican leadership did not believe that such an event was necessary, but the action of the conventions and Southern statements on the subject convinced many of the people at the North that the colored man would be unable to protect himself without the ballot. Some Southern leaders had given lip service to the idea of Negro suffrage, but even these had qualified their acceptance of the principle. In South Carolina, for example, some of the recognized leaders had stated that they were willing to see the colored man enfranchised, but that it must be in a limited manner. Northerners looked with suspicion upon such an attitude as that expressed by the brother of Wade Hampton. This individual informed a visiting Northern reporter, Whitelaw Reid, before the convention was assembled in that state, that he and many other whites had no great objection to allowing the Negro to vote. Such a statement would have aroused no suspicion at the North as to Southern intentions toward the

¹¹In no instance were Negroes allowed to participate in choosing members.

colored man had not this prominent South Carolinian continued by stating that the South would not suffer from enfranchisement because the masters would cast the ballots of their former slaves as they did their own!¹² Statements of this type certainly did nothing to mollify the increasing Northern suspicions as to the true attitude in the South toward the Negro. Neither did the fact that in all of the former Confederate states the conventions refused to countenance even the enfranchisement of the more intelligent colored men. Thus, there was increasing dissatisfaction with Southern policy and the development of the thought that force must be applied to bring the principle of Negro suffrage to fruition.

Establishments of governments in the Southern states under the Johnson plan completed Presidential Reconstruction. It did not, however, mark an end to the question. Unfortunately for the future history of the South the state governments inaugurated under this plan and the Congressmen chosen in those states included among their numbers many former Confederates. This, coupled with the obvious reluctance of those states to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment and the adoption of the so-called Black Codes, convinced some Republican leaders that a solidly Democratic South was emerging. They realized that the electoral vote of the Southern states, coupled with those of New York and New Jersey, would be sufficient to win a Presidential election for the opposition party. With this the dominance of the sectional Republican party in national politics would come to an abrupt end. But, if a strong Republican party could be developed in the Southern states such a situation might not develop for several years.

¹²Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Southern Tour (Cincinnati, Low, 1866), p. 283.

Leaders of the party realized, however, that such success could not be attained without the Negro vote, and with the Democrats in power in these states this objective would be difficult to achieve. Consequently, the only hope that the Republicans had of ever being anything more than a sectional party was to bring an end to the white-dominated Democratic governments established under the Johnson plan.

In order to gain the time necessary to solidify opposition to the Johnson governments, the Radical Republicans blocked the seating of Congressmen from the Southern states in the session which began in December, 1865. Then the Radicals--those extremists in the Republican party who advocated a punitive policy toward the South--brought about the organization of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. This committee, under the chairmanship of Senator William Fessenden but dominated by the vitriolic Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, was charged with the responsibility of investigating conditions in the South. It was also to inform Congress when the former Confederate states were ready to be readmitted into the Union. The committee, composed of fifteen members, collected testimony from a seeming unending parade of witnesses on the conditions which prevailed in the South. Such "evidence" as was elicited from these eager witnesses proved to the satisfaction of the Radicals that the Southern states had been lax in providing protection for the loyalist element and the colored people.¹³ Consequently, in the opinion of the committee these states could not be considered ready to fulfill their obligations as members of the Union. In addition, Congress was informed that since the

¹³Francis B. Simkins, The South Old and New: A History, 1820-1947 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 181.

former Confederate states were either unwilling or unable to regulate relations between the whites and their former slaves, the Freedmen's Bureau and an army of occupation must be maintained in the South.¹⁴

Testimony assembled by the Joint Committee convinced moderate as well as Radical Republicans that the former Confederates were unwilling to accept the fact of their defeat and that drastic measures were necessary to protect the colored people. Supporting this contention were reports from newspaper correspondents, occasional travelers, and official observers who visited these states in the years immediately after the war. While not all of the reports, both formal and informal, were antagonistic toward the former enemy enough of them fell into that category that Radical contentions as to Southern attitude could be supported. For instance, the report of the highly respected Carl Shurtz, an official observer sent into the South by President Johnson, maintained that a majority of the people in that region were not contrite and that they were only awaiting a favorable opportunity to reestablish slavery. This position was seemingly supported by reports of mistreatment of Negroes by the whites. Accounts of numerous Northerners, coupled with riots in Memphis and New Orleans in 1866 during which many colored people lost their lives, convinced many people at the North that steps must be taken to protect the freedman. Such action was forthcoming on February 16, 1866, when Congress passed legislation extending the life and expanding the scope of the Freedmen's Bureau. A short two months later, on April 9, 1866, Congress enacted into law the Civil Rights Act. This measure made the Negro a

¹⁴The Freedmen's Bureau, designed to protect the blacks in their relationship with the whites, was created in March, 1865, as a bureau in the War Department.

citizen and conferred upon him all civil rights enjoyed by the whites. It was hoped by Republican leaders that such measures would not only afford protection to the colored man, but would also increase his loyalty to the Republican party.

In spite of the fact that these measures were widely acclaimed in the North, President Johnson did not feel he could accept them. Although not convinced that the Freedmen's Bureau was necessary for the protection of the colored man, the primary reason assigned to the President for his veto of the measure was that the Southern states had been denied representation in Congress. In his veto message Johnson admitted that each branch of Congress was the judge of the qualifications of its members, but, he continued, "that authority cannot be construed as including the right to shut out in time of peace any State from representation to which it is entitled by the Constitution"¹⁵ Johnson's contention that Congress was not legally constituted, and his subsequent veto of the Civil Rights Act resulted in increased antipathy toward the President on the part of members of that body and also among the rank and file of the Republican party.

After the vetoes, verbal attacks upon Johnson came with ever-increasing frequency. The President answered the vituperation in kind and the nation was treated to the unfortunate spectacle of the Chief Executive engaging in a name-calling affray with prominent Congressmen. The end result was a decline in the prestige of Johnson. Unable to longer command respect, he could not, as he attempted in 1866, influence the

¹⁵The text of the veto message may be found in Commager (ed.), Documents of American History, II, 12-14.

electorate to select a Congress which would support his program. Unfortunately for the future of the South, the Radicals, augmented in numbers by newly elected members and by Moderates now disenchanted with Johnson, had little difficulty after the 1866 election in overriding Presidential vetoes. Very quickly they began to work their will upon the South.

In the Congressional session of 1867 the Radical Republicans were firmly in control, but there was some doubt as to how long this position could be maintained. Prior to the abolition of slavery only three-fifths of the Negroes were counted in determining Congressional representation. The freeing of the slaves ended this arrangement and entitled the former Confederate states to increased representation in Congress and the Electoral College. That this posed a threat to the ascendancy of the Republicans was clearly recognized by the leaders of that party. Largely as a result of this, sentiment in the Radical-dominated Congress strongly favored making enfranchisement of the Negro a prerequisite for reorganization of governments in the Southern states. If the colored man could be made eligible to the ballot he could undoubtedly be influenced to cast his vote for the party responsible for his freedom. This might break the power of the Democratic party in the South and assure the continued ascendancy of the Republicans. That this was the ultimate purpose of that party can be seen in statements made by its leadership. Thaddeus Stevens, for example, said in 1867 that "the Republican white men are in a minority in each of those States. With them the blacks would act in a body, form a majority, control the States and protect themselves. It would assure the ascendancy of the Union party."¹⁶ Charles Sumner, Radical counterpart

¹⁶Quoted in Weeks, "The History of Negro Suffrage in the South," Political Science Quarterly, IX, 682.

of Stevens in the Senate, wanted to go even further and provide for Negro suffrage throughout the Union. On April 20, 1867, he addressed the editor of a prominent journal, the Independent, on the subject of bestowing the franchise upon the colored man. Noting that the editor favored accomplishing this end through the medium of an amendment to the Constitution, Sumner said that "we can not wait . . . this question must be settled forthwith; in other words, it must be settled before the presidential election" The votes of the Negroes, he continued, "are needed at the North as well as at the South. There are Northern states where their votes can make the good cause safe beyond question."¹⁷

That the colored vote was necessary for the continued success of the Republican party was increasingly recognized by its leaders, and their attitude toward the South was certainly not mollified by the action undertaken by the states of that section in relation to the Fourteenth Amendment. This proposed change in the nation's fundamental law was passed by Congress even though the Civil Rights Act, guaranteeing to the Negro many of the same things incorporated in the Amendment, had been put into effect over Johnson's veto. The Radicals, however, realized that it would be simple for future Congresses to revise or abandon this legislation and, consequently, sought to guarantee the Negro's position by changing the basic law of the United States. Thus, the Fourteenth Amendment, submitted to the states in June, 1866, not only defined citizenship and made the Negro a citizen, but it also sought to protect the colored man in his civil rights. While the Amendment did not directly

¹⁷Quoted in ibid.

enfranchise the Negro, it did seek to accomplish that end by penalizing those states denying him the vote by lessening their representation in Congress and the Electoral College.¹⁸ Reaction to this Amendment in the South was what might have been expected. The legislature of every former Confederate state but Tennessee refused to give ratification. In this action they were joined by enough other states that the necessary three-fourths vote could not be immediately secured, and for the time-being it appeared that the Amendment would be rejected.

Action of the Southern states on the proposed change in the Constitution resulted in the Radicals becoming even more convinced that restrictive legislation was necessary. Thus, when the "lame-duck" session of Congress was convened in December, 1866, there was inaugurated what might be termed the "force policy" of Reconstruction. Through the medium of legislation passed in this and the following session, the Southern governments established under the Lincoln and Johnson plans were overthrown. In the so-called First Reconstruction Act, passed on March 2, 1867, it was declared that "no legal State governments or adequate protection for life or property" existed in ten of the former Confederate states.¹⁹ In order that "peace and order" might be restored these ten states were divided into five districts--each of which was to be placed under the command of a military governor. This individual was to call a

¹⁸The amendment also forced repudiation of the Confederate debt, guaranteed that of the Federal government, and denied many former Confederates the privilege of holding office. This latter disability could be removed by a two-thirds vote of Congress. For the complete text see Commager (ed.), Documents of American History, II, 51.

¹⁹Tennessee, already under a Radical government, was the exception.

constitutional convention to which the members would be elected by "the male citizens . . . of whatever race, color or previous condition" ²⁰ Each convention was charged with the responsibility of preparing a new instrument of government for its state which would include a provision establishing the same rule of suffrage. After the constitution was approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the state and by Congress, state officials might be elected. Congressmen would be seated from the state, however, only after the legislature had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and it had become a part of the Constitution. ²¹

This act, and supplemental measures passed for the purposes of clarification, were not acceptable to President Johnson. Congress desired to overthrow the already loyal governments, he maintained in his veto message, only in order that it could insist upon the granting of the franchise to the Negro. "Universal suffrage," he proclaimed, "is a question which the Federal Constitution leaves exclusively to the States themselves." ²² Johnson's efforts in vetoing this and subsequent legislation, however, was merely a "tilting at windmills." The Radical-dominated Congress had no intention of allowing the already discredited President to prevent the fulfillment of its plans for the Southern states. The vetoes were quickly over-ridden, and supplementary legislation,

²⁰The act excluded from voting those who were disfranchised for participating in the rebellion. Fleming (ed.), Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 402.

²¹Ibid.

²²For the complete text of the veto message see Richardson (comp.), Messages and Papers, VI, 532-33

designed to prevent Johnson from thwarting the will of Congress, was enacted into law. On March 2, for example, Congress passed the Command of the Army Act. This measure placed the military, important to the Radicals as a tool through which their dictates could be enforced, under the virtual control of the Radical-dominated General of the Army, Ulysses S. Grant. At the same time there was enacted the Tenure of Office Act--a measure which usurped control of the President's own cabinet by preventing the dismissal of members friendly to the Radicals.²³ That the Radicals were firmly in the saddle was now evident; they intended to ride until the Southern states were reconstituted to their own satisfaction.

Enactment of the Reconstruction measures left the South confused and disheartened. Benjamin H. Hill, later to represent Georgia in the Senate of the United States, declared that the legislation constituted a breach of faith with the South because the obligations they imposed had not been made a condition of surrender.²⁴ Provisions in the act moved another Georgian, a newspaperman, to write that while military rule might be forced upon the South "she will never confess a falsehood nor affix the brand of infamy on her own brow."²⁵ White leaders in Arkansas

²³Johnson was later impeached for dismissing Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in violation of the terms of the Tenure of Office Act. That he escaped conviction, on obviously trumped-up charges, by only one vote is indicative of the tenor of opinion in Congress.

²⁴Benjamin H. Hill, Jr. (ed.), Senator Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia: His Life, Speeches, and Writings (Atlanta: T. H. P. Bloodworth, 1893), p. 747.

²⁵Augusta Weekly Constitutionalist, February 27, 1867, quoted in E. Merton Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877, Vol. VIII of A History of the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (12 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 121.

declared that Reconstruction under the Congressional plan was an impossibility; it would result in "the certain degradation, prostration and complete ruin of the State."²⁶ Mississippi sought to prevent the implementation of the acts by requesting the Supreme Court of the United States to enjoin President Johnson from enforcing them. This request was denied, as was the petition of Georgia for an injunction prohibiting Secretary of War Edwin Stanton from enforcing the measure.²⁷ No matter how much the South might complain, the refusal of the Supreme Court to take action made it clear that the Southern states could not look to that body for redress of grievances.

While much dissatisfaction was manifested in the South toward the Congressional plan, some Southerners believed from the outset that it would be better to accept the situation. Joseph E. Brown, war-Governor of Georgia, warned his compatriots not to flatter themselves that they had the privilege of "choosing between the present proposition and continued military government." If the South rejected the Congressional plan, he warned, the next action of the Radicals might be to turn the area completely over to Negro rule.²⁸ A Confederate hero from South

²⁶Quoted in Fleming, Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 423-24.

²⁷In the Mississippi case the Supreme Court ruled that the issue was a political matter in which the Court did not have jurisdiction, and also that the President might not be restrained in the performance of his executive duties by the judiciary. Mississippi V. Johnson, 4 Wallace (U.S.), 475, 500-01, (1867). In the case of Georgia V. Stanton, the Court ruled that the Secretary of War was an agent of the President, and was consequently not subject to interference by the judicial branch. Georgia V. Stanton, 6 Wallace (U.S.), 50, 77 (1867, 1868).

²⁸Speech of Ex-Gov. Joseph E. Brown, of Georgia, Delivered in

Carolina, Wade Hampton, advised Southerners to accept the situation, but to try and convince the colored man that his best friend was the Southern white. Hampton professed to believe that the states of the South should establish impartial suffrage and recognize the political rights of the blacks. He cautioned all classes to cultivate harmony and exercise forbearance; to remember the Negroes were not responsible for the existing state of affairs.²⁹

It actually mattered very little whether Southerners sought to "cultivate harmony" or whether they liked the Congressional plan--they were forced by circumstances to follow the procedure it outlined. President Johnson, although believing the legislation to be unconstitutional, fulfilled his obligation under the act by appointing the military commanders. The generals, required by the so-called Second Military Reconstruction Act to enroll eligible voters before September 1, 1867, also quickly set about their task. According to the terms of the law no individual was entitled to register if he had willingly participated in the rebellion, and as a result of this disfranchising clause much of the potential white electorate was not included on the completed registration lists. The ultimate effect was that more Negroes--the group from which

Milledgville, Ga., June 6, 1867, on the Present Situation and Future Prospects of the Country, pp. 1-8, quoted in Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 123.

²⁹Letter of Wade Hampton, August 7, 1867, included in Free Men! Free Ballots!! Free Schools!!! The Pledges of Gen. Wade Hampton, Democratic Candidate for Governor, to the Colored People of South Carolina (n.p., 1876), pp. 1-2. A copy of this campaign document may be found at the University of North Carolina library. It might be noted that such other prominent Southerners as Albert Gallatin Brown of Mississippi and former generals Pierre G. T. Beauregard and James Longstreet also advised compliance with Congressional dictates.

the Republican party was to draw its strength in the South--were enrolled than were native whites.³⁰

After registration was completed in the various states, elections were held to determine if constitutional conventions should be called and if so, to choose delegates to them. Many of those whites eligible to vote absented themselves from the polls in an effort to prevent a majority vote in the state.³¹ Most of the whites who did vote cast their ballot for the convention. The same was true of the majority of the Negroes and as a result the vote was in favor of holding a convention.³²

Inactivity on the part of the whites plus the marshalling of the Negro vote in favor of the state constitutional convention resulted in the membership of those bodies being predominately Radical. In Louisiana and South Carolina a majority of the delegates were colored, and in all states, with the exception of North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, the combined vote of the Negro and white Radical delegates exceeded that of the Conservatives. A few colored delegates were men of ability, but in most instances they were illiterate.³³ Consequently, the white Radical

³⁰The registration totals included 627,00 whites and 703,000 Negroes. The latter outnumbered the whites in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Simkins, The South Old and New, p. 187.

³¹The Reconstruction Acts provided that no convention could be held unless a majority of the registered voters participated in the elections. Some leaders advised whites to abstain from voting and thus possibly prevent the necessary majority. Fleming (ed.), Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 423-24. In South Carolina and Florida only about one-tenth of the registered whites voted, and in no state did more than one-half participate. Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 133.

³²Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 133.

³³Simkins, The South Old and New, p. 190.

leaders, intent upon assuring the ascendancy of the Republican party, were able to dominate the proceedings.

The new instruments of government prepared by the conventions assembled under the Radical plan included some progressive innovations. As a whole they all included the principle of equality of all men before the law, required the counting of the total population as the basis for representation, and provided for universal manhood suffrage without restrictions as to race, color or previous condition. Generally, too, they provided for free education of all children, and usually centralized power in the governor.³⁴ Some states, however, included provisions which were too radical to be effective. The South Carolina convention, for example, adopted resolutions expunging forever from the vocabulary of the state the words "Negro," "nigger," and "Yankee."³⁵

By 1868 every convention but Virginia's and Texas' had completed its work and submitted a newly prepared constitution--each conferring the right to vote upon the Negro--to its electorate for acceptance or rejection. Republican leaders in the various states advised immediate adoption; most Conservative leaders voiced opposition. Despite all efforts of the latter to prevent it, all of the Southern states but three accepted their constitutions, inaugurated new state governments, and rati-

³⁴For a compilation of these state constitutions see Francis M. Thorpe (comp. and ed.), The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America (4 vols.; Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1909).

³⁵Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, quoted in Fleming (ed.), Documentary History of Reconstruction, I, 450.

fied the Fourteenth Amendment by July, 1868.³⁶ Upon completion of this procedure they were readmitted to the Union and their representatives were seated in Congress.

The three remaining states--Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia--were not restored to their normal relationship until 1870. Prior to this date Mississippi voters had rejected the constitution submitted to them for ratification; Texas Republicans engaged in an intra-party battle and could not agree on a constitution; Virginia's new instrument of government so severely proscribed ex-Confederates that the district commander refused to submit it to the electorate. Consequently, when the Radical-dominated Ulysses S. Grant was elected President in 1868, there were still three Southern states out of harmony with the rest of the Union. Shortly after Grant assumed office in March, 1869, he was instructed by Congress to bring these states into their normal relationship with the rest of the Union as soon as was feasible. This was accomplished by allowing the electorate of Mississippi and Virginia to vote on their constitutions with or without the objectionable disfranchising clause. In both states that particular clause was rejected and the remainder of the constitution was accepted. As a result, Virginia, after ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment, was readmitted to the Union in January, 1870, and Mississippi the following month. By March of the same year the Texans had settled their differences and had been accepted back into the good graces of the

³⁶Enough voters remained away from the polls in Alabama that a majority of the registered voters did not participate as was required by the Second Reconstruction Act. Congress, therefore, enacted the Fourth Military Reconstruction Act. It provided that constitutions would become effective when approved by a majority of those participating in the election.

United States.³⁷

Readmittance of the Southern states did not result in an immediate end to their difficulties. In fact, the years included in the period from the summer of 1868 to the spring of 1877--the time when the last Federal troops were withdrawn from the South--saw so many changes and problems that the period is generally termed Black Reconstruction. These are the years when all of the Southern governments were, for varying lengths of time, under the domination of the Radical Republicans and their colored cohorts.³⁸ Actually, the Negroes, only recently freed from the stultifying effects of slavery, were generally not competent from an educational standpoint to participate either in elections or governmental administration. Since the colored men had no tradition of self-government it is not at all surprising that they ordinarily were meek in following the instructions of their white leaders. The latter fell into one of two categories--Carpetbagger or Scalawag. Carpetbagger was an opprobrious term bestowed upon a few thousand adventurers who descended upon the Southern states from the North after the Civil War. Their primary purpose seemed to be that of organizing the blacks politically and then utilizing

³⁷ Georgia was another state not fully accepted until 1870. She had been readmitted in June, 1868, but the first legislature convened under the new constitution expelled its Negro members on the grounds that the colored man was entitled to vote but not to hold office. The state was again placed under military Reconstruction with the proviso that the Negroes must be reseated, and that Georgia must join Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia in ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment. Upon fulfilling these provisions Georgia was readmitted in 1870.

³⁸ Only Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina were dominated by the Radicals for the entire period. Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia attained "home rule" after a short period and the other states after four or five years.

the Negro vote to win and control public office. This group was joined in its activities by native white Southerners derisively termed Scalawags. The motives guiding this group were varied. Some cooperated with the Radicals because of a desire for office, some because they believed the Negro must be uplifted; many because they had a heritage of a political philosophy more akin to that of the Republican than of the Democratic party.³⁹ Whatever reason they might have had for lending support to the Radical Carpetbagger, they were usually considered traitors to the South. One Southern journal, for example, characterized the Scalawag as the "local leper . . . [and] a mangy dog."⁴⁰ Another newspaper proclaimed that it would prefer to see in office "the blackest man that can be found to the whitest renegade of the South" These individuals, said the editor, "have dishonored the dignity of the white blood and are traitors alike to principle and race."⁴¹

While Southerners disliked the Scalawag as a matter of principle, they were particularly concerned with the fact that the Radicals utilized the Freedmen's Bureau and an organization known as the Union League to bring the Negro into the Republican party.⁴² Although the Freedmen's

³⁹David Donald says that the assumption that after the war the Southern Whigs joined with the Democrats to fight Negro and Carpetbag rule was not always true. Many Whigs joined with the Republicans. He estimates that from 25 to 30 per cent of the white voters in Mississippi had joined the Republican party by 1873. David H. Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," Journal of Southern History, X (November, 1944), 448.

⁴⁰Land We Love, VI (1868-69), p. 87, quoted in Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 125.

⁴¹Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, August 15, 1867, quoted in ibid., p. 126.

Bureau was charged with such activity, it was undoubtedly the Union League which had the greatest success. The methods employed by this organization to achieve its ends were varied and complex. Well aware of the Negro's penchant for ceremony, an elaborate ritual and an impressive catechism was evolved. Night meetings with their aura of mystery and gay parades and drills were used to appeal to the colored man's love of show. But if persuasion failed, fear and intimidation were also acceptable parts of the League's program to gain Negro support for the Republican party.⁴³ Most of the colored men willingly united with that party, but, unfortunately for the Negro, the excesses of Black Reconstruction were charged to him while the spoils of office fell to his political mentors.

The period of Radical or Black Reconstruction is usually pictured as one of general corruption in the governments of the Southern states. Since this was not an era of morality in office--witness the activities of the Tweed Ring in New York and the scandals associated with the Grant administration--it is not too surprising to find the Radical Republicans in the South succumbing to the opportunities of gaining wealth from the public coffers. Most of the higher and potentially more lucrative offices

⁴²The Union League was founded in Northern cities in 1862 to rally support for the war effort after the reverses of that year. Agents of the League entered the South when the war ended. For awhile it was a white organization, but in 1866 Negroes were admitted to membership. By 1867 its primary objective was the organization of Negro voters for the Republican party. Fleming (ed.), Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 3-5.

⁴³North Carolina Negroes were told in 1863 that if the Democratic candidate for President won the election the colored man would be returned to bondage. Ku Klux Report, North Carolina Testimony, pp. 309-12, quoted in ibid., 22-23.

were filled either by white Carpetbaggers or Scalawags.⁴⁴ Yet, it was not the native white Southerner nor his Northern ally who evoked the most criticism, comment, and opposition from the mass of Southern whites. Realizing that this was alien rule based upon the support of some 931,000 registered Negro voters, the Southern white came to place most of the blame for the excesses of Reconstruction upon the head of the freedman.

That the whites of the South came to blame the colored race for most of their troubles is understandable but not entirely accurate. Although the Southern governments were dominated by the Radical Republicans--supported by the civil and military power of the Grant administration--the Negroes were recipients of little more than the crumbs of the spoils. For the most part the positions held by the colored men were confined to the local areas of government, constables, justices of the peace, county treasurers, and the like.⁴⁵ Some were appointed to Federal positions--postmasters, marshals, mail agents, and the like--and a few were elected to serve in Congress. Many Southerners viewed the latter situation with great glee. One Virginian wrote that "we want negroes to be so thick in Congress that a man standing on the wharf at Aquia Creek, with a favorable

⁴⁴Among the leading Carpetbaggers were David H. Chamberlain, a native of Massachusetts who served as Governor of South Carolina, Adelbert Ames, who held the same position in Mississippi, and Henry C. Warmoth who emerged a wealthy man from the governorship of Louisiana. Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 140. In Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas it was the Scalawag who assumed the dominant position.

⁴⁵There were, of course, exceptions. In Mississippi, a colored man, Alexander K. Davis, was elected Lieutenant-Governor; in South Carolina a Negro Carpetbagger, Jonathan J. Wright, served on the State Supreme Court; in most of the states colored men were elected to the legislature. For an account of Wright's service see Robert H. Woody, "Jonathan Jasper Wright, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina, 1870-1877," Journal of Negro History, XVIII (February, 1933), 114-136.

wind, could smell them." We want, he said, "their wool to be knee-deep in the halls of Congress, and we do not want any one there who is not five times blacker than the ace of spades."⁴⁶ While men of color were not elected to Congress in the numbers desired by this Virginian, seven states--Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina--did send Negroes to the House of Representatives during the Reconstruction period. Only two Negro Senators were elected to serve during these years. These were Hiram R. Revels and Blanche K. Bruce, both of Mississippi. Generally, the Negro members of Congress were not noted for their statesmanship, but their presence in that body did afford pride and satisfaction to their race.⁴⁷

While some Negroes achieved prominent political positions, Republican leaders in the South were little interested in advancing the Negro politically except where it would aid them to control the Southern states. For several years the Radicals had overwhelming majorities in the legislatures of several former Confederate states. Despite this, little legislation which would materially advance the colored race emerged from these legislatures. Instead, corruption and personal aggrandizement were the order of the day. In Louisiana, for instance, six hundred dollars would purchase the vote of a Senator, and in Florida the Negro members of the legislature, taking a cue from their white counterparts, organized a "smelling committee" to ferret out possibilities of graft.⁴⁸ Included

⁴⁶Richmond Times quoted in Southern Cultivator XXIV (1866), 61, quoted in Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 144.

⁴⁷For an account of the Congressional service of the Negro see Samuel Denny Smith, The Negro in Congress (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940).

⁴⁸Fleming (ed.), Documentary History of Reconstruction, II, 54-55.

in the refreshments supplied to the legislators of South Carolina, at public expense, were wines and liquors, Westphalia hams, pineapple, Norfolk oysters, the finest cigars, and other delicacies too numerous to mention. State house "supplies" paid for by the public of South Carolina included gilt mantle mirrors, the finest of furniture, jewelry, horses, mules, carriages, buggies, and so on ad infinitum.⁴⁹ It is small wonder that state expenses rose to astronomical heights during this period.

The saturnalia of corruption were not, however, limited to South Carolina. Tax rates were increased rapidly in all states; in some they became almost confiscatory.⁵⁰ Some states saw their credit mortgaged to provide aids for projects which were never brought to fruition. In Alabama, for example, the Radical legislature was bribed to loan millions to the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad Company--money which was used to construct not a railroad, but a hotel and an opera house, and which was never repaid.⁵¹ State governments also floated large bond issues in order to provide additional funds to expend, and, as a result, there was a rapid increase in the indebtedness of these states. By 1872 the state debt of Alabama had risen from \$7,000,000 to \$32,000,000, while that of Louisiana had increased from \$14,000,000 to \$48,000,000.⁵² In all of

⁴⁹Ibid., 59-68.

⁵⁰Tax rates in Mississippi were fourteen times as much in 1874 as in 1869. Ibid., 71. Public expenditures were greatly increased throughout the South. In Alabama and Florida expenses of state government increased 200%, in Louisiana 500%, and in Arkansas 1500%. The natural result was an increase in tax rates and a decline in property values. Simkins, The South Old and New, p. 196.

⁵¹In North Carolina the Scalawag regime of William H. Holden made grants to railroad companies in excess of \$27,000,000. Randall, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 851

⁵²Simkins, The South Old and New, p. 186.

these states the melon of spoils was sliced in a manner which benefited the men in office. It is little wonder that Radical rule produced a violent reaction on the part of the white people of the South.

Malfeasance in office was not the only reason that Radical governments were increasingly under attack. Radical Reconstruction was also an attack upon white supremacy. While the excesses of the period were not usually the direct responsibility of the Negro, the average Southerner did not believe that these governments could exist without the support of the colored race. Corruption and extravagance increased the antipathy of the Southern whites toward the Republican governments. Yet, maintains one modern historian of the South, had these regimes been the model of rectitude, they would still have been suspect by the average Southerner as long as the Radical governments regarded the black man as the political equal of the white.⁵³ To bring about an end to this alliance of Negroes and Radicals--and to return control of affairs to the native white--became the primary objective of many a Southerner. To accomplish this end they were willing to utilize any weapon at their command--be it social, economic, moral, or, if necessary, violent.

By 1870 indecision on the part of the whites was replaced with the firm intention to regain control of the Southern governments. To escape the odium attached to the name Democrat, the Conservative party was organized in most of the states. This political organization, aided by dissensions among the Radicals and intimidation of Negroes by Ku Klux threats and outright violence, was soon able to control the governments

⁵³Ibid., p. 199.

in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.⁵⁴ The activities of the Ku Klux Klan, and similar terroristic organizations, elicited from the Radical-controlled Congress the third in a series of so-called "force" acts. This measure authorized the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in those states where he deemed it necessary. It also declared a long list of activities to be high crimes, and the perpetrators were made subject to fine and imprisonment.⁵⁵ President Grant, acting under the authority of this act, in October, 1871, designated nine counties in South Carolina as being in rebellion. The counties were placed under martial law, troops were rushed in to enforce the President's decree, investigations were held, and the Federal Circuit Court handed down numerous sentences involving fine and imprisonment. Through this method the Klan was suppressed by Federal authorities, and the Conservatives deemed it necessary to turn to other methods to achieve the final overthrow of Radical governments in the remainder of the former Confederate states.

⁵⁴The Klan was organized at Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1865 as an innocent lodge, but by 1868 it had become an answer to the Union League and a means of intimidating the hated Negro militia units. Eventually, the better element among the whites became disenamoured with the violent tactics employed by the organization. To some it seemed that its "primary motive . . . was the desire of the lower class whites to remove the Negro as a competitor in labor and . . . in the renting of land." Francis B. Simkins and Robert H. Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 462.

⁵⁵U.S., Statutes at Large, XXVII, pp. 13-15. The first of the so-called "force" acts, passed on May 31, 1870, was designed to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment. It provided penalties for anyone using force, bribery, or intimidation to prevent citizens from voting. The President was authorized to use the military to enforce decisions of the Federal courts which had jurisdiction in these cases. At the same time Congressional elections were placed under Federal regulation. U.S., Statutes at Large, XVI, pp. 140-46.

Despite the restrictive Federal legislation, or perhaps because of it, there was an increased determination on the part of the Southern leaders to rid their states of Radical control. Well aware that Radical domination rested upon the electoral support of the colored man, plans were laid to divorce the Negro from his white leaders. New organizations, reminiscent of the Klan but without its rituals and disguises, were formed in the early 1870's to accomplish that end.⁵⁶ Organizations of this type usually sought to convince the Negroes that the people of the South had the best interests of the colored race at heart and that the Conservatives were deserving of their political support. If persuasion failed, and it generally did, there was always recourse to intimidation and physical coercion. Armed men often invaded Republican meetings, heckled the speakers, and insisted upon equal time for Conservative orators. Moving through the crowd, they would hint to the awed colored men that a healthy course would be to cast their ballots for Conservative candidates. As a result of these tactics many Negroes, and even some white Republicans, either joined forces with the Conservatives during the twilight years of Reconstruction or ceased to participate in the elections.⁵⁷

Largely because of these activities the Conservatives were able to acquire control of all but three of the state governments before 1876. Redemption occurred in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia in 1870, and in 1874, despite open conflict, or maybe because of it,

⁵⁶These associations were known as the White League in Louisiana, the White Line in Mississippi, the White Man's Party in Alabama, and the Red Shirts in South Carolina.

⁵⁷Randall, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 866.

elections were carried by the Democrats in Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas. In the following year Mississippi made her bid for freedom from Radical control. The situation in this state differed, however, from that in any of the other states which had so far been successful in achieving Redemption.⁵⁸ Here, the Radical-controlled Negroes greatly outnumbered the whites, and the problem was how to effect control without bringing about Federal intervention.⁵⁹

The system which was evolved by the Mississippi white leaders was essentially very simple. At the outset of Reconstruction there was a relatively large number of whites in that state who were willing to accept the fact of defeat and to obey the dictates of the Radicals--even to the point of upholding the right of the Negro to the suffrage. This group of whites, composed mostly of old-line Whigs, desired order and harmony above all else. They, like many other Southerners, believed that it would be advantageous to convince the colored man that the best friend he had was the Southern white. If the Negro could be so convinced,

⁵⁸ Southern historians are increasingly institutionalizing the words "Redemption" and "Redeemer." Redemption is the term applied to the movement seeking to effect a return to native white political control of the Southern states. Redeemer is a term applied to those political leaders who directed the movement to secure "home rule." These leaders generally remained politically prominent after 1877, but the "Redeemers" came to be termed "Bourbons."

⁵⁹ Because of the dislocation attendant upon the war and because of the ignorance of the Negro the Census of 1870, as it deals with the colored population, is inaccurate. The Census of 1880, however, is accurate and, because it comes near the beginning of the period covered in this work, will be the one primarily utilized. This census showed the Negro population of Mississippi to be 650,291 and the white population to be 479,398. Percentagewise, 57.5% of the population was Negro. The same ration probably prevailed in 1875. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), chap. III, table 13, p. 44, and chap. IV, table 5, p. 51.

it was believed, he would cast his vote for his "true" friend and home rule would be restored through the medium of the ballot box. Most Conservative leaders in Mississippi, however, did not accept this idea. Almost from the outset they had believed that allowing the colored man to vote was a dangerous expedient and that it must be curtailed. As early as December, 1869, for example, the editor of the Columbus Index wrote that "we have given the negro a fair trial. He has voted steadily against us, and we hoist, from this day, the white man's flag, and will never take it down so long as we have a voice in the government of the State."⁶⁰ The attitude expressed by this editor soon became that of a majority of the white people of the state, and by 1870 a number of "White Men's Clubs" had been formed--the purpose of which was to restore white supremacy to Mississippi. These clubs, fearful of Federal intervention as in South Carolina, did not resort to much violence in the years prior to 1873. In the election of that year, however, there was an increase in Negro office holders and the white supremacy movement gained new converts. Included among the new additions were many who had previously believed the Negro could be convinced that his best interests were those of the Southern whites.⁶¹

Radical Reconstruction came to an abrupt end in Mississippi in 1875. In the state elections of that year the Democrats, determined to maintain home rule and white supremacy, gained control of the government. The methods employed to accomplish the restoration of home rule--later to

⁶⁰ Hinds County Gazette, December 15, 1869, quoting the Columbus Index, quoted in Vernon L. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 181.

⁶¹ Ibid.

be given such titles as the Mississippi Plan, the Straightout Policy, and the Shotgun Policy--ranged from the stuffing of ballot boxes to the intimidation of whites and Negroes by threats and the occasional use of violence.⁶² By employing these means the Democrats were able to sweep the elections and Mississippi was redeemed.

As the presidential election year of 1876 rolled onto the calendar only three Southern states--Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina--remained under Radical control. In these states the large colored population, destined to play a key roll in the election of that year, had been an important political factor from the time of the inauguration of Radical Reconstruction. Not only had the Republicans depended upon their votes, but many Negroes had also held local and state offices. Numerous attempts had been made by the Conservatives to wean the colored men away from the Republican bosses prior to 1876. In Louisiana, for example, Negro and white leaders in New Orleans had evolved a plan in 1873 which would end Radical control by unifying the two races into one gigantic political organization. This plan anticipated guaranteeing the Negro complete political, civil, and, if possible, economic equality.⁶³ Although this so-called "Unification Movement" came to naught, continuing efforts were made in Louisiana to bring the Negro into the Democratic fold.

⁶²William A. Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro in Mississippi," Journal of Southern History, IV (August, 1938), 318-19. In this election there was a decrease in Negro votes. Democrats were chosen in 62 of 74 counties and in the only race for state office, that of Treasurer, the Democratic candidate polled 96,596 votes to 66,155 for his Republican opponent. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, pp. 181-98.

⁶³T. Harry Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," Journal of Southern History, XI (August, 1945), 349-50.

In the election year of 1876 the New Orleans Daily Picayune, an organ of the Democratic party, launched a campaign designed not only to convince the Negro but also Northern leaders that the South was well aware of who had won the war and that the colored men possessed certain rights. On April 23 the newspaper editorialized that "the war is over. The negroes have been emancipated and enfranchised They have a right to their own political opinions and to vote for whom they please."⁶⁴ On May 12 the editor reiterated the recognition of the "enfranchised African" as a fellow citizen. "We mean to go to the polls with him," he said, "and to count his vote as we would count our own, but we mean to control his vote, if we possibly can, by every fair means."⁶⁵ On July 19 the Picayune professed to see a spread of conservatism among the colored men and said that undoubtedly they were beginning to sense the utter hopelessness of their situation under Radical leadership.⁶⁶ Editorials continued in this vein until after the election, but whether they had any success in disenchanting the mass of illiterate Negroes with the Republicans is problematical. Actually, the editors of this and other newspapers were more interested in convincing the people in the North that the intentions of the whites of Louisiana and the South were pure. Nevertheless, editorials such as these obviously had an effect upon the white Republicans because repeated warnings were issued to the colored men that the

⁶⁴ New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 23, 1876.

⁶⁵ Ibid., May 12, 1876.

⁶⁶ Ibid., July 19, 1876. The Picayune pointed out that the colored men had assisted the Radicals in holding office for ten years and it had profited them nothing.

Democratic party desired their votes only for its own selfish purpose.⁶⁷ The party press also began to characterize those Negroes who united with the Democrats as renegades, drunkards, and "deadbeats" who joined the enemy to "obtain food, clothing, and whiskey without working for them."⁶⁸ Obviously, Republican leaders in Louisiana feared their traditional hold on the colored man was tenuous in 1876.

Another state in which the Democratic party actively sought the support of the Negro was South Carolina. In this state a number of Democratic clubs were formed in which the colored man was encouraged to be active. Also, the Democratic candidate for governor in 1876, Wade Hampton, made an appeal for their support. Hampton promised the Negroes that if chosen he would be "the Governor of the whole State," and would "render to the whole people of this State equal and impartial justice."⁶⁹ He informed the Negroes that talk that the whites of the Democratic party desired to return them to slavery or even qualify their suffrage was foolish. Instead, he said, it was the Republicans who wanted to limit colored suffrage. "We want your votes," he proclaimed, "we don't want you to be deprived of them"⁷⁰ In spite of this show of interest in the political welfare of the Negroes, however, the Democrats took no chance that their appeals would fall on barren ground. Consequently, in the election of that

⁶⁷Donaldsonville Chief, October 7, 1876, quoted in Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana, 1877-1900" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Louisiana State University), p. 136.

⁶⁸Donaldsonville Chief, September 9 and November 4, 1876, quoted in ibid.

⁶⁹Hampton, Free Men! Free Ballots!! Free Schools!!!, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁰Ibid.

year, the Red Shirts of South Carolina utilized the Mississippi Plan to good advantage. Fraud, intimidation, and violence were employed during the campaign and election to overawe the Republican Negroes.

In Florida, too, the Democratic organization was determined to redeem the state in 1876. Efforts were redoubled as the election approached to curb the colored political organizations.⁷¹ During the campaign and election, as in South Carolina, violence, threats, and economic coercion were utilized to limit the political effectiveness of the Negro. As the state did not provide a standard ballot it was easy for employers to give special ballots to their Negro employees and to see that they were cast for Democratic candidates. The Radicals, divided among themselves, intimidated their colored cohorts in an effort to hold them firm for the party.⁷² Thus in Florida, as in the other states, the black man became only a pawn in the political chess game.

The confusing events of the Presidential election of 1876 were of momentous consequence for the South and for the nation as a whole. In the states which had been redeemed a majority of the ballots cast were counted for the Democratic aspirant, Samuel J. Tilden of New York. The votes of these and other states provided Tilden with 184 electoral votes--only one less than the requisite majority. But in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, a confused situation gave hope to the Republicans that the

⁷¹H. D. Price, The Negro and Southern Politics: A Chapter in Florida History (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 11.

⁷²The Radicals had reason to be concerned about the potential and actual abandonment of their party by the Negro for there were 5,000 more whites than blacks in Florida. Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 370.

presidency might still be salvaged for their candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio. Apparently, the Democrats had won in the three Southern states still occupied by Federal forces, and, if they had been successful in only one, the Republican domination of the executive branch of the national government was at an end. In each of these states, however, voting irregularities were claimed by the Republicans, and Radical re-turning boards fearlessly--with the army still in occupation--threw out enough Democratic votes to give Hayes the victory. The Democrats, however, were able to compile their votes and send the returns to Washington to be counted for Tilden. With two sets of returns from the three Southern states to be considered, the question arose as to who would decide which set would be accepted. After much recrimination, Congress established an Electoral Commission of fifteen members to determine which set of returns was valid. Shortly before the new President was to be inaugurated the Commission handed down its decision. By a strictly party vote of eight to seven the Commission ruled that Hayes was the victor in each of the disputed states and would be the next occupant of the White House.⁷³

The decision of the Electoral Commission resulted in some bellicose talk among the Democrats, especially those in the North. But the Southern members of the party would not accept the idea that perhaps the presidency should be seized by force. Southerners had seen enough of civil conflict and, besides, what they desired most of all was the restoration of home rule. That this could be accomplished under the administration of Hayes was entirely possible for he had promised, in his letter

⁷³ There was also a dispute over one of the electoral votes of Oregon. This question was settled on its merits and the vote was awarded to Hayes.

accepting the nomination, that the Federal government would no longer meddle in the affairs of the South.⁷⁴ If he abided by his promise, the South would be satisfied.

Hayes lived up to his promise. Upon assuming the presidency he called to Washington the governors of the rival administrations which had been established in South Carolina, Wade Hampton and Daniel Chamberlain. Over the latter's protest he informed them that Federal troops would be withdrawn from the state. Chamberlain's Radical government rested upon the support of these forces, and as a result of their withdrawal his administration collapsed. Thus, South Carolina was returned to the control of the native whites.

In Florida control by the whites was regained without a contest, but in Louisiana, like South Carolina, rival governments competed for domination. In this state, too, Hayes withdrew Federal support from the Radical contestant, Stephen B. Packard, and the Democrat, Francis T. Nicholls, gained the state house.⁷⁵

Thus, in 1877, home rule was restored to the last of the former Confederate states. Carpetbaggers and Scalawags were no longer in the political saddle; the Negro was henceforth at the political mercy of the Southern whites. No longer would the Federal bayonet clear for him a path to the voting booth. In the future the colored man would have to trust the Southern white to observe constitutional and legal limitations upon

⁷⁴Some of Hayes' supporters promised Southern leaders, in a conference at a Washington hotel, that this promise would be fulfilled. C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951), pp. 212-14.

⁷⁵Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 370.

enfranchisement. He would have to convince the people of the South that his participation in politics posed no threat to their traditional way of life.⁷⁶ If the colored man was successful in impressing upon his former masters that Negro suffrage did not constitute a danger, then perhaps he could continue freely to enjoy the advantages of citizenship conferred upon him during the last decade. If he was not successful, however, the future could only hold a relegation to some political limbo for the majority of the colored race.

⁷⁶It should be pointed out that not all Negroes supported the Radicals during Reconstruction. By 1877 they were voting with the Democrats, whether out of fear or conviction it is impossible to say, in increasing numbers. A large majority, however, continued to support the Republican party, and without their assistance the Radicals could not have maintained themselves in power.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF THE NEGRO VOTER

In the lexicon of American politics the term "Solid South" is often employed to indicate that political solidarity prevailed among Southern whites after home rule was accomplished. Use of the term implies that the loyalty to one party which had been achieved when the whites were struggling to free their states from an alien domination based on the Negro vote was a continuing thing; that the Southern whites were of one political mind both during and after Redemption. That the political diversity which had existed in the ante-bellum South was largely subordinated during the period of Reconstruction is an accepted fact. Had not the Black Belt gentry and the hillbilly commoner cooperated during that time, success of the Redemption movement would have been problematical. Despite such cooperation, however, there was no real feeling of trust or affinity between the two groups and when home rule was achieved this vaunted solidarity began at once to erode. Occupying a position in the middle of the disputants were some five million colored citizens of the Southern states.¹ Whether or not they would be allowed to continue

¹In 1880 the colored population for all Southern states, including those not a part of the Confederacy, was 5,953,903. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 27.

to enjoy the rights bestowed upon them after emancipation depended to a great extent upon a satisfactory solution to the differences between the Southern whites.

The dominating force in the politics of the former Confederate states during the period between 1877 and 1890 were those individuals who had provided the effective leadership in the campaign for Redemption. These Redeemers, usually owning the proud and politically advantageous record of a Confederate office or statesman, were identified through their family names and manners with the ante-bellum South. There, however, the resemblance ended and the directing influence provided by these individuals did not in any wise constitute a "restoration." Essentially oriented in an economic sense toward the middle class, industrial, and capitalistic philosophy, the Redeemers, or Bourbons, actually had little in common with the pre-war agrarian regime. Like the high priest of the Bourbons, Henry Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, the political leaders made it a practice continually to denounce the evils of slavery and of the single-crop system of agriculture. Proclaiming that "it is the white man of the South and not the Negro who has been freed by the Civil War,"² the Bourbons, destined to remain in political control until the agrarian revolt, utilized every opportunity to propagandize as to the advantages which would accrue to the South as a result of crop diversification and industrialization. Everywhere, on the huskings, on and off the floor of Congress, through the medium of newspapers and journals, they preached upon the text that the South, though it might justifiably glorify

²Quoted in Francis B. Simkins, The South Old and New: A History, 1820-1947 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 231.

the "Lost Cause," must emulate the North in its habits of thrift and industry. Only by so doing, they insisted, would the South be able to rise phoenix-like from the ashes and become something more than an economic satellite of the North.

The economic philosophy advocated by the Bourbons was one which was destined to result in a major problem for this class. These individuals were convinced that the South could not compete with the rest of the nation unless it abandoned its traditional agrarian orientation and sought to diversify its economy. Such a program would be difficult to achieve, however, unless investment capital could be attracted to the South from other sections. To facilitate this the new governments sought to lessen the burden of oppressive taxes and huge debts which were a legacy of Reconstruction. In nearly every state a program of "retrenchment," of spending nothing unless it was absolutely necessary, was begun. Salaries of state officials were slashed and such vital public services as charitable institutions and education were provided with insufficient funds.³ Economy became the watchword of the day.

The majority of Southerners could have undoubtedly accepted this program had it not been for the fact that at the same time the Bourbons were preaching the necessity for economy they initiated policies which worked to the advantage of the merchants, bankers, and industrialists of

³In nearly every Southern state public education suffered a severe cut-back under the policy of retrenchment. The average length of the school-term, already low by Northern standards, fell by 20% after Redemption. Not until 1900 did the 100 day term become common. Expenditures per pupil were also drastically reduced. Figures cited in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1914, Vol. IX of A History of the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (12 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), pp. 61-2.

the North and South. Few individuals belonging to the agrarian class, as most Southerners did, could see any justification in granting railroads, public utilities, and comparable institutions franchises that were either untaxed or assessed far below their actual value.⁴ Such a policy placed an unequal and unfair tax burden upon the holders of real estate. This, coupled with lower prices for their products and the fact that such investment capital as was available to the farmer was subject to inflated interest rates, resulted in increased dissatisfaction with Bourbon policies by the agrarian element in the 1880's.

While Bourbon economic policies were destined eventually to result in the rise of Independent parties to contest for control of the Southern states, there was a more immediate problem facing these governments--that of the Negro and his place in the political framework. One factor in the Negro problem was the new policy of the Federal government. As a result of the Compromise of 1877, the colored man was largely abandoned by his political mentor, the National Republican party. President Hayes, hoping to conciliate the South by allowing Bourbon leaders a free hand in state politics in exchange for Southern support in Congress, informed the colored man in that year that their "rights and interests" could be better protected by the Southern white than by the Federal government.⁵ This attitude, coupled with the fact that little real effort was made by the administration to maintain the Republican organization in the Southern

⁴ Some Southern legislatures, as is the case with a few states at the present, granted a tax holiday to new manufactures entering the state.

⁵ Hayes toured some of the Southern states a few months after his inauguration. He made this statement in Atlanta.

states, was considered a grievous error by some of the leading members of the party. Opposition to abandonment of the policy inaugurated by Thaddeus Stephens and Charles Sumner was pronounced during the four years of the Hayes' administration. Nevertheless, when his most persistent critics assumed control during the administrations of Garfield and Arthur, they, too, considered it politically expedient to abandon the colored man. The reason for this reversal is apparent in a communication from William E. Chandler, Arthur's secretary of the navy and chief patronage dispenser, to one who had been a violent critic of Hayes policy, Senator James G. Blaine of Maine. "If we lose the next House," Chandler informed Blaine on October 2, 1882, "we can hardly hope to carry the next presidential election and we shall need more than 20 southern votes instead of the 10 we had to give us organization of the House Our straight Republican, carpet-bag, Negro governments . . . have been destroyed and cannot be revived . . . ; do not be narrowminded, or hesitating but place yourself unmistakably on the side of progress at the South."⁶

The side of progress, as conceived by National Republican leaders during most of the 1880's, was to give support in state elections to any faction opposing the Bourbons. Thus, during this decade, although Negro politicians were sometimes given Federal positions in an effort to maintain their loyalty to the Republican party and the colored masses were encouraged to support candidates of that party in elections of national import, the Republican party often became moribund organization in state politics. Such an event made it potentially more difficult for the Bourbons to maintain white loyalty to the Democratic party.

⁶ Quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 101-102.

The attitude of the mass of Southern whites toward the Negro, and especially his right to vote, was also a problem to the Bourbon governments. To most of the whites of the South abandonment of the Negroes by their Northern champions was a satisfactory culmination of a long and intense struggle to free their states from Republican and Negro domination. To some of the whites it undoubtedly meant that the Negro, the bête noire of Reconstruction, would be immediately disfranchised; others hoped to replace the Carpetbagger as the director of a political symphony of colored voters.

Falling into the first category were the whites of the upcountry, the small farmer class which was the traditional enemy of the colored man. During the ante-bellum period this group, most of whom aspired to but could never hope to achieve the status of a planter, had favored a continuance of the slave system because of a fear of being economically and socially leveled with a mass of liberated black men. During Reconstruction, when the Republican party had utilized the colored vote for their own purposes in the Southern states, their worst fears had been realized. Consequently, the rural white had cooperated with the gentry, whom they jealously disliked, in an attempt to combat the menace of permanent social, political, and economic leveling. Enfranchisement and civil rights legislation had moved the colored man up the social and political ladder until he was almost on an even plane with the poor white. If the wishes of this class were respected the Negro would be disfranchised and his civil rights subordinated, legally if possible; illegally if necessary.

Fortunately for the immediate political future of the Negro, it

was not to this group, but to the Bourbons that the responsibility for developing a Southern policy toward the colored men fell after the Compromise of 1877. Two decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, delivered in the session of 1876, had opened the way for the Bourbons to discriminate in suffrage matters if they chose. In the case of United States vs. Reese, the Court had ruled that the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution did not confer the right of suffrage on anyone. Instead, it merely prevented "the States or the United States . . . from giving preference . . . to one citizen over another on account of 'race, color or previous condition of servitude.'"⁷ In another decision, United States vs. Cruikshank, the Court postulated that "the right to vote comes from the State, but the right of exemption from the prohibited discrimination comes from the United States"⁸

These decisions, defining the scope of the so-called enfranchising amendment, meant that the various states could legitimately establish the rules and regulations for their electorate. Thus, individual states, by imposing strict educational, property, or other requirements, could legally limit Negro suffrage--but only if the regulations did not openly discriminate in favor of one race over another. It would be possible, however, to so enforce the voting regulations that the whites could freely exercise the ballot while a majority of the colored men would be effectively disfranchised. Such a policy would have been more than acceptable to the small farmer class, but at the outset of the period of

⁷United States v. Reese, 92 U.S. 212 (1876).

⁸United States v. Cruikshank, 92 U.S. 588 (1876).

home rule the complete disfranchisement of the Negro was not a part of the Bourbon program.

It was upon the shoals of the Negro question, an issue upon which it is generally believed the Southern whites were of one mind, that white solidarity was destined to be battered. The Bourbons, heirs of the old aristocracy, had a paternalistic feeling toward the colored men. Even before the Negro was deserted by the Republican leaders, it had been the policy of the Southern whites to convince the colored men that their best interests would be served by lending political support to their old masters. After Redemption was accomplished the tempo of this campaign was increased. Bourbon leaders used every means at their disposal to marshal the Negro vote. Governor Wade Hampton of South Carolina, for example, informed the colored electorate that "the best friends of the colored man are the old slaveholders They will defend your right to vote because it gives to the South infinitely more power than we ever had before."⁹ This was a typical expression which was to be echoed by other leaders, in other states, at other times. In 1879 the legislature of North Carolina adopted a resolution which proclaimed to all who were interested in Negro suffrage that "we are disposed and determined to carry out in good faith . . ." the amendments to the Constitution of the United States which conferred suffrage and citizenship upon the colored race.¹⁰ Another example of this attitude may be seen in an event which

⁹ Charleston News and Courier, September 20, 1878, quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 79.

¹⁰ Quoted in Guion G. Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy, 1876-1910," Essays in Southern History, ed. Fletcher M. Green ("James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science," Vol. XXXI; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 203.

occured in Florida during the election of 1884. In that year a Democratic candidate for Presidential elector, R. C. Long, made a vitriolic anti-Negro speech. He was forced to resign as a candidate by the Chairman of the State Executive Committee, Samuel Pasco, who stated that the Conservative Democratic Party of Florida had and would maintain the constitutional rights of the colored man.¹¹

The foregoing statements are examples of only a few of the pleas which were made by the Bourbons to the colored electorate in the period before 1890. Such protestations of the purity of the intentions of the Southern governments toward the Negro were often backed by the practice of allowing colored leaders to hold minor offices. But, where cajolery and the bestowing of favors did not have the desired effect, the Bourbons utilized other devices to accomplish their purposes.¹²

A favorite method employed by the Bourbons to convince the Negro electorate that their interests could best be served by lending support to the party of white supremacy was economic pressure. Many, if not most, of the former slaves depended upon their old masters for employment. This convinced one planter that "a little moral suasion on the part of our

¹¹Tallahassee Land of Flowers, September 24, 1884, quoted in Edward C. Williamson, "The Era of the Democratic County Leader: Florida Politics, 1877-1893" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Pennsylvania), p. 203.

¹²The practice of allowing Negroes to hold minor offices was widespread in South Carolina while Wade Hampton was in office. The Charleston News and Courier said, on April 14, 1877, that Hampton had appointed colored men to office because they were "equally capable with white applicants of filling . . . the office in question" Naturally, added the editor, "the endeavor is made to avoid putting colored persons in positions where they would, or could, be peculiarly offensive." Quoted in George B. Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952), p. 22.

planters and others engaged in the employment and control of laborers has the effect of providing a potent influence upon the minds of the latter in election matters." He theorized "they naturally receive with deference the expression of opinion by their employers on all subjects" ¹³ The statement of this planter was symptomatic of the prevailing attitude in the South. But, not only was economic and moral pressure applied by the Bourbons and their supporters to win electoral support from the colored men, but when necessary legal and extra-legal devices were also utilized either to control or limit voting by members of that race.

Legal devices for limiting and controlling the Negro vote varied from state to state. ¹⁴ Generally they took the form of intricate registration and election laws which could be used not only against the recalcitrant colored man, but also against the poor and ignorant white. Thus, the Bourbon-enacted registration laws, which required the potential elector to register several months in advance of an election and to possess the certificate on the polling day, struck at the lower economic strata of both white and black who had a propensity for not keeping papers

¹³J. S. Sims and E. N. Pugh to W. P. Miles, October 30, 1885, quoted in Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana, 1877-1900," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Louisiana State University), p. 132. Republicans also pressured Negroes to support their candidates. One Louisiana planter informed Benjamin Harrison that "I vote the Republican ticket, and I have 125 colored voters on my plantation, and they all vote as I do. I force them to do it." W. P. Pierce Benjamin Harrison, December 29, 1888, quoted in ibid., p. 133.

¹⁴ From 1876 to 1882 Virginia required the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting. Georgia, by her constitution prepared in 1877, demanded the payment of all taxes, including a poll tax. As in Virginia, however, such requirements applied equally to black and white. Frank B. Williams, Jr., "The Poll Tax as a Suffrage Requirement in the South, 1870-1900" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Vanderbilt University), p. 19. Widely copied was the Virginia law which added petty larceny to the list of disqualifications because of its effect upon the colored vote.

of any kind. Residence requirements also had the effect of disfranchising numerous whites and Negroes. Ordinarily, it was required that a man seeking to register must have been a resident of the state, county, and precinct for a specified period. Because many Negroes and whites were itinerants, they could not fulfill this obligation. Another device, in South Carolina, which effected much disfranchisement was the eight box law. This measure, passed by the legislature in 1882, required the voter to place his ballot in the correct box or have it invalidated. Election managers, usually Democrats, were permitted to read box titles on request, but many of the illiterate whites and blacks were too proud to ask for assistance. This, coupled with a periodic shifting of the order of the boxes, confounded many of them and resulted in their placing of ballots in the correct box a happy accident.¹⁵

When and where the colored man insisted on supporting candidates in opposition to the Bourbons--as they generally did in national or state elections when a Republican was in the field--and where legal limitations did not assure a Bourbon victory, extra-legal devices of fraud and chicanery were employed to achieve the desired end. Stuffing of boxes with tissue ballots, the use of boxes with false bottoms, repeating of votes, manipulation of returns, bribery, intimidation, and outright violence toward the Negro were all employed to assure a victory by candidates of the party of white supremacy.¹⁶

¹⁵ Stephen B. Weeks, "The History of Negro Suffrage in the South," Political Science Quarterly, IX (December, 1894), 690-703.

¹⁶ It would perhaps be possible to list several pages of methods which were used to curtail the colored vote in the various states, but the above account gives some clue as to the devices and practices which were most favored.

The net result of Bourbon policy toward the Negro as a voter was that in some of the Southern states these political leaders were able to employ the submissive or intimidated colored men in the factional disputes which beset the white man's party in the decades of the seventies and eighties. Since the Bourbons and their adherents were potentially in a minority in all of the former Confederate states, any internecine dispute within the white party was a threat to their continued control. In order to lessen the possibility of the upland whites gaining control of the party machinery and replacing the Bourbons as the political directors in the Southern states, the heirs of the old aristocracy resorted to "fusion" arrangements with the colored leaders. This was a device whereby the Negroes were allotted certain minor local and state offices in exchange for giving electoral support to Bourbon candidates. Where the fusion principle was adopted, it contributed to the ability of the Bourbons to maintain control of the party machinery and thus to resist encroachments upon their power by elements dissatisfied with their policy. In Alabama, for example, a convention nominated the candidates of the Democratic-Conservative party. Delegates to the convention were selected in each county on the basis of the number of votes cast within the county for the party's gubernatorial candidate in the previous election. Thus, Dallas county in the Black Belt, where Negroes outnumbered the whites by 45,372 to 9,285, was apportioned thirty delegates to the convention of 1890 because there had been a heavy black vote for the white supremacy party in 1888. At the same time, Cherokee county, with a population of 18,080 whites and only 3,618 Negroes, was allotted only ten seats.¹⁷ Such a

¹⁷Figures cited in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 79.

situation naturally amplified Bourbon power in the Alabama convention and made it more difficult for the upland whites to achieve control of the party machinery. But, this situation was not confined to Alabama. In nearly all of the former Confederate states there was increasing displeasure with the policies of the leadership class during the decade of the eighties. Especially were there protests at the Bourbon's attitude toward the Negro. Leaders of the upland whites complained vehemently at the lowlanders policy of "fusion" with the Negro; of the Bourbon's truckling to the colored vote; of Negroes filling public positions which "belonged" to white men. This dissatisfaction with the racial attitude of the Bourbons, coupled with agrarian discontent at the economic and governmental policies of that class, threatened to divide the whites of the South.¹⁸ Maintaining Bourbon supremacy thus came to depend upon the ability of those politicians to enforce party discipline. Any issue that made permanent division probable was attacked by the Bourbon's as a danger to the white man's way of life. It portended, they insisted, a revival of Republican-Negro rule and a return to the excesses of Reconstruction.

¹⁸Independent movements were local in nature at the outset, but the tendency for them to unite was marked. Because the Bourbons had pre-empted the Democratic title for their party and because the name Republican carried with it a distasteful connotation, the Independents usually supported candidates seeking election as Grangers or Greenbackers. The economic issues which were destined to divide the Alliance from the Democratic Conservatives in the 1890's were present at an earlier date, but Southern Independents did not develop the class consciousness which was so marked in the Alliance movement. One reason for this was the inability of a majority of the agrarian class to subordinate their fear of a revival of the Republican-Negro combination. When they failed in their efforts to capture the white man's party they sullenly supported Bourbon candidates.

Despite all Bourbon efforts to prevent it, Independent political groups did arise to contest for control in the various states. While such movements varied in time, place, and intensity within the different states, it was deemed necessary by the men responsible for Redemption and their newspaper mouthpieces continually to exhort the white man of the South to remain solid for the party of white supremacy. "The negro vote is consolidated and wielded . . . in the South today," warned a Georgia editor in 1885, "with more disastrous effects upon Southern ideas, Southern progress, Southern virtues, intelligence, and property interests than at any period since the negro was endowed with the ballot."¹⁹ Not quite so blatant in his warning of the danger inherent in the Negro vote was the editor of the primary Democratic journal in Mississippi. "In other States it may be different," he admitted. "In this State for some time to come there is but one issue. All know what it is."²⁰ Not so coy, however, was the editor of the Raleigh News and Observer. When an Independent movement threatened to split the party responsible for Redemption in North Carolina, he attempted to identify what should be considered the overriding issue. "The issue is white supremacy, with all that exalts and enobles humanity," he said, "in opposition to a base amalgamation, seeking respectability under the guise of coalition."²¹ For any individual or group that might oppose the white man's party the same newspaper, at a later

¹⁹ Southern Star (Atlanta, n.d.), quoted in Texas Baptist and Herald (Dallas), August 3, 1885.

²⁰ Jackson Weekly Clarion, August 23, 1882, quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 51.

²¹ Raleigh News and Observer, June 29, 1884.

date, had a word of warning. Speaking for the benefit of the opposition in North Carolina, but propagandizing in a method that would be acceptable to the Bourbons in most of the Southern states, the editor proclaimed that "we are primarily organized to maintain Anglo-Saxon supremacy in North Carolina and in every part of it. We wish to dwell on this fact; we wish to make it plain."²²

Bourbon leaders and the party press did dwell on this fact during most of the period under discussion. From the Rio Grande to the Potomac; from the Tennessee to the Atlantic Ocean, the Bourbons continually exhorted the Southern white to remain solid for the party responsible for Redemption. Incessantly, the whites of the South were informed that a political bolter or an Independent was lower than a Radical and an outright traitor to his race. The whites, insisted the Bourbons, must continue to present a united front or their traditional way of life would be in jeopardy. Republican whites and their black cohorts, it was warned, were impatiently awaiting the time when the Democratic party divided over unimportant issues.²³ If such division occurred, preached the Bourbons,

²²Ibid., December 18, 1887.

²³Negro leaders such as Blanche K. Bruce and John Lynch of Mississippi, Henry Demas and Pinckney Pinchbeck of Louisiana, Joseph Walls of Florida, Joseph Rainey and Robert Smalls of South Carolina, and others in the various states continued as Republicans during the entire period. Bourbon leaders often concluded agreements with the Negro leaders whereby the colored men gave support to the whites in state elections, and the whites did not attempt to prevent them from receiving Federal patronage. By maintaining Negroes and Carpetbaggers in control of Republican organizations in the South, the Bourbons were more able to identify that party with the colored race and thus to solidify the Democratic party by the cry of danger to white supremacy. One of the more able white Republicans informed the dispenser of party patronage, William Chandler, that the Negro leader Bruce cooperated with the Bourbons of Mississippi to " . . . humbug the different Republican administrations and keep up negro rule

the corpse of the white man's party would be shredded like carrion by a flock of vultures and there would be a dusky occupant of the governor's mansion.

Success was largely attendant upon efforts by the Bourbons to prevent a successful political revolt by the agrarian element until the Alliance revolution of the 1890's. Success was also achieved in the efforts of this class to prevent a renewal of Federal legislation which would protect the colored men in their right freely to exercise the ballot. The methods they employed in an attempt to convince the North that such legislation was unnecessary reveals another of the Janus-faces of the Bourbon's attitude toward Negro participation in politics.

Bourbon attitude toward Negro voting, as expressed for the benefit of the residents of the Northern states, may be seen in a series of articles which comprised part of a symposium conducted by the North American Review in 1879. Posed by this leading Northern journal were two questions: Should the Negro be disfranchised, and conversely, should he have been enfranchised? Bourbon answers to these questions were of vital interest to the politicians of the Republican party. Their answers were of even greater interest to those individuals and groups in the North who thought that it was the responsibility of the Federal government to protect the colored man in the full and free enjoyment of all the rights with which he had been bestowed.

One of the participants in this symposium was a leading Redeemer,

in the Rep. party in order that fear of negro rule in the State may keep white men in the Dem. party." George C. McKee to Chandler, July 6, 1882, quoted in Willie D. Halsell (ed.), "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi, 1882-1884," "Journal of Southern History", VII (February, 1941), 93.

the Governor of South Carolina, Wade Hampton. In 1876, when this former Confederate general was campaigning for the office he now occupied, Hampton had actively sought the electoral support of the colored man. During the campaign he had bragged of being one of the first Southerners to advocate suffrage for the Negro, and, as a part of his platform, he had promised the colored man that if elected he would "know no party, nor race, in the administration of the law" ²⁴ Now, two years after becoming governor, Hampton was requested to state whether he believed enfranchising this race was a mistake which should be rectified.

In answering the questions which were posed, Hampton, always the practical politician, replied that they could only be of speculative interest because disfranchisement had been rendered impossible by action of both the national and state governments. Considering the questions in an academic sense, however, the Governor was of the opinion that the franchise should not have been bestowed upon the colored man because his ignorance and general incompetence made him incapable of understanding the high moral responsibility attached to the privilege of exercising the ballot. Nevertheless, according to this Bourbon leader, enfranchisement was irrevocable, and the South was satisfied with the situation because the Negro contributed immeasurably to the wealth and political power of that section. ²⁵ Hampton informed the people of the North that this would be a

²⁴ Wade Hampton, Free Man! Free Ballots!! Free Schools!!! The Pledge of General Wade Hampton, Democratic Candidate for Governor, to the Colored People of South Carolina (n.p. 1876), p. 6. After his election Hampton claimed that 17,000 Negro votes had been responsible for his victory. The Charleston News and Courier, April 28, 1877, said that the purpose of Hampton's party would be "so to legislate, and so to administer public affairs, as to win over tens of thousands of colored voters." Quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 80.

continuing thing because "as the negro becomes more intelligent he naturally allies himself with the more conservative of the whites for his observation and experience both show him that his interests are identified with the white race."²⁶

Participating along with Hampton in this written discussion were two other prominent Southerners who were regarded by the people of the North as being among the foremost spokesmen of their section--Senator Lucius Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi and the former Vice-President of the Confederacy, Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia. They were in accord with Hampton's views as to the impossibility and actual undesirability of disfranchising the Negro. Lamar contended that he knew of no Southern man of importance or influence who believed disfranchisement to be feasible. Furthermore, he maintained that the South as a whole was willing to accept the situation. Noting that the people of Mississippi had voted in favor of the enfranchising amendment in 1896, Lamar proclaimed that they "would vote for negro suffrage in the light of experience with more confidence

²⁵In April of 1877 Hampton spoke at a celebration in Charleston. During the course of his address he revealed that several high Republican officials in Washington had asked him how the Negro vote could best be restricted. Hampton said that he informed them that the South did not want it curtailed because it entitled that section to thirty more Congressional seats. Yorkville Enquirer, April 26, 1877, quoted in Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, p. 20. In 1878 a touring member of the English Parliament was informed by Hampton that the better class of whites wanted to conserve the Negro, but that the lower class was less favorable. This bitterness extended, the governor said, only to political questions and did not extend into those involving labor. George Campbell, Black and White: the Outcome of a Visit to the United States (New York: R. Worthington, 1879), p. 316.

²⁶James G. Blaine, et al., "Ought the Negro to be Disfranchised? Ought He to have been Enfranchised?" North American Review, CCLXVII (March 1879), 293.

than they voted for it in the light of an experiment."²⁷

To Stephens' way of thinking there was no reason for continued agitation of the question. He vehemently denied the contention of another participant in the symposium, a bitter opponent of Hayes' Southern policy, Senator James G. Blaine of Maine, that the Southern states had in the past and were now illegally depriving the Negro of his vote. Stephens, then a member of the Georgia delegation in the United States House of Representatives, admitted that individuals in his state had been guilty of offenses against the colored man. He insisted, however, that such an occurrence was the exception rather than the rule. When such isolated events happened, he maintained, they were the responsibility of individuals and certainly did not constitute official or even semi-official party policy. Should it not be, asked Stephens, the object of all citizens, of all parties, of all races, to give Negro suffrage a fair trial? If individuals were unwilling to do this the remedy must be provided by the courts and not, he hinted, by any legislative body.²⁸

The solicitude for the colored man in his right to the franchise and the denial that Southerners were illegally depriving him of that right which was expressed by these Bourbon leaders was a continuing argument in the period of the 1880's. Journalists, businessmen, politicians, and Southerners in general took every opportunity to answer Northern criticisms of their attitude toward the colored man.²⁹ Republican leaders,

²⁷Ibid., 231-34.

²⁸Ibid., 239.

²⁹Editorials continually appeared in Southern newspapers claiming that Negro was intimidating Negro during various elections. For example, the Atlanta Journal, July 29, 1890, said that "we have said repeatedly that the only interference in this state with the negroes in their right to vote was by Republican negroes intimidating those of their color who were disposed to vote the Democratic ticket."

they insisted, had been and were interested in the Negro only for the political advantage which would accrue from his support. They had in the past and would in the future utilize the colored men for their own base purposes. When Republicans had directed political affairs in the Southern states they had made little effort and had little real desire to advance the Negro socially, morally, educationally, or economically. They had falsely and frauduently inflamed the passions of the impressionable colored men until it had become necessary for the whites to unite for the preservation of their way of life.³⁰ But, when the Southern white man regained control of his own affairs, propagandized the Bourbons, the situation was reversed and the Negro had started his slow climb of the ladder of civilization. They would continue to progress upward, however, only so long as they did not become an issue between the sections; they would continue their ascent only so long as the whites of the South, those who knew the Negro best and had his interests truly at heart, were free to direct his future--a future which the Bourbons insisted included the right to the unencumbered exercise of the ballot.³¹

³⁰Hilary A. Herbert, et al., Why the Solid South? Or Reconstruction and Its Results (Baltimore: R. Woodward and Co. 1890), p. 63.

³¹Among prominent Southerners who pled that the Negro not be made an issue was Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal. In an article written for a Northern journal in 1879, Watterson said that the colored man was "placable and kindly--the fortunate possessor of a sweet, loving and generous nature." But, he maintained, when the Negro was employed for party service he became "a devil incarnate; a barbarian, useful to the basest purposes; the easy prey of the vilest. No true friend of his but would take him out of politics as a factor or leading issue." Henry Watterson, "The Solid South," North American Review, CXXVII (January, 1879), 54. See also the attitude expressed by the Chief Justice H. H. Chalmers of the Mississippi Supreme Court. H. H. Chalmers, "The Effect of Negro Suffrage," North American Review, CXXXII (March 1881), 242.

Throughout the entire period under discussion the attitude of Southerners toward Negro participation in politics took various turns. As previously noted, the mass of Southern whites, especially the agrarian element, would have preferred disfranchisement if a method could be evolved which would effect only the colored race. On the other hand, the Bourbons, in an actual numerical minority as far as the white population of the South was concerned, hoped to be able to exploit the Negro politically as well as economically. In order that this feat might be accomplished it was necessary to convince the colored men, especially those in the areas where they were numerically superior, that their best interests would be served by lending electoral support to the party of white supremacy. At the same time, as noted above, the Bourbons had to convince Northern doubters that such support was a result of choice and not intimidation. Yet, because a second party in the South would pose a distinct threat to their program, it was also necessary to convince the mass of Southern whites that Negro participation in politics endangered the supremacy of the white man. To satisfy the opinions of these three divergent groups would require the sagacity of a Solomon. Nevertheless, continued Bourbon ascendancy depended upon the ability of this conservative element successfully to accomplish that end.

CHAPTER III

THE NEGRO VOTE IN ALABAMA, ARKANSAS, AND FLORIDA

In every former Confederate state throughout the entire Bourbon period arguments were heard as to why the Negro should or should not vote and as to what the electoral privilege in the hands of that race meant to the South. Despite this fact, however, the intensity and success of the several arguments varied in time and place. Had the Negro population been evenly divided among all of the Southern states a common philosophy toward participation by the colored men in politics might have been evolved. Such, however, was not entirely the case. The political situation in Mississippi, for instance, differed greatly from that of Tennessee, and the Bourbons of Virginia were forced to emphasize a completely different attitude from that of their counterparts in Texas. Nevertheless, certain facets of the Southern attitude toward Negro voting were common to every state, and it is only by examining the political situation in the individual states that the reasons for diversity and for identity can be understood.

At the outset it should be realized that colored men did continue to exercise the franchise, especially in elections of national import, in the period between 1876 and 1890. It is difficult to determine the actual number of Negro electors, however, because no exact count of the vote by

racess was maintained. Consequently, only by examining the election returns and relating them to the racial composition of the population of a state can some approximation of colored participation be made. Even the figures arrived at in this manner must be used with extreme caution. Continued Republican and Independent charges that the Democrats stuffed the ballot boxes for their candidates are to be found during the entire period. If this did occur, and it undoubtedly did, although how often it is impossible to determine, an inflated picture of the Democratic vote must be considered. Neither would it be correct to state that the Democratic vote consisted entirely of ballots cast by the whites and the Republican vote of those cast by the colored men. Many Negroes supported the Bourbon ticket, especially in state elections, and this, of course, adds to the total of colored men who were voting. It is not the purpose of this work, however, to prove that a specific number of Negroes participated in any one election. That would patently be an impossibility. Nevertheless, by examining individual states it can be demonstrated that there was a continuing participation by the colored electorate in Southern elections--a fact which effected the attitude of the average white man toward his colored neighbor.

The state of Alabama, noted as the birthplace of the Confederate States of America, was under the domination of Radical Republicans until 1874. Prior to that year Negroes voted in large numbers, were elected to Congress and to other offices, and were protected by a clause in the state constitution which required every person seeking to register as an elector to take an oath that he would ". . . accept the civil and political equality of all men; and would agree not to attempt to deprive any

person . . . , of any civil right, privilege or immunity, enjoyed by any other class of men"¹ In 1874, however, the Democratic party, still going by the name Conservative, took advantage of the fact that two years of Radical turmoil had alienated most of the people of the state. In a campaign based almost exclusively upon the race issue and accompanied by violence and fraud, the Democrats won political control.²

The Democratic party in Alabama, which moved the next year to consolidate its position by adopting a new constitution for the state, was one of diverse leadership and policies.³ An Alabama editor explained the

¹Francis N. Thorpe (comp. and ed.), The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America (4 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), I, 144-45. Three different colored men served in Congress from Alabama. Benjamin Turner served from 1871 to 1873; James Rapier and Jeremiah Haralson from 1873 to 1875. Monroe N. Work (comp.), "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," Journal of Negro History, V (January, 1920), 67.

²Because the Democratic party was often characterized as the party of secession, Southerners found it advantageous to disassociate themselves from the odium attached to its name and to designate their party as Conservative, Democratic-Conservative, or something else. Before long, however, these names were dropped throughout the South and the party of white supremacy reassumed the Democratic label. For an account of the campaign of 1874 in Alabama see E. Merton Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877, Vol. VIII of A History of the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (12 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), pp. 350-51. More detail on this election is included in Allen J. Going, Bourbon Democracy in Alabama, 1874-1890 (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1951), pp. 26-36.

³The instrument of government adopted in 1875 provided more stringent residence requirements for anyone seeking to register as an elector. Also, the General Assembly was authorized to prescribe a shorter or longer residence period in any incorporated city or town having a population of five thousand. Not permitted to register, vote, or hold office were persons convicted of treason, embezzlement of public funds, malfeasance in office, larceny, bribery, or other crime punishable by imprisonment in the state penitentiary. The stringent residence requirements were disadvantageous to Negroes and poorer whites who were often

situation in 1877 when he wrote that "the Democratic party . . . is composed of men of all shades of opinion upon what to us are non-essential questions" This heterogeneous crowd joined the party in 1868, he said, not because they were in agreement on a particular philosophy, "but because we agreed upon the one great essential question, the preservation of State government here in Alabama in the hands of the white race."⁴

Sentiments expressed by this editor in 1877 had been current in the state ever since home rule was achieved in 1874. After that date the Democrats generally based their campaign appeals upon the argument that it was of absolute necessity that political control be retained by the native whites. Any individual disagreeing with this philosophy or endeavoring to weaken the party by diverting its strength for any office was considered by its members to be an enemy of the state. Thus, "the downfall of Democracy," propagandized the party's primary newspaper to those whites who were dissatisfied with Bourbon policies, "means the restoration of negro rule."⁵ Yet, despite such statements, there was little sentiment in Alabama before 1890 for disfranchising the colored men. Newspapers in the Black Belt, where the Negro was a potential ally of the Bourbons, continued to proclaim that it was necessary to permit the colored man to exercise the franchise in order that he might be divorced from his traditional Republican alliance. Whether or not the

transients, and the larceny provisions also had its effect largely on this group. For the full provisions see Thorpe (comp. and ed.), Federal and State Constitutions, I, 174-75.

⁴Mobile Register, February 5, 1887, quoted in Going, Bourbon Democracy in Alabama, p. 27.

⁵Montgomery Advertiser, August 2, 1882, quoted in ibid., p. 31.

Bourbons believed that this would be the final result of their policy, so long as they dominated the Democratic party in Alabama they emphasized the necessity of maintaining white supremacy, but took no legal steps to limit Negro suffrage.⁶

What did all of this mean to the colored citizens of Alabama?

With a population nearly equal to that of the whites it might be expected that the Negro would play an important role in the political affairs of the state.⁷ Election statistics and reports indicate that such indeed was the case. Not always, however, was the role they played of benefit to the Republican party.

The Republican party of Alabama, traditional political home of the state's colored population, declined as an effective political force after 1874. In the period between 1876 and 1888 the party continued to hold state conventions, but only in 1876 did they choose to nominate a state ticket.⁸ In 1880 and again in 1882 it was deemed wise by the Republicans officially to endorse the Independent-Greenback ticket in the state election.⁹

⁶Control in the Black Belt and often the state depended upon commanding or eliminating the Negro vote. The Democrats emphasized white supremacy in counties where the colored population was small, but in the Black Belt, where they hoped to win Negro support, the race issue was subordinated. Ibid., p. 33.

⁷According to the Census of 1880 there were 600,103 Negroes and 662,185 whites in Alabama. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918,), chap. III, table 13, p. 44.

⁸The Republican Convention of 1878, largely composed of Negroes, cited as its reason for not putting forth a slate their belief that the votes would not be honestly counted. Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia and Register of Important Events (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1876--), Vol. III, 8-9.

The decision of the Republican leaders to abandon the field to the Democrats in state contests and to attempt to defeat them through cooperation with Independent parties left the colored man at loose ends. His primary antagonist, the poor white, ordinarily supported the Independent candidates. Since the party of Lincoln was actually endorsing candidates who were opposed to the colored vote, it became increasingly easy for the Bourbons to win Negro support. Newspapers throughout the South noted the frequency with which the colored men in Alabama were voting for candidates of the Democratic party.¹⁰ What the journals did not emphasize, however, was that such support was generally only available in state contests. In elections of national import the majority of the Negroes continued to vote for the ticket of the party responsible for their freedom.

While the Republican party rarely put forth a slate of candidates in state and local elections, there was always a member of that organization seeking election in a campaign with national overtones. In every Congressional campaign of the period, for example, a Republican stood for election in one or more of the districts.¹¹ None was elected from Alabama

⁹In 1882 Negroes were active in the Republican convention which endorsed the Greenbackers. Ibid., Vol. VII, 6.

¹⁰In 1880 the Pittsburgh Post commented on the fact that there were many Negro Democrats in Alabama. Cited in Galveston Daily News, September 24, 1880. In 1882 Southern newspapers commented that many colored men were voting Democratic. The Republicans were not organized for this election. See Raleigh News and Observer, August 10, 1882, and Galveston Daily News, July 27 and August 11, 1882. It should be noted that Alabama, as did many of the other Southern states, held her state election at an earlier date than the national election. This lessened the possibility of Federal interference in such elections.

¹¹For a list of the candidates and the vote polled by each see The Tribune Almanac and Political Register (New York: The Tribune Association, Yearly) for the years between 1876 and 1891.

after 1874, but they always polled a considerable number of votes. This was especially true of the two colored men who ran for Congress from the Fourth District in 1876.¹² One, Jeremiah Haralson, received 8,675 votes while the other, James T. Rapier, polled a total of 7,236. With two Negro candidates in the field, however, the vote of the members of their race was split and both received less than did their white Democratic opponent. The lack of success in this election did not deter Haralson from again seeking a seat in Congress. In 1878 he again campaigned, but this time he polled only 6,545 votes to 8,514 for his Democratic opponent, Charles M. Shelly. In 1884 he did even worse--being able to command the support of only 683 electors.¹³ Defeats suffered by the Negro candidates foretold the fate of their white Republican counterparts, and the party of white supremacy was able to maintain a stranglehold on Alabama Congressional seats during the entire period.

Just as the Republican party had no success in its competition for Congressional positions, so did any hope they might have had of winning the electoral vote of Alabama for their presidential aspirant assume the nature of an opium dream. Nevertheless, in every election they did poll thousands of votes for their nominee. For example, in 1876 Hayes received 68,230 votes to 102,002 for Tilden; in 1880 Garfield polled

¹²The counties comprising this district were all located in the Black Belt. Ibid., 1876.

¹³For the vote polled by these candidates in the various campaigns see ibid., for the years 1877, 1879, and 1885. In 1882 a Negro Republican by the name of Stevens polled 1,693 votes in a losing cause. Ibid., 1883. White Republicans fared no better than did the Negroes, but they did poll thousands of votes. This indicates that colored electors were giving them support.

56,221 to 91,181 for Hancock; in 1884 Blaine managed to attract the support of 59,444 electors, but, like the others, he was swamped by his Democratic opponent, Cleveland, who won Alabama's electoral votes by polling 92,973 popular ballots.¹⁴ These figures mean nothing unless it is remembered that the colored and white population of the state was almost equal, and that a majority of the members of the Republican party were Negroes. Obviously, then, many thousands of the colored men were allowed to exercise their franchise in Federal elections.

The fact that the Republican party had little success in its efforts to win in national contests and in its attempts to divide the party of white supremacy by endorsing Independent candidates in state elections may be largely charged off to the fact that Bourbon leaders were able to utilize the Negro vote in the Black Belt.¹⁵ A contributing factor, also, was that the Republicans were never able to escape the odium of being the Negro party. Since this hindered their efforts again to become influential in state politics, it was deemed necessary by Republican leaders to disassociate themselves from the colored man.

In 1839 Thomas H. Watts, an old-line Whig, was approached with the idea of forming a Republican party which would ignore the Negro and would concentrate on a platform expounding the necessity for a protective tariff. Watts could see no hope for such an organization because, as he said, "it is perfect nonsense to talk of splitting the democratic party of the South

¹⁴Ibid., for the year 1877, 1881, and 1885.

¹⁵In exchange for their aid a small number of colored men were permitted to hold legislative and local offices during the period. Never to the extent, however, that they could possibly pose a threat to the Bourbon program.

so long as we are confronted by the threat and danger of negro rule." He believed, however, that "if the negro could be placed in the background and kept there, the white people might divide, but to think of a split now is idle dreaming."¹⁶ Only a few days after Watts made this statement, however, a convention of white Republicans was assembled in Birmingham for the purpose of organizing a party which would exclude the colored man. Organization of this group, the White Republican Tariff League, drew immediate fire from the Negroes. Most of their leaders, including the very influential clergymen, denounced it from lecture platforms and from the pulpit. In the regular Republican convention, called to order soon after the other adjourned, the temporary chairman, a Negro by the name of Stevens, denounced all Federal office-holders in the state during the terms of Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur. He castigated them as "political rascals, acting with the Democrats in the State to keep the negro out of his political rights."¹⁷

The split within the Republican party in Alabama was greeted gleefully by Southern Democratic journals. One such newspaper, the Atlanta Constitution, predicted that the movement would be abortive because the colored man constituted ninety per cent of the Republican party in Alabama. This journal did note, however, that the Negroes of the state had been alienated by the action of the white Republicans and offered the idea that many colored men would find their way into the ranks of the

¹⁶Quoted in Raleigh News and Observer, March 30, 1889.

¹⁷Quoted in ibid., May 16, 1889. This convention of some 300 delegates, four-fifths of whom were colored, nominated a full slate of candidates, but the Democrats swamped them again.

Democratic party.¹⁸ While the same suggestion was made by some of the Negro preachers, it was too late for the colored man effectively to switch his allegiance. Just around the proverbial corner was the Populist revolt--a struggle between the agrarian uplander and the Bourbon. When the smoke and fire of this contest between the whites was doused by the agrarian storm, the Negro of Alabama, never after 1876 as potent a political force in the state as his numbers would indicate he should have been, would find that his political future was at the mercy of his traditional enemy, "the boys from the forks of the creek."

In Arkansas the situation in regard to Negro voting was somewhat different from that in Alabama because of the state's racial composition. Unlike in Alabama, the Negro was in a distinct minority in Arkansas.¹⁹ In spite of this, however, the colored man was a factor to be considered in the politics of the state. During the period under discussion no legal restriction was placed upon his exercise of the franchise.²⁰ Usually the Negroes cooperated with their Republican mentors, but instances are to be

¹⁸See the Atlanta Constitution for April 10, 11, 12, and 20, 1889.

¹⁹There were only 26.3 per cent as many Negroes as whites in the population. The figures given by the Census of 1880 show 591,531 whites and 210,666 Negroes. Of the latter, 107,331 were males. Age differentiation is not given. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. III, table 13, p. 14.

²⁰The constitution in effect in Arkansas during this period was prepared in 1874. It entitled every male citizen or one who had declared his intention of becoming one, at least twenty-one years of age, and who had resided in the state for one year and the county for six months to vote. Thorpe (comp. and ed.), Federal and State Constitutions, II, 336-37. Nevertheless, at a Negro convention held at Little Rock in 1878 the suggestion was made that since the rights of the colored men were not respected in Arkansas, they should consider emigration to a state where they could exercise the franchise unmolested. Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia, Vol. III, 23.

found where the opposition party endeavored to attract their support. For example, the Democratic State Convention of 1878 included a plank in its platform which noted that "it is the sense of this convention that the colored population . . . are identified in interest with the great Democratic party of the State" Since this was true the Convention "fully realizing the importance of more harmonious feeling between them, embrace this opportunity of inviting them--the colored people of the State--to an active cooperation with us in furthering our common interests."²¹

It is impossible to determine the success of this and subsequent and comparable pleas that the interests of the Negro were those of the Democratic party. Nevertheless, leaders of that organization continuously bragged that the colored man was being converted and was placing his political future willingly in the hands of the Democrats. Even a Northern journal reported in 1880 that it had found evidence that indicated the Democratic party in Arkansas had made gains among the colored men. This was borne out to some extent by the fact that Negroes had been placed on the party ticket as candidates for minor offices in a number of counties.²² Also bearing out Democratic contentions was an article carried in a Negro newspaper, published at Little Rock, in 1884. The editor took cognizance of a statement in a Northern journal which maintained that the colored people of the South were gravitating toward the party of white supremacy. He took exception to this statement to the extent of wondering if the Negroes were gravitating toward the Democrats or if that party was moving toward the colored man? He did admit, however, that there were numerous

²¹Appleton's Annual Cyclopedic, Vol. III, 23.

²²Nation, LI (September 11, 1880), 201-02.

instances throughout the South where, through a compromise arrangement, the Negro was permitted to share the political spoils with the white man.²³

Whether the colored electorate of Arkansas was gravitating toward the Democratic party or not, the primary Negro support which that party was able to command came in state and local elections.²⁴ In elections of national import the colored men of the state continued to give their main support to the Republican party. This was true during the time of Reconstruction when the Carpetbagger, Powell Clayton, was elected governor with the aid of the Negro vote. It remained the case down until the late 1880's when a "lily-white" movement began and the same Powell Clayton informed the colored men that they were no longer welcome in the Republican party.²⁵

During the period between 1876 and 1888 the Republicans did not always find it feasible to nominate candidates for state offices in Arkansas. In 1878 they did not bother to select a gubernatorial nominee, and

²³"The greatest danger that threatens democratic supremacy in the south," said the editor, "is that the 'out faction' always gravitates toward the negro and secures his aid to route [sic] the 'ins.'" In nearly every southern state scores of colored men hold office" Weekly Mansion (Little Rock), July 21, 1883.

²⁴The editor of the Weekly Mansion, August 11, 1883, complained that for twenty years the Democrats had opposed the wishes and interests of the Negro. Bourbon policies, he insisted, were forcing the colored men to remain Republican. On September 8, 1883, the same Negro editor applauded a statement appearing in the Free South to the effect that if the Republicans wanted to remain a power in national politics they must give the colored man more office. The editor of the Arkansas journal claimed that four-fifths of the members of that party in his state were Negroes, and yet they were allowed to hold only the offices undesired by the whites--constable and coroner.

²⁵Noting Clayton's change of attitude, the Atlanta Constitution, May 15, 1888, said it was a sign of progress. The editor of this Bourbon newspaper maintained that the colored men would find that their true interests were those of their white friends, the Democrats.

in 1880 they followed the same course but tried to split the party of white supremacy by supporting the Greenback candidate.²⁶ Little success was achieved in this effort and in 1882 the Republicans again nominated a candidate for governor. A lack of success in this and succeeding elections, coupled with the fact that the Negroes were demanding more and better offices, led to disillusionment on the part of the white leaders. Not since the period of Reconstruction had the Republicans, even with Negro support, been able to pose a threat to Democratic hegemony in either state or national elections.²⁷ Not since the period of Reconstruction had they elected a governor, controlled either house of the state legislature, or chosen a member of the United States Congress.²⁸ The ultimate effect of this state of affairs was an increasing belief on the part of the white Republicans that their party would never gain respectability as long as it depended to such a great extent upon the colored vote. Bearing this out is a statement made by a party leader to the Lincoln Club of Arkansas in 1888. He informed his audience that the Republican party must attract

²⁶Colored electoral support was primarily given to the Democrats in state and local elections where the Republicans did not nominate a slate of candidates, but endorsed Independents.

²⁷According to Democratic editors, one reason for this was that more Negroes were voting for the party of white supremacy. For example, the editor of the Fort Smith Weekly Elevator, November 26, 1886, wrote that Northern impressions that Negroes were intimidated at the South was a fallacy. Democratic electoral majorities were increased, he said, because more colored men were supporting that party.

²⁸For a compilation of the Arkansas vote in the various elections see the Tribune Almanac for the years 1877-1891. It is interesting to note that there was a continual increase in Republican totals during this period. For instance, the Republican presidential aspirant received 38,669 votes in 1876 and 58,752 in 1888. There was a corresponding increase in Democratic totals.

"persons who have heretofore acted with the Democratic party." He also announced that he was trying to discover "a way by which they could act with the Republican party without being dominated by the Negro."²⁹ This was a backhand acknowledgment that the Republicans had in the past catered to and depended upon the colored vote. At the same time it was an announcement that the party of Lincoln in Arkansas intended to divorce itself from what had become an embarrassing alliance.

Despite the fact that at least one Democratic newspaper answered the Republican orator with the proclamation that the ranks of its party was open to the Negro, it is apparent that the influence of the colored man on the politics of Arkansas declined after 1888.³⁰ That year was marked by increased violence between white and black and the exodus of some Negro politicians from the state. One such individual, J. W. Ramsay, deputy-clerk of Crittenden County, arrived in St. Louis with eighteen other refugees. Ramsay informed a reporter for the Associated Press that he would not return to Arkansas because it was an unhealthy place for him. He also took cognizance of reported violence from his section of the state by declaring that "the cause of these troubles there is that the whites did not want the negroes to hold office."³¹ Whether or not the contentions of Ramsay were true, reports of violence in Arkansas continued

²⁹Little Rock Daily Gazette, July 22, 1888, quoted in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1914, Vol. X of A History of the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 219.

³⁰Weekly Elevator, July 27, 1888, informed the colored men that they were welcome in the Democratic party.

³¹Quoted in Raleigh News and Observer, July 31, 1888.

to circulate. In 1889 the Atlanta Constitution, commenting on the situation in that state, contended that the root of the trouble was that Negroes were voting the Democratic ticket. "Negroes who admit that they have voted the democratic ticket," claimed the editor, "are unmercifully beaten, and Arkansas is just now passing through a phase of the race problem that most of the other southern states have experienced long ago."³²

Charges and countercharges were the order of the day. Nevertheless, to use an old cliché, "where there's smoke there's fire." Undoubtedly the colored man was an active participant in the political life of Arkansas; undoubtedly, too, there was increasing concern on the part of some whites because of this activity. The agrarian element, opposing the Bourbons as Independent or Greenback candidates, found their chances for victory dimmed when the Bourbons utilized the pliant Negro vote. The Republican, on the other hand, found the colored man willing to vote for him, but he also found himself associated in the minds of the whites as the champion of the Negro--a fact which virtually assured his defeat. By the year 1889, therefore, the Republican party in Arkansas, as in Alabama, decided to present a bill of divorcement to their colored colleagues. Apparently the divorce was concluded. At least the Republican Convention of Pulaski County in 1890 was composed primarily of Negroes. This convention nominated five colored men and two white Democrats for county office; the Democrats refused to accept this fusion arrangement and the white Republicans refused to support the colored nominee.³³ This was

³²Atlanta Constitution, July 26, 1889.

³³Atlanta Journal, August 18, 1890.

symptomatic of what was increasingly to be the political fate of the Negro in Arkansas. Slowly but surely he was deserted by both parties. Slowly but surely the colored men, once a factor to be considered in Arkansas politics, declined in influence until eventually they were almost totally disfranchised.

As was true in the states of Alabama and Arkansas, the attitude toward Negro participation in politics varied in time and intensity among the white population of Florida. During the period of Reconstruction the Negroes, who, according to the Census of 1880, numbered some 126,690 and comprised forty-seven per cent of the population,³⁴ were tutored in the ways of the Republican party. Despite all efforts of their former masters, both during and for some years after the end of Reconstruction, to sever them from this alliance the colored men tended to remain loyal to the party of emancipation.³⁵ Nevertheless, although the loyalty of the mass of Negroes could be counted upon by the leaders of the Republican party in Florida, it was not enough to maintain that organization in control. By 1876 white opposition was so intense to the Republicans that the Democrats were successful in their efforts to place George F. Drew in the governor's chair. The membership of the party responsible for the defeat of the Radicals and the ending of Reconstruction represented

³⁴Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. III, table 13, p. 44.

³⁵During the period of Reconstruction the Negro not only voted in Florida, but many of them held office. For example, there were nineteen colored men among the seventy-six members elected to the state legislature in 1868. H. D. Price, The Negro and Southern Politics: A Chapter of Florida History (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 11. A Florida Negro, Joseph T. Walls, served in Congress from 1871 to 1875. A. A. Taylor, "Negro Congressmen a Generation After," Journal of Negro History, VII (April, 1922), 127.

a conglomeration of economic interests and political philosophies, but upon one point they could agree--the necessity of controlling the Negro and preventing a revival of the combination which had dominated and exploited the state for so long.

Agreement among the whites as to the necessity for control of the colored man left unsolved the method whereby it might be effected. The yeoman element of the party of white supremacy, Democrats before the Civil War, had a strong anti-Negro bias and would have been elated to see the colored men disfranchised. They especially distrusted the ability of the Black Belt planters, often members of the Whig party and now Democrats by necessity rather than conviction, to control the Negroes' vote as they had a short time previously regulated their very lives.³⁶ But it was the planter element, the Bourbon, and not the agrarian class which dominated the Democratic party of Florida at the outset of Redemption. Because of this dominance it was the Bourbons who for most of the period formulated Democratic party policy in regard to the colored man.

When the Redeemer George F. Drew was inaugurated as Governor of Florida on January 2, 1877, one era ended and another began. In his inaugural address the governor promised his colored constituents that all rights, including those dealing with the franchise, which had been bestowed upon them by the Constitution prepared during the period of Reconstruction would be maintained by his administration.³⁷ Such a promise was undoubtedly pleasing to the Negroes, but not greeted with so

³⁶ Edward C. Williamson, "The Era of the Democratic County Leader: Florida Politics, 1877-1893" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Pennsylvania), p. 25.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

much acclaim was a message which the governor delivered to the legislature on January 10, 1877. In this message Drew proposed that the Democrat-controlled legislature effect a reform of the election laws of the state. It was suggested that Florida counties be divided into election districts, and that each elector be required to cast his ballot in the district where he was registered. Undoubtedly the governor realized that such a law would work a hardship on many of the colored men. A large number of this race were itinerant laborers and it would often be difficult for them to return to their district on election day. That this would in effect disfranchise many Negroes and might be the beginning of complete disfranchising legislation was recognized by the small number of colored men in the legislature. Consequently, they fought the governor's proposal with every means at their disposal. Their battle was fruitless, however, and the suggestion of Drew was enacted into law by a compliant legislature.³⁸

The election law of 1877, while it did result in some transient colored men being unable to cast ballots, did not appreciably lessen the number of Negroes eligible to vote. Eligibility, however, does not necessarily mean that the colored citizen of Florida was freely allowed to exercise the franchise. It early became apparent that whenever the colored men opposed the Bourbon's program their right to vote would be encumbered. In 1878, for example, some Negroes who had earlier been enticed into the Democratic party but who were now dissatisfied with the "retrenchment" policy of Governor Drew, joined with the Republican members of their race to oppose the Bourbons in the Congressional elections.³⁹

³⁸Ibid., pp. 39-51.

The revolt of the colored man was of little success in 1878 because the party of white supremacy was able to elect their full slate of candidates to Congress.⁴⁰ This accomplishment of the Bourbons was apparently tinged with fraud and resulted in demands by the Republicans that a Federal election law be enacted to protect the colored man in his right to cast a ballot and have it counted.⁴¹ Such a prospect was anathema to the Democratic party of the state. The Florida legislature almost immediately passed a resolution which directed the Congressional delegation of the state to use all of its influence to prevent a recurrence of the employment of Federal officials as supervisors of elections held under the laws of the state.⁴²

³⁹ Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, Vol. III, 333-35. Negroes dominated some of the Republican conventions in which the party's Congressional candidates were chosen. The Democratic party also chose its candidates in convention. Shortly after the convention adjourned, Negro Democrats of Leon County held a mass meeting and passed resolutions condemning the cutting of the length of the school term, discrimination against the colored race in the drawing of juries, and the increase in county taxes. They warned that they would vote Republican until the abuses were removed. Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, July 30, 1878, cited in Williamson, "Era of the Democratic County Leader," p. 75.

⁴⁰ One Republican candidate, Horatio Bisbee, contested his defeat on the grounds of fraud and intimidation. After an investigation, Bisbee was seated. U.S. Congress, House, Bisbee v. Hull, 46th Cong., 1st Sess., 1878, House Misc. Doc. 187, p. 391-96. Bisbee was a perennial candidate from the Second District. He was elected in 1876, 1878, and 1882. See the Tribune Almanac for the years 1877-85. In the other Congressional districts a Democrat was elected during these years, but the vote polled by the Republicans indicates that a large number of colored electors remained loyal to that party in national elections. This is also borne out by the vote polled by Republican presidential aspirants. For example, Garfield received 23,686 votes to 27,924 for Hancock; in 1884 Blaine polled 28,031 and Cleveland 31,766; in 1888 Harrison received 26,657 and Cleveland 39,561. Tribune Almanac for the years 1881-1889.

⁴¹ See the Tallahassee Weekly Floridian, December 18, 1878, quoted in Williamson, "Era of the Democratic County Leader," p. 85.

⁴² Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, Vol. IV, 371.

No Federal election law existed in 1880--a year marked by another Democratic victory in Florida. The Republicans nominated ex-Senator Simon Bolivar Conover as their candidate for governor, and the Democrats, pledging to all men the fullest protection of their civil and political rights, countered with William D. Bloxham.⁴³ As in 1878, this election year saw intimidation and fraud being practiced freely by both sides. Armed Democrats roamed the countryside intimidating prospective colored Republican voters. Not certain, however, that this would be sufficient to ensure the election of their candidate, the Democrats also stuffed the ballot boxes with tissue ballots.⁴⁴ While the Republicans protested bitterly at such actions, neither were they pure in their methods of campaigning. In some instances members of the Negro community intimidated some of their neighbors in an effort to keep the colored vote solidly in the Republican column.⁴⁵

Generally, the theme of Florida politics after 1880 was that the Bourbons continued to appeal for the Negro vote and were able to command some such support in local and state elections. In contests of national scope during the period, however, the colored man generally retained his

⁴³Ibid., Vol. V, 273.

⁴⁴Ibid. In 1880 the Republicans nominated a colorful Negro orator, George W. Witherspoon, as their Congressional candidate from the First District. Williamson, "Era of the Democratic County Leader," p. 113. Witherspoon polled 11,082 votes, but his Democratic opponent, Robert H. M. Davidson, received 15,078. Witherspoon contested his defeat, but the case was dismissed by Congress. Chester H. Rowell (ed.), A Historical and Legal Digest of all the Contested Election Cases in the House of Representatives of the United States from the First to the Fifty-Sixth Congress, 1789-1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 368.

⁴⁵Williamson, "Era of the Democratic County Leader," p. 113.

allegiance to the Republican party. Random samplings of some campaign and election reports will provide the best indication of conditions in the state. In 1882, for example, the major news coming from the Florida election was that it passed off quietly except for the assault on a colored voter by a Negro bystander because he voted the Democratic ticket.⁴⁶ The most noteworthy event of the following year was the suggestion by a Republican newspaper, the Key West News, that all elements opposed to the Bourbon Democracy cooperate with each other.⁴⁷ Some efforts at fusion were made. In 1884 the Republicans endorsed an Independent candidate for governor, but to no avail, the Democrats were again victorious.

That the Bourbons were successful in winning some colored support in this and succeeding elections can not be actually proved, but that it did occur may be drawn from inference. Had not the Bourbons been seeking to placate the Negro then it is doubtful if an event of the election of 1884 would have come to pass. In that year a Democratic candidate for Presidential elector, R. C. Long, made an anti-Negro speech. He was immediately forced to resign as a candidate by the Chairman of the Democratic State Executive Committee, Samuel Pasco, who informed the colored man that it had been in the past and would in the future be the purpose of the Democratic party to maintain "the constitutional rights of the

⁴⁶Raleigh News and Observer, November 8, 1882, and Galveston Daily News, November 8, 1882.

⁴⁷Key West News, n.d., cited in the Lancet, September 22, 1883. The Lancet, a Negro newspaper published in Petersburg, Virginia, noted that the News claimed that the Republican party of Florida was composed of ninety percent colored men.

colored man"⁴⁸ The editor of the Key West News answered Pasco by saying that "the studied and polished hypocrisy which the Bourbon leaders have displayed toward the colored people since the war has been and is remarkable only for its transparency."⁴⁹ Such a statement makes it evident that the Republican party was concerned about Bourbon efforts to attract Negro support. Additional evidence comes from the fact that the Bourbons permitted colored men to hold some county positions and seats in the state legislature, and that steps were not immediately taken to effect the disfranchisement of the colored race.⁵⁰

The possibility of curtailing Negro participation in politics certainly occurred to some citizens of Florida. By 1885 agitation by the yeoman farmer, the small merchant, and other members of their economic strata resulted in consideration being given to the idea of disfranchisement. In that year, amidst dire predictions by the Republicans that it foreshadowed terrible political woes for the colored man, a constitutional convention was convened for the purpose of considering changes in the instrument of government prepared during Radical Reconstruction. Republican fears for the Negro, however, were not borne

⁴⁸Tallahassee Land of Flowers, September 27, 1884, quoted in Williamson, "Era of the Democratic County Leader," p. 203.

⁴⁹Quoted in ibid., p. 204. Reports from Jacksonville said that the election was quiet and that the Negroes were voting more solidly than ever. Raleigh News and Observer, November 5, 1884.

⁵⁰In the period of the 1880's, as a result of fusion agreements, at least nine different Negroes were elected to the state senate. Also, during this decade there were several colored Republicans elected to the lower house of the legislature. In addition, a Negro was elected marshal of Jacksonville, and, in 1889, a colored man was elected County Judge of Monroe County. He was impeached and removed from office because he issued a marriage license to a colored Cuban man and a white Cuban woman. Work (comp.), "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," Journal of Negro History, V (January, 1920), 69-70.

out in the new fundamental law prepared by the Bourbon-dominated body. Liberal franchise requirements were adopted and the restoration of county self-government was provided. Of more immediate danger to the colored man, and, for that matter, to the agrarian opponents of the Bourbons, was the provision authorizing the governor to appoint county commissioners. Because these individuals controlled election machinery on the county level, the new provision of the Constitution enhanced the position of the party in power. Naturally the governor would appoint commissioners friendly to his party and, since they controlled election machinery, it would henceforth be easier to count out the party's opponents.⁵¹ Despite this new device, however, at the outset no overt action was taken to limit the franchise of the colored man under the provisions of the new Constitution.

The situation in Florida politics changed rapidly in 1889. Negroes had continued their practice of voting for Republican candidates in national elections and seeking to conclude an arrangement in state and local politics whereby, in exchange for their electoral support, a number of offices would be allotted to members of their race. Generally, this support was available to the Bourbons, but by 1889 there was a possibility that the colored men would join forces with the agrarian element to overthrow the conservatives. To lessen the possibility that this combination would achieve success, the Bourbon-dominated legislature enacted into law a measure changing franchise requirements. This new

⁵¹The legislature was also empowered to enact a poll tax. For voting provisions of the new constitution see Thorpe (comp. and ed.), Federal and State Constitutions, II, 747-48.

election law provided for the inauguration of a poll tax and also for a multiple ballot-box system similar to that of South Carolina. While these provisions did not overtly violate the Fifteenth Amendment--they applied equally to white and black--they did strike the Negro and the Republican party at the most vulnerable points. Many colored men would be reluctant to spend their hard-earned cash for the privilege of exercising the franchise, a privilege that was less and less associated in their minds as a method of demonstrating their freedom. Even those who did pay the tax, or had it paid for them, often found that it was to no avail because of the confusing ballot-box system. According to the Florida law a ballot had to be correctly deposited in one of eight boxes, each of which was for a different office. It was an easy matter for the Bourbon-directed election officials periodically to shift the location of the ballot boxes. This had the effect of preventing a literate member of the opposition from memorizing the location of the boxes and instructing the illiterate Negroes and whites as to the one in which each ballot should be deposited.⁵² Consequently, a majority of those colored men who had met the poll tax obligation found that their lack of education often resulted in disfranchisement. These machinations by the Bourbons had the desired effect for after the enactment of this legislation the Republican vote in Florida rapidly declined.⁵³ Thus after

⁵²Price, The Negro and Southern Politics, p. 13. It was a simple matter for Democratic election managers to inform their illiterate supporters as to the box in which their ballots should be deposited.

⁵³The combined effect of the poll tax and ballot-box laws on the opposition vote can be seen in the total vote for governor in the elections immediately preceding and following their adoption. In 1884 the Democratic gubernatorial total was 32,057 and the opposition polled

1890 the colored man, while still a factor, largely ceased to be a force in Florida politics.

Even though the percentage of colored men in the population differed greatly in Alabama, Arkansas, and Florida, the political fate of the Negro in these states was somewhat comparable. In all of these states the colored men generally remained loyal to the Republican party, but when that organization chose to abandon the political arena in state politics and support Independents, the Negro often cast his vote for Bourbon candidates. In payment for such assistance to the Bourbons the Negro leaders were often allowed to hold a small percentage of the minor offices and seats in the state legislature. Inability of the Republicans to win elections, however, convinced the leaders of that party that the colored vote, so valuable during Reconstruction, was a liability rather than an asset. Consequently, before the end of the 1880's a movement was under way in these states to disassociate the Republican party from its traditional alliance with the colored race. Thus, by 1889 the Negro was being abandoned by his political mentors in these states of the lower South. This situation was not, however, unique for it also prevailed in most of the other states which had formerly constituted the Confederacy.

27,851. Thus, out of a total vote of 59,938 the Democrats received 53.5%. In 1888 the Democrats garnered 40,255 out of a total of 66,740 for a percentage of 60.3. By 1892, however, the Democrats percentage was 78.7, but in 1896 it dropped to 66.7. In 1900 the percentage of votes polled by the Democrats had climbed to an astounding 81%. It is instructive to note that the total vote polled by Democrats declined while their percentage increased after 1890. Obviously, many Democrats concluded their vote was not needed for a party victory. For a chart of these and additional figures see ibid., pp. 13-14.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEGRO AND SOUTHERN POLITICS: GEORGIA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, AND TEXAS

The attitude in regard to Negro suffrage which prevailed in Florida was repeated to some extent in the neighboring state of Georgia. White men of this state, wrecked and torn by the Civil War, faced the prospect of Negro voting with trepidation after that conflict. As was true of a majority of the people of the South, the citizens of Georgia had no desire to see the colored men enfranchised. Alexander Stephens more or less reflected the attitude of his compatriots when, in testimony before a Congressional Committee considering what eventually became the Fourteenth Amendment, he said that the "general opinion of the State is very much adverse to Negro suffrage" Citizens of Georgia, he stated, ". . . look upon the question of suffrage as one belonging exclusively to the States" ¹ That this point of view did not impress either the committee or the Radical-dominated Congress is not at all surprising. The question of state's rights had, temporarily at least, been settled by the recent conflict, and the fact that the white

¹Quoted in Southern Watchman, May 2, 1866, cited in Ralph Wardlaw, Negro Suffrage in Georgia, 1867-1930 ("Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies," No. 11, Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1932), p. 18. General John B. Gordon said he did not favor disfranchisement of the colored men as a class, but he thought some restriction should be placed on their voting. Ibid., p. 24.

citizens of Georgia were opposed to the enfranchisement of the colored men made it even more certain that Congress would look favorable upon the question of bestowing the vote upon that race. Eventually, of course, this did occur, and when the Negro was enfranchised the Southern Watchman gave the following advice to Georgia's colored citizens: Vote for the best qualified candidates, and, above all else, "avoid saying or doing anything which can get up any bad feelings between the two races."²

The advice given to the Negro by this journal was well taken because strenuous opposition was early manifested by some white citizens toward participation by members of that race in the political affairs of the state. As a rule, such prominent Georgians as John B. Gordon, Alexander Stephens, Alfred Colquitt, Benjamin Hill, and ex-Governor Joseph Brown, while opposed to the indiscriminate enfranchisement of the colored men, acquiesced to the situation and attempted to make the most of it. Violent opposition, however, came from the poorer class of whites with whom the Negro was in economic competition. Nevertheless, in spite of bitter protestations the colored men, backed by Federal bayonets, freely participated in the Georgia political arena while that state was in the throes of Radical Reconstruction.³

²Southern Watchman, May 27, 1867, quoted in ibid., p. 23.

³In elections held on April 20, 1868, twenty-eight Negroes were elected to the Georgia legislature. On September 3 the House expelled all but three. This action drew fire from Congress which retaliated by refusing to seat the Georgia delegation. Eventually the state was required to seat the Negroes and to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment before her statehood was restored. After this date one colored man, Jefferson F. Long, served part of one term in Congress. Four Negroes sought election to Congress in 1870, but none were successful in their campaign. Samuel D. Smith, The Negro in Congress, 1870-1901 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), pp. 5, 135.

Redemption was accomplished earlier in Georgia than in some of the other former Confederate states--an event which placed the political future of the Negro in the hands of potentially antagonistic whites. The actual beginning of a return to native white control was in 1872 when the Democrats were successful in electing their gubernatorial candidate. The following year the Georgia legislature sought to consolidate the position of this party by changing the electoral section of the state constitution. Since the Republican party of Georgia, as in other Southern states, was largely dependent upon the political support of the colored race, the change in the fundamental law sought to make it more difficult for a Negro to register as an elector. Capitalizing upon the propensity of the colored men to move periodically, an amendment was adopted which stipulated that to be eligible to cast a ballot an individual must be a resident of the state for one year and the county for six months.⁴ The immediate purpose of this legal maneuver was to limit to some extent the number of eligible Negro voters, and thus to lessen the possibility that a rejuvenated Republican party would seriously contest for control of the state in 1874. Actually, the amendment, together with the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, had the desired effect because the colored vote was virtually powerless in this election. That this was true is amply demonstrated by the fact that although the Negro population of Georgia was almost equal to that of the white it was only in three counties that their voting strength was sufficient to elect colored representatives to

⁴ George A. Glynn (comp.), The Convention Manual for the Sixth New York State Constitutional Convention, 1894, American Constitutions (Albany: Argus Printing Co., 1894), II, Part II, pp. 400-06.

the legislature.⁵ Even had more Negroes been registered, however, the result would have been little different because the Democratic whites were solid in their determination not to permit a revival of Republican rule. The leading Democratic newspaper of the state left no doubt of this when it published the party ticket with the comment that here "is the ticket selected by the Democratic party . . . which will of course be elected, as there is no opposition, and would be if there was."⁶

In 1874 and in succeeding elections which came during the period under discussion the Republican party did not pose a serious threat to Democratic ascendancy. Legal stumbling blocks and intimidation of the potential supporters of the Republicans was largely responsible for this during the early years of the period. After the Compromise of 1877, however, the policy of the National Republican party was largely geared to the philosophy that success in state politics was problematical as long as that party was associated with the colored men. Consequently, while the Republican machinery was maintained and was oiled in presidential years to marshal votes for its nominee, it was rare indeed when they bothered to nominate a state ticket. In spite of this, however, the Negro did remain a factor to be considered in state politics--not so much because he posed a threat to Democratic ascendancy, but as an

⁵The counties from which Negroes were elected were McIntosh, Glynn, and Liberty. Four white Radicals were elected in other counties. Wardlaw, Negro Suffrage in Georgia, p. 38. The census of 1880, more accurate than the one 1870, gives the population as consisting of 725,133 Negroes and 816,906 whites. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), chap. III, table 13, p. 44.

⁶Atlanta Constitution, December 2, 1874.

emotional issue employed to rally whites to continued loyalty to the party of white supremacy.

The leaders who seized power in the Democratic party of Georgia during the period under discussion were not representative of the small farmer class or even of the old planter oligarchy. Although their names and manners often resulted in their being associated in the electorate's mind with the ante-bellum planter element, in economic philosophy they represented more the rising class of industrialists.⁷ Early during the the period they became convinced that a maintenance of the traditional agrarian economy by their state and section could only result in continued domination by the North. Thus, they reached the conclusion that they must take the initiative in bringing about a diversification of the economic system in their state. Such an event would be possible, however, only if investment capital could be enticed into Georgia and it would not come where there was political chaos. Consequently, whether these individuals rationalized it in this manner or not, they developed the attitude that it was their collective responsibility to assume the posture of a political Moses and lead their state to the promised land of industrialization.

In their efforts to improve the economic situation in Georgia the leaders turned to political action, and, in so doing, they violated many democratic principles. Led by the so-called "Triumvirate" of Joseph E. Brown, John B. Gordon, and Alfred H. Colquitt, the Georgia Bourbons traded the primary political offices of the state back and forth among

⁷C. Vann Woodward, "Tom Watson and the Negro in Agrarian Politics," Journal of Southern History, V (February, 1938), 14.

a selected few. By so doing they were successful in their efforts to prevent political instability, but they also succeeded in arousing opposition among the numerous members of their party who believed that the Bourbon's policy was disadvantageous to the majority of the citizens of Georgia. Yet, because the Bourbons directed the party responsible for Redemption, their antagonists found that the road to party revolution was indeed a rocky one. Whenever it appeared that success might be attendant upon their efforts, the Bourbons called forth the specter of Reconstruction and demanded strict allegiance from all classes in the hallowed name of white supremacy.

While the Georgia Bourbons had no intention of allowing a revitalized Republican-Negro combination to threaten their political dominance they did seek to give a semblance of legality to their actions and to solidify their position by adopting a new constitution for the state. As would be expected, the convention which was assembled for that purpose in 1877 was largely dominated by the Bourbons. It did, however, contain an element which accepted the idea that limitations should be placed upon the right of the colored men to exercise the franchise. Prominent among the delegates holding to that attitude was Robert Toombs, former general and Secretary of State of the Confederacy, who had refused to ask a pardon from the Federal government and who had consequently not had his citizenship restored. Toombs reminded his fellow delegates that a new and ignorant element had been enfranchised. "We must not only protect ourselves against them," he said, "but in behalf of the poor African, I would protect them from themselves." The Negro is kind and affectionate, he continued, "but their previous condition, whether by your fault or not,

was such as to disqualify them for self-government."⁸ In spite of the arguments advanced by Toombs the Georgia convention did not deem it necessary to include in the new constitution restrictive qualifications on the franchise. In fact, the finished article on the suffrage was not vastly different from the provisions included in the Constitution of 1868.⁹ The completed product was such that a Northern journal commented that among the good features of Georgia's new instrument of government were those effecting the colored man because they secured to him his civil rights. It was noted by this editor, however, that the provision requiring the payment of all taxes in order to be eligible to vote might for a time disfranchise many of the colored race.¹⁰

It was not necessary for the Bourbons to employ strict legal methods to prevent the Negro from voting the Republican party back into power because after about 1876 that organization made no real effort to win in state elections. Occasionally, but with no success, a Republican candidate would seek election to Congress, and once in awhile a member of that party campaigned for minor state office.¹¹ One reason for this was

⁸Quoted in Pleasant A. Stovall, Robert Toombs: Statesman, Speaker, Soldier, Sage (New York: Cassell Publishing Co., 1893), p. 341. By raising the specter of the Negro vote, Toombs was seeking to prevent the convention from adopting a provision which would require state judges to stand for election. In this he was successful.

⁹The franchise section of the constitution provided that male citizens who had resided in the state one year and the county six months, and who had paid all taxes were eligible to vote. Excluded were all persons convicted of a list of crimes which included larceny and moral turpitude. For the complete text see Glynn (comp.), American Constitutions, II, Part II, 405-07.

¹⁰Nation, XXV (August 30, 1877), 128.

¹¹Some Republicans sought election to Congress in almost every election. In 1884 a Negro named Wright ran in the Tenth District, but

that the Republicans became convinced that their best chance of breaking the Bourbon stranglehold on state politics would be to cooperate with the numerous whites who were dissatisfied with the Bourbon leadership.

Opposition to the Bourbons had arisen in Georgia as early as 1874 when an Independent movement led, among others, by Doctor William H. Felton threatened a permanent division of the white vote. Despite the fact that the Bourbons sought to offset the revolt in their party by use of the Negro vote, Felton was elected to Congress in 1874 and again in 1876 and 1878. Even more success was achieved in the last election for, in addition to Felton, two other Independent Democrats were chosen over the regular nominees of the party.¹²

Dissatisfaction of the small farmer class of the rural counties with the ring-rule of the Bourbons intensified with an event of 1880.

polled only 1,277 votes to 9,166 for his Democratic opponent. The Tribune Almanac and Political Register (New York: The Tribune Association, yearly) for the year 1885. Not only were Republicans unable to win any important state office, but their presidential candidates never came close to winning the electoral vote of the state. In 1880 Garfield polled 54,086 votes to 102,470 for Hancock; Blaine in 1884 garnered only 40,446 to 100,449 for Cleveland. See ibid., for the years 1881, 1885, and 1889.

¹²Charges were later made that in these campaigns money was freely spent by the Bourbons in order to purchase the vote of the Negro. Alexander H. Stephens, himself a Bourbon, quoted a Georgia newspaper in 1879 which said that at the polls "money was freely exhibited and as freely and as openly taken. The price of a vote ranged from ten cents to five dollars Hundreds of votes were thus openly disposed of in plain view of everybody" Augusta Evening News, n.d., quoted by Stephens in James G. Blaine, et al. "Ought the Negro to be Disfranchised? Ought He to have been Enfranchised?" North American Review, CCLXVIII (March, 1879), 252. For an account of the theft of ballot boxes, use of tissue ballots, intimidation, and general fraud employed in these campaigns see Mrs. William H. Felton, My Memoirs of Georgia Politics (Atlanta: Index Printing Co., 1911), pp. 656-63. In 1876 Felton polled 13,269 votes to 10,807 for the regular Democrat, and in 1878 his total was 14,815, and his opponents was 12,965. Tribune Almanac for the years 1877 and 1879.

In that election year former General John B. Gordon suddenly resigned his position in the United States Senate--a position to which he had just been elected for a second term--and was replaced by Governor Alfred Colquitt with the millionaire industrialist, Joseph E. Brown. Gordon, who had informed the North in 1878 that "the causes that divided us are gone, and gone forever,"¹³ had ostensibly resigned to pursue a railroad career. The white Independents, however, considered his action merely another manifestation of the Bourbon's intention permanently to divide the major offices among themselves. This smacked too much of machine rule to a public already shocked by disclosures of corruption in the administration of Governor Colquitt. Consequently, when the governor sought renomination in an effort to vindicate himself and his administration, a revolt erupted within the Democratic party. Previously the Independent Democrats had been content to seek election to Congress and to minor state positions--probably because of the Bourbon's insistence that a split within the party might result in a revival of Republican rule. In 1880, however, the Independents risked such a possibility by running Thomas M. Norwood against Colquitt. The ensuing campaign was one of charges and countercharges, but one in which both Norwood and Colquitt sought the electoral support of the colored man. This was not the first time that the Bourbons had manifested an interest in such support. In 1876, for example, Benjamin H. Hill marched "arm in arm" to the polls with a Negro saying that he was "glad to be voted by a colored Democrat."¹⁴ Whether or not the Negroes

¹³Quoted in Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), p. 105.

¹⁴Jackson Weekly Clarion, November 22, 1876, quoted in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1817-1914, Vol. X of A History of

marched to the polls with the Bourbons in 1880, when the smoke of the election cleared it was found that Colquitt had won a resounding victory. Norwood immediately charged that the machine had stolen the election with colored votes. Newspapers throughout Georgia and the South speculated that Norwood's contention was correct and that continued Bourbon control was indeed due to the electoral support of black Republicans.¹⁵

While the Bourbons undoubtedly did employ the colored vote in 1880 they very quickly began to attack Felton and the Independent Democrats for seeking to effect a division in the party of white supremacy. In general, the theme of their attack was that division meant a revival of the conditions which existed during Reconstruction. One editor, for example, said of Felton that "he knew that Independent success meant a reinstatement of Republican rule in Georgia, and a victory of the Negro over the white man. He consented to lead a movement with this disgraceful end in view, and justly merits the contempt and political ostracism in which he will be held."¹⁶

the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 80.

¹⁵Raleigh News and Observer, October 8, 1880, reported that the Negro vote in Georgia was largely for Colquitt and predicted he would be elected by a 50,000 majority. The actual vote was 64,004 for Norwood and 118,349 for Colquitt. Tribune Almanac for 1880. The Columbus (Ga.) Enquirer, said after his election that Colquitt probably owed his victory to the Negro while the correspondent of the New York Times in Atlanta said that fully 65,000 colored men took advantage of the split among the Democrats to resume voting in safety. Nation, XXXI (October 21, 1880), p. 280.

¹⁶Athens Banner-Watchman, April 1, 1884, quoted in Wardlaw, Negro Suffrage in Georgia, pp. 48-9. Felton was defeated in his bid for Congress in 1882 by a vote of 10,746 to 12,408 for the regular Democrat. He ran again in 1886 and polled 1,537 to 5,043 for his opponent. Other Independent Democrats suffered the same fate. Tribune Almanac for the years 1881-1887.

After the election of 1880 the Independent Democrats did not pose much of a threat to Bourbon ascendancy. One reason for this was undoubtedly the colored man who in at least two ways contributed to maintaining the Bourbons in power. First, the Bourbon newspapers could and did continually harp upon the theme that the Negro constituted a distinct threat to white supremacy. By so doing they were able to convince many disenchanted whites that they must remain constant in their support of the Democratic party. Secondly, although the Macon Telegraph proclaimed the colored men to be "a corrupt and corrupting element in Georgia politics,"¹⁷ the Bourbons did not hesitate to utilize his vote whenever and wherever possible.

That the Republican party could not always depend upon the Negro vote and that the Bourbons sometimes could is evident from an event of 1882. In that year white Republican leaders again offered support to Independents of any political persuasion in an effort to defeat the Bourbons, capture control of the state government, and, by electing anti-Bourbons to Congress, break the Solid South. Negro members of the party were reluctant to follow their white leaders because it would mean cooperating with the class of Southern whites most antagonistic to the colored men. Consequently, a colored convention, called by the Negro leader W. A. Pledger, met in Atlanta for the purpose of discussing the situation. Most of the white Republicans, led by General James Longstreet, met in a convention of their own. Eventually harmony was restored and it was agreed that the Republicans would support an

¹⁷Macon Telegraph, n.d., quoted in Raleigh News and Observer, April 7, 1883.

Independent, Lucius J. Gartrell, in his campaign for the governorship.¹⁸ The overwhelming defeat suffered by Gartrell at the hands of Alexander H. Stephens convinced Longstreet and another white Republican leader, Jonathan Norcross, that their party could little hope to win an election as long as it was identified with the Negro. Consequently, by 1884 they determined that the party should rid itself completely of its colored following, and a meeting was called to convene at Atlanta for the purpose of organizing a white Republican party. The convention issued an address in which it was noted that Georgia had ten Congressional districts and that the Negroes had a numerical majority in several of them. Yet, they maintained, no sensible man could hope that under Negro leadership a Republican Congressman could be elected in any of them. "We have tried Negroes as party leaders for sixteen years," said the address, "and find them totally inefficient."¹⁹

Exclusion of the colored men by at least one wing of the

¹⁸Gartrell polled 44,889 votes to 107,253 for Stephens. The Negro leader, Pledger, received 27,226 votes to 119,861 for his Democratic opponent in the race for secretary of state. A comparison of the vote in these two contests is interesting. The Democrat running for secretary of state polled 12,608 more votes than did the party's candidate for governor. At the same time the Independent Democrat running for governor polled 17,643 more votes than did Pledger in his contest. This would indicate that a large number of whites voting against the Bourbon gubernatorial candidate refused to support a Negro against the Bourbon for the minor office. For the vote totals see Tribune Almanac for 1883.

¹⁹Quoted in Washington Post, April 5, 1884, as quoted in Smith, The Negro in Congress, p. 139. The movement to make the Republican party "lily-white" elicited the comment from the Athens Banner-Watchman, April 1, 1884, that it was "the initial step made by the Republican party to shake off the negro" To the editor it meant that the white Republicans realized that they could never gain a foothold in the South by using the colored vote because ". . . so long as the negro is made the issue, the South will protest with an unbroken ballot" Quoted in Wardlaw, Negro Suffrage in Georgia, p. 48.

Republican party did not mean that they ceased to be important in Georgia politics. In 1884, for example, they played an important role in an election which aroused considerable interest. The legislature of the state had enacted legislation providing for general county local-option on the sale of alcholic beverages. Fulton County, which included Atlanta within its boundaries, was the first to hold an election on the question. After a campaign which was remarkable for the breaking down of party and color lines a majority of 225 votes out a total of about 7,000 cast were secured for prohibition.²⁰ Both sides actively sought the colored vote for, as a North Carolina newspaper commenting on the election noted, "the negro vote was the bone of contention and the balance of power."²¹ The colored men were divided on the question, but a majority cast their ballots against prohibition. This fact elicited the comment from a local newspaper that "the negro vote is consolidated and wielded in . . . the South today with more disastrous effects upon Southern ideas, Southern progress, Southern virtue, intelligence, and property interests than at any time since the negro was endowed with the ballot."²²

This was only one of the many expressions of opinion upon the Negro vote and its effect which came out of Georgia in the period before 1890. Another theme was that advanced by former governor and then United States Senator Alfred H. Colquitt in 1887. Colquitt insisted that Northern

²⁰See Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia and Register of Important Events (New York: D. Appleton and Co., yearly), XII, 409-10. See also Nation, XLI (December 3, 1885), 455-6, and (December 10, 1885), 477.

²¹Raleigh News and Observer, November 27, 1887.

²²Southern Star (Atlanta, n.d.), quoted in Texas Baptist and Herald (Dallas), August 8, 1888.

contentions that the colored men had their vote suppressed were erroneous. "Friendly relations," he said, "habitually exist between our white and black citizens, and are never disturbed except on those rare occasions when the exigencies of party politics call for an agitation of race prejudice" ²³ He denied that the colored vote was suppressed--a contention which was seconded by the editor of the Atlanta Constitution. ²⁴ To some extent such claims were based on fact. . In state elections, such as the one in 1888 when the question of prohibition was again the major issue in some counties, Negroes were apparently permitted to vote in large numbers. During most of the period under discussion, however, the colored men, except in those instances where the Bourbons could use their vote to combat insurgents within their party, were prevented by fraud and intimidation from casting a ballot. Thus, the Negro did continue to participate in the political life of Georgia after Reconstruction, albeit in varying degrees of intensity, during the entire period before 1890.

The situation which prevailed in Georgia during the Bourbon period was comparable to the one which arose in Louisiana. This state was one of the first to be occupied by Union troops during the Civil War and one of the last to secure home rule. The latter was accomplished after the election of 1876 when a badly maimed Confederate veteran, Francis T.

²³Alfred H. Colquitt, "Is the Negro Vote Suppressed?" Forum, IV (November, 1887), 220-21.

²⁴Atlanta Constitution, April 8, 1888, answered a statement by the Kentucky editor, Henry Watterson, to the effect that the Negro vote was suppressed at the South. The Constitution said that this might be true "in the neighborhood of the whiskey ring . . .," but that such was not the case in Georgia. On May 12, 1888, the Atlanta Constitution, proclaimed that the Negro voted as he pleased and if he did not please he stayed home.

Nicholls, opposed the Republican, Stephen B. Packard, for the right to occupy the governor's chair. When the ballots were counted each of the two rivals, hurling charges of fraud against the other, claimed to have received a majority of the legitimate votes cast and thus to have been legally elected. Rival governments, each with its own legislature, were established by the claimants and for a time Louisiana teetered upon the brink of anarchy. It was not until after the dispute over who had been elected President had been settled that the situation in Louisiana was resolved. Soon after Rutherford B. Hayes was inaugurated, and apparently as part of a "deal," Federal support was withdrawn from Packard and Nicholls became governor.²⁵ Thus, amidst an admixture of charges and countercharges of venality, fraud, and intimidation, began the period of Democratic dominance in Louisiana.

The experiences of Radical Reconstruction in Louisiana were such that it might be expected that once the native white man had regained control through the medium of the Democratic party the colored men of the state would either be disfranchised or relegated to a secondary position. Certainly the former did not immediately occur. Registration figures indicate that the Negro continued to be eligible to vote, and, at least

²⁵During the election of 1876 the incumbent governor, William P. Kellogg, predicted a heavy Negro vote would be polled unless the Democrats resorted to intimidation and fraud. One Southern newspaper said that the reason for the decline of the colored vote throughout the South was not what Kellogg maintained, but was due to the fact that the mortality rate was higher among Negroes than among whites! Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser, August 26, 1876. After the election neither of the rival governments had a quorum in their legislature, and money, probably supplied by the Louisiana Lottery Company, was used to induce Republican legislators to move to the Democratic legislature. Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 11-12.

in some areas of the state remained a potent political force. This is not overly surprising, however, because according to the Census of 1890 the colored population outnumbered the white by 483,655 to 454,954.²⁶ As a result of this disparity in population there were always more Negroes than whites registered as electors in the period prior to 1890.²⁷ The immediate result of this situation was that during the entire period Negroes continued to seek and to be elected to office, black leaders continued to exert a powerful influence, and Democrats and Republicans continued to vie for colored support.

Beginning even prior to the crucial political canvass of 1876 and continuing throughout the entire Bourbon period, Democratic leaders in Louisiana followed the policy of securing, so far as was possible, the cooperation of the vast Negro electorate. During the course of the campaign of 1876 colored men were often enrolled in the same political clubs with Conservative whites and, in some instances, formed Conservative clubs of their own.²⁸ Members of these organizations were encouraged to

²⁶Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. III, table 13, p. 44. Three parishes were always included in black districts even when the state was gerrymandered. These parishes--Tensas, East Carroll, and Madison--all had a population which was over ninety per cent colored. Ibid., 776-93.

²⁷Louisiana is the only Southern state that maintained registration figures according to race. In 1867 there were 44,670 whites and 83,065 Negroes registered as electors. By 1876 the total for both races had increased until there were 92,354 whites and 115,268 colored men registered. See the Tribune Almanac for the year 1877. The figures cited by the Tribune Almanac may be in error for in 1878 the white registration was listed at 77,341 and the colored at 78,123. In 1880 the figures were 85,451 and 88,024, and 1886 they stood at 110,445 and 111,791, and in 1888 they were 125,407 and 128,150 respectively. These figures are listed in Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Louisiana, 1902 (Baton Rouge, 1902), cited in Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana, 1877-1900" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Louisiana State University), p. 196.

participate in campaign rallies, parades, barbecues, and, of course, to mark their ballots for the candidates of the Democratic party. Nicholls, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, assured the Negroes that if he was elected their rights would be "amply protected and a new era enacted in the State administration" ²⁹ Whether large numbers of colored electors supported the Democratic candidate in this campaign is impossible to determine, but, after being recognized as governor, Nicholls did reward a number of Negroes by appointing them to minor offices. ³⁰

Efforts by the Democrats to attract the colored vote did not cease with the election of 1876. Continually the leaders of that party sought to convince the colored men that their best interests would be served by supporting politically the party which was representative of their former masters. It was difficult, however, for the Louisiana Bourbons to so couch their appeals as to convince the majority of the colored electorate. Consequently, since the Negro generally followed the advice of the leaders of his own race, the Democrats evolved a plan whereby these individuals

²⁸ Appleton's Annual Cyclopedic, I, 485. Because there was still a suspicion of the Democratic party on the part of people at the North the leaders of that party, in several Southern states, renamed it the Conservative party. By the mid-eighties, however, the title Democrats was generally used.

²⁹ Nicholls later wrote that after his election he was determined to bring about good relations between the races. He appointed a number of Negroes to minor offices, but said that they were sandwiched on boards between white men where they could do no harm. Barner F. Lathrop (ed.), "An Autobiography of Francis T. Nicholls, 1834-1881," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XVII (April, 1934), 257.

³⁰ Charges of fraud were hurled by both Democrats and Republicans after 1876 and it is impossible to determine if the listed vote totals do accurately represent the correct number of electors who cast ballots. For the vote total of 1876 see Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana," p. 199.

would be willing to herd their cohorts to the polls to cast their ballots for Bourbon candidates. This scheme, a fusion plan locally called the "mixed-ticket," went into effect with the election of 1878. Under this plan Republican candidates, and most of the colored men remained nominally Republican, would be assured a portion of parish offices and seats in the state legislature.³¹ In exchange, they would not contest with the Bourbons for the remainder of the offices.

That the fusion plan was effective in Louisiana is very obvious. Negroes went to the polls freely in 1878 and many cast their ballots for the Democratic candidates. For example, the Natchitoches Vindicator reported that "election day here was spent joyously by white and black. First they went arm-in-arm and voted the Democratic ticket, and then went to their old ante-bellum plays." The editor, after recounting the surprise of the white men at the tremendous groundswell of Negro support, proclaimed to the colored men that "... we salute you as citizens, friends and brothers."³² Undoubtedly the major purpose of this statement was to convince the Negro and the people in the North of the purity of the Democrats' intentions. The same was true of one of the first resolutions adopted by a convention which met in 1879 for the purpose of preparing a new constitution for the state. This Democratically-controlled

³¹Under the mixed-ticket scheme, parish leaders of both parties would agree to share local offices and legislative positions. Each party nominated a slate, but it listed the same candidates. A candidate in such a ticket informed an audience composed primarily of colored men that he was a Democrat, but "I am on the Republican ticket, and the last one of you kinky-headed - - 's has got to vote for me." Weekly Democrat, November 2, 1878, quoted in ibid., p. 138.

³²Quoted in New Orleans Weekly Democrat, November 28, 1878, as quoted in ibid., p. 134.

body promised that there was no intention of impairing the political, social, or religious rights of any citizen. On the contrary, said the resolution, "the intention is to defend and maintain the rights of the colored citizens"33

The new instrument of government prepared by this convention did nothing, on the surface at least, to beggar the promise incorporated in the resolution. While the residence requirements for eligibility to the franchise were tightened, it was expressly stated in the constitution that "no qualification of any kind for suffrage or office, nor any restraint upon the same, on account of race, color, or previous condition shall be made by law."34

Adoption of the new constitution in 1879 did not greatly lessen the active participation of the colored men in the political life of Louisiana during the period of the eighties. Many Negroes obviously gave their support to Democratic candidates during these years, especially in state politics. For example, in the gubernatorial campaign of 1879 the Democrat, Louis A. Wiltz, polled a total of 74,098 votes to 42,555 for his opponent, Taylor Beatrice. This would not be surprising was it not for the fact that registration statistics compiled in 1880 show that 85,451 whites and 88,024 Negroes were registered. It would be too much

³³Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, IV, 564. The membership of the convention included 98 Democrats, 32 Republicans, and 3 Independents.

³⁴Glynn (comp.), American Constitutions, I, Part II, 781-82. To be eligible to register a male citizen, twenty-one years or older, had to be a resident of the state for one year, the parish for six months, and the precinct for thirty days before the election. General elections were to be held in April. Ibid. It might be noted that more stringent residence requirements did not lessen the number registered.

to expect that every white who was registered voted in this election and that nearly seventy-five thousand cast their ballot for Wiltz. Even more to the point, however, are the statistics for the year 1888. In the gubernatorial campaign of that year the Democrat was the same one who had emerged victorious from the disputed election of 1876, Francis T. Nicholls. He polled 136,746 votes and his Republican opponent, Henry Warmoth, garnered only 51,993. At this time there were 125,407 whites and 128,150 Negroes registered in Louisiana. Thus, if every white man registered as an elector had voted for Nicholls, 11,850 colored men would have had to do the same in order for him to have polled this total.³⁵

While the Bourbons--playing upon the supposed loyalty of the Negroes for their "white folks"--were able to attract numerous colored electors to the Democratic banner, it should not be thought that the Negro of Louisiana entirely deserted the party of Abraham Lincoln. Black leaders such as Henry Demas and Pinckney B. S. Pinchback generally encouraged their brethern to remain true to their traditional allegiance.³⁶

³⁵Complete registration and election returns for these years are to be found in Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Louisiana, 1902 (Baton Rouge, 1902), cited in Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana," pp. 196-99.

³⁶Henry Demas, a veteran of the Union army, was the "black boss" of St. John the Baptist parish. His lieutenant, John Webre, was sheriff of the parish almost continuously from 1876 to 1895. Demas was also able to keep a member of his race in the state legislature, except for the years 1884 to 1888, during the same period. Demas served as state senator for twenty years. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-42. Pinchback, a Georgia born mulatto and Union army veteran, was the most widely known Negro leader. During Reconstruction he was elected Lieutenant-Governor of Louisiana and, when Governor Warmoth was impeached, briefly served as governor. He published the *Weekly Louisianian*, and held several Federal appointive offices. Agnes Smith Grosz, "The Political Career of Pinckney Stewart Pinchback," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (April, 1944), 527-607.

Once in a while, generally in state contests, Negro leaders would bolt the Republican party to campaign for Democratic candidates, but this was the exception rather than the rule unless a fusion arrangement was in operation.³⁷ On the whole a majority of the colored men blindly followed the advice of their leaders and maintained their allegiance to the Republican party. Several points bear out this fact. First, most of the colored men seeking and holding office in Louisiana during this period belonged to the Republican party.³⁸ Secondly, during some campaigns there were complaints by Negroes that they were not free to cast their ballot and have it counted in this state.³⁹ Thirdly, there was the fact that in 1882 the Democrats deemed it necessary to change the boundaries of the state's Congressional districts so as to enhance the chances of their candidates defeating those of the Republican party. All of these points, plus the fact that the Democratic leaders were willing to enter into fusion arrangements, is an indication that the majority of colored men who were

³⁷In 1886 three Negro Republican leaders were temporarily expelled from the party because they supported the Democratic candidate, E. J. Gay, for Congress from the Third District. New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 20, 1886. Gay polled 14,782 votes and his Republican opponent, C. B. Darrall, received 11,692. Tribune Almanac for the year 1887.

³⁸From 1876 to 1900 Negroes served continuously in the state legislature. As late as 1888 nine of the twelve Republicans elected to the lower house were colored and the four Negroes elected to the senate in 1884 were reelected. For a complete listing of all Republicans serving in the legislature see Uzee, "Republican party in Louisiana," pp. 203-07.

³⁹In October of 1878 the Republican State Convention, assembled in New Orleans, adopted a resolution setting forth the proposition that unless the colored people were allowed to vote and have their ballot counted they would emigrate. Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, IV, 572. In January, 1879, it was reported that the leading colored citizens of Louisiana had for men the Young Men's Progressive Association for the purpose of protecting the Negro in his right to the franchise. Nation, XXVII (January 9, 1879), 22.

registered were regarded as potential electors for the Republicans.

Although a majority of the Negroes undoubtedly retained their Republican label, the Democratic party largely controlled the political affairs of Louisiana during the entire period. After 1876 the presidential electoral vote of the state always went to the Democratic nominee. Also, that party was always in control of the state house, and, with an occasional exception, the Congressional delegation of Louisiana was composed of Democrats.⁴⁰ Undoubtedly, the success achieved by the Bourbons was due to their ability to prevent an independent movement of the type which troubled Georgia from threatening a split in the party of white supremacy. While some dissatisfaction was manifested toward the Bourbon program, it was never so intense that their domination of the Democratic party was seriously challenged. This was probably due to the fact that in Louisiana the Negroes outnumbered the whites. Thus, when revolt was threatened the Bourbons were able, as in some of the other states, to turn for assistance to the colored population. Consequently, the Democrats and especially the Bourbons were successful in their efforts to prevent a split in the party of white supremacy and a return to Republican dominance in Louisiana.

⁴⁰

In 1880 the Republicans elected C. B. Darrall to Congress from the Third District; in 1882 W. P. Kellogg was chosen from the Second District; in 1884 it was Michael Hahn from the Second, and in 1888 H. D. Coleman was elected from the same district. For the vote in these contests see the Tribune Almanac for the years 1881-89. The only Negro ever elected to Congress from Louisiana was a mulatto, Charles E. Nash, who was chosen in 1884. See Smith, The Negro in Congress, p. 6, and William F. Nowlin, The Negro in American National Politics (Since 1868) (Boston: The Stratford Co., 1931), p. 21. Henry Demas stood for election in the second district in 1882, but he polled only 2,666 votes to 7,701 for E. J. Ellis, his Democratic opponent. Smith, The Negro in Congress does not list Demas as being a candidate, but the vote for this Negro leader is included in the Tribune Almanac for the year 1883.

In the state of Mississippi during the period between 1875 and 1890 the political situation in regard to the colored man was worthy of a Machiavelli. This state, one of only three of the former members of the Confederacy with a Negro population which outnumbered the white, was redeemed to native control in 1875.⁴¹ Since the whites were in a minority in the state, the Bourbons were faced with the continuing problem of how to maintain political control. Under the Mississippi Constitution the colored men were eligible to exercise the franchise, but if they voted in large numbers against the party of the Bourbon's it might result in the latter's program becoming sidetracked. If, on the other hand, measures were taken which denied the colored men their rights the Federal government might once more intervene in the political affairs of the state. Truly, the Mississippi Bourbons were faced with a dilemma, and the methods they pursued in an effort to arrive at a satisfactory solution took many turns.⁴²

In the year when Mississippi was redeemed the colored men of the state were primarily members of the Republican party. Consequently, the leaders of the Democratic party resorted to all sorts of stratagems--

⁴¹In 1880 there were 650,291 Negroes and 479,388 whites in Mississippi. The 1890 census, an undercount, gives a total of 740,559 Negroes and 544,851 whites. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. III, table 13, p. 44. The 1880 census listed six Mississippi counties in which the population was overwhelmingly black. The percentage of Negroes in these counties ranged from a low of 77.6 in Coahoma to a high of 91.7 in Tunica. Ibid., p. 795. The other former Confederate states in which the colored men outnumbered the whites were Louisiana and South Carolina.

⁴²One Mississippi historian notes that only on one issue were the Bourbons of the state in agreement--the necessity of controlling the Negro vote in order to assure white supremacy. Willie D. Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," Journal of Southern History, XI (November, 1945), 523.

including intimidation and outright violence--to lessen the effect of the colored vote and to win the state to native control. After the election was over Democratic journals, such as the Jackson Weekly Clarion claimed, mainly for the benefit of Northern doubters, that they had never seen the colored people so contented and happy. This contention was not always seconded, however, by statements coming from the Negroes. Immediately prior to the election of 1876, for example, a colored man from Nouxbee County informed the governor that "we are anxious for you to know the condition of our county. Here is about 25,000 raticals [sic] of we colored population never got to cast a vote" He continued by declaring that the Democrats "have been shooting and raring around these two months Although we colored people wish to have peace; but I do say we cannot live at this rate."⁴³

The "shooting and raring around" of which the Negro correspondent complained was a favorite part of the so-called "shot-gun policy" and was designed to frighten the colored population into staying away from the polls. Other methods were also utilized to accomplish that end. One was a complicated election law enacted by the Democrat-controlled legislature in 1876. This measure required every prospective voter to give, under oath, his occupation, employment and employer, and the district or ward in which he resided.⁴⁴ Some local registration boards interpreted this to mean that they could legally require registrants to know the section, range, and township in which they lived and worked. Inability

⁴³Quoted in Vernon L. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 200.

⁴⁴Mississippi, Session Laws (1876), pp. 66-67, cited in ibid., p. 199.

to provide the correct answers to these questions would often result in a request, especially if the prospective registrant was a Negro, to "stand aside."⁴⁵ This rather crude attempt at disfranchisement was not overly satisfactory or successful, and, during the course of the campaign of 1876, there was in many sections of the state a return to the methods employed to achieve Redemption.

In an effort to coax the colored men to support their ticket in this election, the Democrats formed Negro Democratic clubs and furnished barbecues, parades, and orators. While this appealed to the colored man's love of show and may have attracted some support to the Democratic cause, a more effective procedure in lessening the Negro vote and assuring a Democratic victory was the utilization of economic pressure, intimidation, and fraud. Colored men were threatened with the loss of their positions; ballot boxes were stuffed or stolen; bodily harm was mentioned as being a distinct possibility.⁴⁶ The immediate result of all these machinations was a drastic decline of the Republican vote in 1876. Consequently, the Democrats were able to elect all of their candidates to Congress and to return the state's electoral votes for Tilden.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 200.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 201. See also Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Red-necks, Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), and William A. Mabry, "Disfranchisement of the Negro in Mississippi," Journal of Southern History, IV (August, 1938).

⁴⁷The total vote polled by Hayes was 52,625 and Tilden's total was 112,173. Tribune Almanac for the year 1877. More to the point is the vote polled in the Sixth District. In 1876 a Negro Republican, John Lynch, stood for Congress from that district. He polled 12,386 votes to 15,783 for his Democratic opponent. Ibid. The interesting thing about this is that the counties comprising this district were overwhelmingly colored. While no registration figures are available by race for 1876,

Election results in 1876 foreshadowed what was generally to be the order of the day in Mississippi politics for the next fifteen years. During that entire period the Bourbons were able to dominate the state, but they often had to resort to various devices to insure continued control. One thing that they strived to achieve was a division among the Negroes on questions of political import. After 1876 the Bourbons, hoping to convince large numbers of colored men to desert their traditional allegiance to the Republican party, began assiduously to court the Negro vote. One prominent Democratic newspaper, the Jackson Clarion, became an ardent supporter, on the surface at least, of Negro suffrage. During the campaign of 1876 the Clarion pointed out that the Democrats had placed colored men on their ticket in several counties and urged all Negroes to realize that this was proof that this party truly had the best interests of the colored race at heart.⁴⁸ The Clarion continued its campaign throughout most of the eighties and in many instances it was joined by other members of the Mississippi press.⁴⁹

such a listing was published a short five years later. The 1881 figures do not give the registrants for two of the twelve counties in the district, but in the other ten there was a total of 32,787 Negroes and 9,851 whites registered. It is surprising that Lynch was unable to command more colored support! For the figures see U. S., Congressional Record, 47th Cong., Special Session, 1881, XII, 357. In the two counties for which registration figures are not given Lynch polled 1,254 votes to 1,663 for his opponent. Tribune Almanac for the year 1877.

⁴⁸Jackson Weekly Clarion, October 25, 1876, July 25 and October 3, 1877, cited in Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, p. 15. This author maintains that some colored men were dissatisfied with the Republicans and willingly joined with the Democrats. Ibid., pp. 7-14. It should be noted that some Negroes were elected to the state legislature in 1876. According to figures in Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, I, 560, there were five colored men in the senate and sixteen in the house.

⁴⁹For example, in October of 1883, the Aberdeen Examiner complimented "the gallant colored men who at so much personal sacrifice come to us" Quoted in Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, p. 15.

Where platitudes did not elicit the hoped for response, however, it was not at all rare for threats to be voiced. On July 3, 1883, for example, a Democratic journal, the Copiah Signal, published an article which was designed not only to warn the Negroes, but also to convince the poorer whites that the colored man posed a threat to white supremacy. "We must," wrote the editor, "have the triumph of the white man's ticket; we would be more than pleased to see the colored men join our ranks, and should they do so, we agree to give them all the rights guaranteed them by the constitution." The editor went ahead to say, however, that the white man had no intention of being dominated by the Negro.⁵⁰ On October 18, 1883, the same newspaper proclaimed that the whites were not going to be ruled or dictated to any longer, and the colored race might as well understand it. "If they will not vote with the Democrats," said the editor, "it would be better for them and the country that they refuse to participate in the election. The weather might be warm that day and they might possibly get sunstruck."⁵¹ The sentiments expressed by the Copiah Signal, and for that matter by the Jackson Clarion, were not echoed by all of the Mississippi journals, but they do indicate that the Negro continued to be an important political factor in the state. In fact, he was something more than a factor. As the editor of the Jackson Weekly Clarion wrote on August 2, 1882, "in this State for some time to come there is but one issue. All know what it is."⁵²

⁵⁰Copiah Signal, July 6, 1883, quoted in U.S., Congress, Senate, Mississippi in 1883: Report of the Special Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1883 with the Testimony and Documentary Evidence, Report No. 512, 48th Cong., 1st Sess., 1884, I, XXXVII.

⁵¹Copiah Signal, October 18, 1883, quoted in ibid.

Factor or issue, during the entire period under discussion the Negro remained a force with which the white leaders in Mississippi had to cope. Actually, some advantage accrued to the Bourbon leaders of the party of white supremacy from the fact that the majority of colored men retained their Republican label. The Redeemers, by identifying that party with the Negro and the Carpetbagger, found it possible to play upon the fears and prejudices of the mass of whites. They could and did insist that it was requisite for all whites to remain solid in support of the party of white supremacy in order to prevent a return to political control of the Republican-Negro combination. By harping upon this theme the Bourbons also made it more difficult for any white third party or dissatisfied independents successfully to cooperate with the Republicans in overthrowing their program.⁵³ This purpose of the Bourbons was recognized for what it was by the white Republicans. One of the leaders of this group, George C. McKee, complained to the chief patronage dispenser of President Chester A. Arthur that "Bruce and Lamar humbug the different Republican administrations and keep up negro rule in the Rep. party in order that the fear of negro rule in the State may keep the white man in the Dem. party."⁵⁴

⁵² Jackson Weekly Clarion, August 2, 1882, quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 51.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 103.

⁵⁴ George C. McKee to William E. Chandler, July 26, 1883, quoted in Willie D. Halsell (ed.), "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi, 1882-1884," Journal of Southern History, VII (February, 1941), 43. Chandler was at this time secretary of the navy. The Bruce of whom McKee referred, was Blanche K. Bruce, a prominent and wealthy Negro Republican. He was a mulatto Carpetbagger who, before moving to Mississippi in 1868, had attended Oberlin College. In Mississippi he became a planter and, in

One device which was employed by the Bourbons to accomplish the end of which McKee complained and also to mollify the Negroes was the one commonly known as the "fusion principle." Under this system Bourbon leaders in the state and in the county would reach an agreement with the colored leaders as to the number of local offices and seats in the state legislature which were to be held by Negroes.⁵⁵ As a result of this type of agreement colored men in a given county would be encouraged by their leaders to support Democratic candidates and the white leaders would not oppose the election of a small number of Negroes.⁵⁶ The "fusion principle" had the effect which was desired by colored leaders because a number

1870, entered politics. He held a number of minor offices until 1875 when he was elected to the United States Senate. After his term expired he was appointed to a minor Federal office. Carter G. Woodson, "Blanche K. Bruce," Dictionary of American Biography, III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928--), 180. The Bourbon Senator, L. Q. C. Lamar, moved the unanimous confirmation of Bruce as Register of the Treasury. Bourbon assistance to Bruce, John R. Lynch, James Hill, and other Negro Republican leaders caused white Republicans to believe that they had secretly agreed to support Democratic candidates in state and local elections. Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 104.

⁵⁵Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, p. 203, says that in general the fusion principle was confined to six or eight counties where the white population was small and almost totally dependent on Negro labor. He also points out that except in the city of Jackson the Republican control of municipal governments practically disappeared after 1876. Ibid., p. 201. In 1888 an election was held in Jackson in which the Negroes agreed not to participate. The Atlanta Constitution, January 2, 1888, noted that there was peace in the city, but predicted trouble if the Negroes attempted to vote in the election.

⁵⁶Negro leaders were often able to virtually dictate to their colored brethren the candidate they should support. For example, John R. Lynch informed a meeting of Mississippi Republicans in 1883 that it made no difference whether the county machines decided "to fuse with the Independents instead of the Democrats, or with the Democrats instead of the Independents, or to make straight party nomination instead of fusing with either;" all good party men should follow the machine, "although they may honestly believe the decision to be unwise." Quoted in New York Globe, October 30, 1883, as quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 217-18.

of the members of that race gained office in Mississippi during the period under discussion. In general they were chosen to fill minor county positions, but some were elected to serve in the state legislature.⁵⁷ Fusion thus resulted in continued Negro participation in the political life of Mississippi--as both candidates and electors.

The fusion device was undoubtedly a valuable aid to the Bourbons in their efforts to retain political dominance in Mississippi. Agrarian discontent with Bourbon policies intensified in the early eighties and an independent movement began to contest with the Bourbons for control. Greenbackers and Independent Democrats, sometimes aided by white Republicans, challenged Bourbon candidates for seats in the legislature in 1879, 1881, and again in 1883.⁵⁸ In 1881 the dissatisfied elements nominated an Independent candidate to oppose the regular Democrat who was running for governor, but he was easily defeated by the Bourbon's choice.⁵⁹ In one

⁵⁷As previously noted, the election of 1876 brought sixteen colored men into the lower house and five into the senate. At every election until 1890 a number of Negroes were chosen to serve in the popular branch of the legislature, but none were chosen to the upper house after 1886. For a compilation of Negro membership in the state legislature see Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, p. 202.

⁵⁸Two Greenback candidates were elected to the senate in 1878 and fourteen were chosen to the lower house. In 1880 their total in the legislature declined to the point where none were elected to the senate and only two to the lower house. This year, however, saw Republican membership in the legislature increase. In 1878 there was one Republican senator and six members of the house. All of these were Negroes. In 1880 three Republicans, none of whom were Negroes, were elected to the senate, and fifteen were chosen to the house. Of the fifteen, eight were colored. The year 1882 saw the Greenback membership in the house increase to four. Republican membership in that body declined to fourteen--ten of whom were colored--and one of the two Republicans in the state senate was a Negro. For the total membership and party affiliation in the legislature see the Tribune Almanac for the years 1879, 1881, and 1883.

⁵⁹In the race for governor in 1877 the Democratic candidate

instance, however, the Independents were successful. In 1883 General James R. Chalmers, the Confederate villain of the Fort Pillow massacre, charging that his defeat for Congress in 1880 by the Negro Republican, John R. Lynch, was due to the Bourbon's agreement with the Negroes, left the Democratic party to run as an Independent. With the aid of white Republicans and dissatisfied Democrats, Chalmers was elected to Congress.⁶⁰ The success achieved by Chalmers, coupled with the possibility of increased Independent revolt, resulted in the Bourbon leaders and Negro politicians uniting to combat the Independent-white Republican combination.⁶¹

Although the Bourbons were themselves cooperating with the colored man, they did not hesitate to raise the cry of treason to the white man's

polled 97,727 votes and a scattering of 1,168 was given to an informal Republican candidate. In 1881 the total polled by the Bourbon candidate declined to 76,857 and the Fusion nominee secured 51,856. See *ibid.* for the year 1878. The increase in votes for the opposition indicates that dissatisfaction with the Bourbon was widespread.

⁶⁰Running as an Independent in 1882, Chalmers received 9,729 votes to 8,749 for his Democratic opponent but was seated only after a contest. *Ibid.*, for the year 1883. He was defeated in his bid for reelection in 1884, 1886, and 1888.

⁶¹One Negro leader, John R. Lynch, made it clear that he considered fusion to be only a temporary expedient. At a fusion meeting held in Hinds County in 1883, he informed the Democrats that they were naive if they thought the colored men were accepting their control. According to Lynch his people would vote with the party of white supremacy, or any other political group offering concessions, only until it was once more possible to cast their ballots as Republicans. Quoted in *Raymond Gazette*, October 13, 1883, quoted in Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi*, p. 203. Lynch was born a slave in Louisiana on September 10, 1847. After gaining his freedom he came to Mississippi. From 1869 to 1873 he served in the Mississippi legislature. In 1874 he was elected to Congress, but in 1876 he was defeated in his bid for reelection. In 1880 he ran against Chalmers and, after a contest, was seated. From 1881 through 1889 he was Chairman of the Republican Committee of Mississippi. U.S., Congress, House, *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1927* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), p. 1246.

party against the Independents. L. Q. C. Lamar, for example, blasted both Greenbackers and Independent Democrats as "selfish and unscrupulous men who have publicly made a shameless partnership with the negroes of Mississippi."⁶² Undoubtedly Lamar's purpose was to associate the third party movements in the mind of the whites with the Republican party--the one blackened by the memories of Reconstruction. Such efforts by Lamar and other Bourbons were largely successful in the early eighties--thus dooming such movements to defeat. But the Bourbons did not limit their opposition to ranting and railing against the purposes of the Independents. As one Mississippi historian describes the situation, "Independent candidates were run out of their counties, beaten, or murdered Ballot boxes were stuffed, fraudulent returns were made, and thousands of opposition votes were thrown out on technicalities. With mock solemnity, newspapers reported that boxes containing anti-Democrat majorities had been eaten by mules or horses."⁶³

Not only were the methods utilized to achieve Redemption employed against those Independents contesting with the Bourbons for control, but those colored men who refused to reach a satisfactory arrangement with those political leaders also felt their effect. While the Bourbons, largely for the benefit of the North, continually pledged themselves to a policy of equal rights for all citizens, they actually had no intention of allowing the Negro vote seriously to endanger white supremacy. Thus,

⁶²Quoted in Edward Mayer, Lucius Q. C. Lamar: His Life; Times, and Speeches, 1825-1893 (2nd ed.; Nashville: Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1896), p. 435.

⁶³Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, p. 204.

when the colored leaders refused to cooperate with the Bourbons, or when they sought election to Congress or to other high office, the usual state of affairs during the canvass was one of fraud, intimidation, and general corruption.⁶⁴

Although the Bourbons were willing to resort to extra-legal devices to insure their continued domination, such a situation was not satisfactory because discrimination against the Negroes increased the possibility of Federal intervention in state elections. Legislation by Congress accomplishing this end loomed on the political horizon with increasing frequency after 1873. In the Congressional elections of that year the Democrats, for the first time since the advent of the Civil War, secured a working majority in the House of Representatives. This event elicited the introduction into the Senate of a resolution authored by James G. Blaine which asked for an investigation into the possibility that the constitutional rights of American citizens had been denied in some of the states. It was obvious that the resolution was aimed directly at the South. Immediately, Southern Senators answered Blaine by maintaining that such a committee was unnecessary. Lamar of Mississippi went even further and made the flat statement that ". . . the negro vote has

⁶⁴ There were several instances during the period when Negroes sought election to Congress. There has already been mentioned the fact that Lynch, after a contest, was seated in 1881. For the charges he leveled against the Democrats see U.S. Congress, House, Miscellaneous Document, No. 12, 47th Cong., 1st Sess., 1881, 228. See also Chester H. Rowell (ed.), A Historical and Legal Digest of all the Contested Election Cases in the House of Representatives of the United States from the First to the Fifty-Sixth Congress, 1789-1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 375. Lynch was defeated in 1882 by a vote of 7,617 to 6,706. He ran again in 1884 and 1886, but was defeated. Tribune Almanac for the years 1883-1887. Another Negro, James Hill, was an unsuccessful aspirant in 1882. Smith, The Negro in Congress, p. 135.

not been suppressed in the South"⁶⁵

While the South might protest that the rights of all citizens were respected in that section, Northern leaders continued to make political capital out of a suspected violation of the Negroe's rights. In 1883 a Senate Committee investigated reports of election disorders in Copiah County, Mississippi, and the following year Blaine, in a speech at Augusta, Maine, again called for further intervention of Federal power into Southern political affairs.⁶⁶ To the average Southerner a Federal election law meant that the Negro would be protected in his right to the exercise of the franchise, and, as the Bourbons were quick to point out, a majority would undoubtedly choose to cast their ballots for candidates of the Republican party. Such an event would pose a dire threat to the hegemony of the Bourbons; to the mass of Southern whites it presaged a return to the saturnalia of Reconstruction.

To lessen the possibility of such an unhappy state of affairs, there was increased agitation in Mississippi, during the latter half of the decade of the 1880's, for a convention to change the fundamental law of the state. Little came of this movement, however, until 1890 when the Lodge Election Bill, or, as the South came to term it, the "Force Bill," was introduced into Congress. Reaction to this proposed measure was

⁶⁵Quoted in Mayes, Lucius Q. C. Lamar, p. 355.

⁶⁶U.S., Congress, Senate, Mississippi in 1883, Report No. 512, 48th Cong., 1st Sess., 1884, I, XXXVII. The majority report claimed that evidence of fraud had been found. This was vehemently denied by the minority, all Southern Democrats. See also John S. McNeily, "History of the Measures Submitted to the Committee on Elective Franchise, Apportionment and Elections in the Constitutional Convention of 1890," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, ed. Franklin E. Riley (Oxford, Miss.: The Society, 1902), VI, 129.

immediate, bitter, and intense. Southern Congressmen, newspapers, and the average citizen maintained that such legislation was unnecessary. All were insistent that the colored man was freely allowed to exercise the franchise, and that introduction of the measure was another example of Northern meddling in the affairs of the South.⁶⁷

In Mississippi the Lodge bill provided an excuse for agrarian leaders in the white counties to insist upon the calling of a constitutional convention.⁶⁸ Opposition to the proposed convention, however, was widespread. Particularly disenchanted with the entire idea were the conservative press and the Bourbon leaders in the black counties who had utilized the colored vote to remain entrenched in power. Despite such powerful opposition, however, a campaign reminiscent of the one of 1875 brought about the election of a slate of candidates favorable to the calling of a convention.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Southern relation to the Lodge bill is detailed in chapter eight.

⁶⁸ Another factor was that the Republican party, for the first time since 1875, nominated a full slate of candidates in 1889. The nominee for secretary of state was a Negro. Democratic action--whooping and hollering; force and intimidation--broke up Republican meetings and forced a withdrawal of the latter's ticket. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, p. 209.

⁶⁹ Several years after the convention had completed its work the president of that body, S. S. Calhoun, gave his impression as to why the convention had been assembled. In general, his opinion was that there was a reaction to the use of force to lessen the Negro vote and the thought that such measures might become chronic unless a legal method could be found to bring about disfranchisement. S. S. Calhoun, "The Causes and Events that Led to the Calling of the Constitutional Convention of 1890," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, ed. Franklin L. Riley (Oxford, Miss.: The Society, 1902), VI, 106. The only Negro in the convention, seated after a contest, was a former slave of Jefferson Davis. With poetic justice he was made a member of the Committee on Franchise and Elections.

The constitutional convention which was convened was primarily favored by the white farmer class--a group which at this time was less concerned with the possibility of Negro domination than they were with continued Bourbon control. The convention was early beset with clashes between the two white factions. Eventually, however, a compromise was concluded whereby the delegations from the black counties agreed to the creation of thirteen new legislative seats--with the idea that they would be assigned to the white counties--and representatives of the white farmer element acquiesced in the establishment of the poll tax and the literacy test as restrictions upon suffrage.⁷⁰ The effect of these provisions was not, however, all that was desired by the small farmer class. Not only did the literacy test result in the disfranchisement of a majority of the Negroes, but because thousands of whites were also unable to meet the requirements set forth by the new constitution, the political domination of the Black Belt oligarchy was temporarily solidified. Thus, not only did the new instrument of government effectively remove the colored man as a political force in Mississippi, but, for the time being, a large majority of the whites remained subject to the control of a minority of their own race in the black counties.⁷¹ The new constitution of the

⁷⁰The literacy test provided that after 1892 a voter must be able to read the Constitution, understand it when read to him, or else be able to give a reasonable interpretation of its passages. The Constitution also provided disfranchisement for a list of specified crimes and for the payment of a poll tax. The complete text may be found in Glynn, American Constitutions, I, Part II, 1095-1107. The so-called "understanding clause" opened the way for wholesale disfranchisement of the colored man--and for that matter of many whites--and did it in a manner entirely legal under the Fifteenth Amendment. The Supreme Court of the United States ruled that educational qualifications were not discriminatory unless it could be shown that their administration was evil. Williams vs. Mississippi, 170 U.S. 213 (1898).

state, however, had another effect. As a result of the success attendant upon the disfranchisement of the Negro in Mississippi under the provisions of the new constitution, other Southern states began to follow her example, and by the middle of the decade of the nineties the colored man was no longer a potent political force in the South.

One state which found it unnecessary to follow the lead of Mississippi in adopting this method of disfranchisement was Texas. This state, which did not even determine it necessary to adopt a poll tax until 1904, had a population in 1880 consisting of 1,197,237 whites and 393,384 Negroes.⁷² Thus, since the colored people of Texas comprised only 24.7 per cent of the state's population there was little danger during the period under discussion that the members of that race, even by cooperating with white Republicans, could ever control the state politically.

Apparently there was little fear in Texas of Negro domination--at least to the extent that fraud and intimidation became the order of the day. Colored men continued to exercise the franchise in the state during the entire period under discussion, and, while no Negro was ever chosen to serve in Congress, there was never a session of the legislature that did not include at least one member of the colored race.⁷³ Negroes were

⁷¹In 1892 a Northern journal said that recently completed registration figures showed that the Negro had been eliminated politically in Mississippi. It reported that 68,127 whites and 8,651 Negroes were enrolled. Colored males of voting age numbered about 147,000 and there were about 110,000 whites of the same class. Thus, about one Negro in seventeen and two whites in three were entitled to vote--provided they paid their poll tax and kept the receipt! "The Ballot in Mississippi," Nation, I (August 25, 1892), 139.

⁷²Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. 111, table 13, p. 44 and chap. iv, table 5, p. 51.

⁷³From 1868 to 1895, twenty-six counties were, at one time or

also elected to fill some county positions--generally as Republicans--and the party of Abraham Lincoln nominated a colored man for Lieutenant-Governor as late as 1878.⁷⁴

It was to the advantage of the Democratic party of Texas, as of other Southern states, to keep the Negro identified with the Republican party. That does not mean, however, that the party of white supremacy did not actively seek colored electoral support. In 1878, for example, a prominent Democratic journal noted that in Montgomery County a Negro leader was working with the Democrats and dividing the colored vote.⁷⁵ Four years later the same journal applauded the statement of Richard Nelson, colored Secretary of the Republican State Executive Committee, that the Negro had been duped by the Republicans and that candidates of that party were no longer worthy of colored support.⁷⁶

While some colored leaders early became disenchanted with the Republican party, as a rule its national candidates could depend upon

another, represented by a Negro. In the Central Texas counties of Brazos, Burleson, Milam, Robertson, Limestone, Falls, and McLennan the colored population never exceeded the white. Yet, twelve colored legislators were elected from these counties. J. Mason Brewer, Negro Legislators of Texas and Their Descendants (Dallas: Mathis Publishing Co., 1935), p. 39. The Galveston Daily News, April 19, 1876, noted that two colored men had been elected to the Texas Senate. One, a quadroon, was characterized as being a person with "an intelligent look, a keen eye, and a well-shaped head, but his deportment is rather modest than otherwise." Brewer, Negro Legislators of Texas, p. 39, gives only one Negro as a member of this session.

⁷⁴The nominee, formerly an alderman in Houston, was regarded by one newspaper as being "bright." Galveston Daily News, October 4, 1878.

⁷⁵Galveston Daily News, November 6, 1878.

⁷⁶Ibid., July 25, 1882. His statement probably had little effect. Indicating this is the fact that the Republican candidate for president in 1884, James G. Blaine, polled a larger total of popular votes than did any Republican presidential aspirant between 1876 and 1892. Tribune Almanac for the years 1876-91.

Negro votes during the entire period under discussion.⁷⁷ In state elections, however, such was not always the case. In 1876, for example, the Greenback party chose to contest with the Democrats for control of the state house. While unsuccessful in their effort, the strong showing made by this farmer-oriented party and the fact that many colored men supported its candidate, led the Republicans in 1880 to offer a fusion arrangement with the Greenbackers--an offer which was immediately refused. Consequently, the Greenback total in this election year drastically declined. Two years later, however, Greenbacker Congressman Wash Jones demonstrated that in Texas, at least, there was increasing dissatisfaction with Bourbon policies by polling the largest vote ever rolled up to that time in a losing gubernatorial effort.⁷⁸

Despite some success on the part of the Greenbackers and other independent candidates, no real threat to Bourbon political hegemony in Texas came until 1890. In that year James S. Hogg, cooperating with but not dominated by the Southern Alliance, overthrew the Bourbons. Un-

⁷⁷See Tribune Almanac for the years 1876-89. The Republican vote totals for president were always larger than those of their gubernatorial aspirants. One exception to this was in 1880 when the Republican candidates for president and governor received exactly the same number of votes--57,893. Ibid., for the year 1881. Evidently all Republicans voted a straight ticket.

⁷⁸In the gubernatorial election of 1878 the Democratic candidate polled 158,933; the Greenbacker 55,002; the Republican, 23,402. Ibid., for the year 1880. Negroes probably gave some support to the Greenbackers. On September 17, 1878, the Galveston Daily News reported that the colored men were deserting this party because it refused to put a Negro on the ticket. On October 2, however, the same newspaper reported that in a Greenback convention in Calvert, Texas, about sixty of the delegates were colored and only eight were white. In this election Independent candidates also opposed the Democrats for Congressional seats. One, Wash Jones, running as a Nationalist in the Fifth District, polled 21,101 votes to 19,721 for his antagonist. Democrats were elected, however, in the other five districts. Tribune Almanac for the year 1880.

doubtedly some of his support came from the members of the colored Alliance who by this time were manifesting dissatisfaction not only with the Texas Bourbons but also with the Republican leaders of that state. One reason for this, aside from economic causes, was that the Republican party of Texas had reached the conclusion that it would be to its advantage to make the party "lily-white."⁷⁹ Undoubtedly this helped drive many of the Negroes--small farmers who were dissatisfied with Bourbon economic policies--into the arms of the Alliance and eventually into the Populist movement.⁸⁰

For a time, however, there was some doubt as to whether the Negroes would be welcome in the party which was largely composed of the small white farmer class. When the Populist party held its first state convention the issue of whether the organization would accept the support of Negroes was prominent. A white delegate introduced a resolution which would have denied colored men representation on party committees. A colored delegate immediately took issue with the suggestion. "The Negro vote," he said, "will be the balancing vote in Texas. If you are going to win, you will have to take the negro with you" In full agreement with this idea was the white president of the convention. "I

⁷⁹The Republican White League of Texas postulated in 1892 that "the union is safe only in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race, and that a Republican party in Texas to merit the respect of mankind must be in the hands of that race." Quoted in Dallas Morning News, June 9, 1892. This "lily-white" movement in Texas was a continuation of the movement already underway in other states. Obviously, the white Republican leaders had reached the conclusion that the Negro was a millstone around the neck of the party and that as long as the Southern white associated the colored race with the Republican party it had no opportunity to win elections in that section.

⁸⁰The colored Alliance originated at Houston in 1886.

am in favor," he said, "of giving the colored man full representation. He is a citizen just as much as we are, and the party that acts on that fact will gain the colored vote of the South."⁸¹

Action by the Populist convention in electing two Negroes to the party's State Executive Committee was a logical continuation of the policy pursued by the whites of Texas after 1876. Since the colored population was not so numerous as in some of the former Confederate states there was no real danger of Negro domination. Actually, to the Bourbons, Greenbackers, and Populists the colored vote was an asset when it could be weaned away from the Republicans. Consequently, the Negro was not subjected to much fraud and intimidation after Redemption, and he was fairly free to vote and seek minor office in this western-most state of the Lower South. Such, however, was not always true in those former Confederate states comprising the Upper South.

⁸¹Dallas Morning News, August 18, 1891.

CHAPTER V

THE NEGRO AND SOUTHERN POLITICS: THE CAROLINAS, TENNESSEE, AND VIRGINIA

On the plains of Texas; among the bayous of Louisiana; along the Mississippi delta; in the hills of Arkansas; the colored men remained a factor and an issue in the political life after white rule was restored. Just as they were exploited in an economic sense, so did the Bourbons, including among their numbers many former slave holders, seek to use the vote of the Negro to insure their entrenched position in the governments of the Southern states. What was true in the states which were the ancestral homes of Jefferson Davis, Alexander H. Stephens, and Robert Toombs, was no less true of those proudly claiming Robert E. Lee, Andrew Jackson, and John C. Calhoun as their native sons. In the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee; through the Great Valley of Virginia; along the coastal plain of South Carolina, here, too, the Negro was both a political factor and issue in the period after 1876.

Radical Reconstruction spent its force more quickly in North Carolina than in some of the other Southern states. Taking the state as a whole, there was at no time colored rule in the most strict definition. Negroes never occupied the highest elective offices in this state, nor did they ever constitute a majority in the legislature. They did, however, control numerous city and county offices in the Black Belt counties,

where they were in a numerical majority, during the entire period of Reconstruction.¹ This situation was, by 1870, threatened by an avalanche of Conservative votes. In that year the Conservatives, soon to reassume the title of Democrats, won control of both houses of the legislature and impeached and removed the Radical governor. By 1874 their strength in that body was sufficient to secure enactment of a measure calling for a Constitutional Convention to assemble the next year.

The campaign for election of members to the convention was bitter and intense. Fearing that the vote of the mass of Negroes² would go to Radical candidates, the Conservative press began just before election day to raise the race issue. For example, the Charlotte Democrat, obviously seeking to convince the whites to come out in strength and vote for Conservative candidates, asked the white men of North Carolina if they were ready for "mixed schools, for Negro judges, for Negro Representatives, for Negro Senators?" Were they ready, queried the editor, to forget that "this is a white man's government, framed by the wisdom of the white man and secured by the blood of the white race?" If they were ready to forget they should remain away from the polls on election day; otherwise, they should "come up . . . and vote for the man of your race."³

¹William A. Mabry, The Negro in North Carolina Politics Since Reconstruction ("Trinity College Historical Society, Historical Papers," Vol. XXIII; Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), p. 12.

²The Census of 1880 gives the population of North Carolina as consisting of 367,242 whites and 531,277 Negroes. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), chap. III, table 13, p. 44.

³Charlotte Democrat, August 2, 1875, quoted in Mabry, The Negro in North Carolina Politics, p. 15.

The advice given by this and other journals was obviously followed by the white citizens. Although the vote was heavy and the race was close, enough Democrats and their Independent cohorts were elected that they could control the convention and write the new instrument of government.

The constitution which was prepared and submitted to the electorate for its approval by this body was the one under which North Carolina was to be governed during the entire period under discussion. As was true of constitutions prepared in other Southern states during this time, no effort was made to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment and disfranchise the Negro as a race. Provisions were included, however, which were aimed directly at the assumed characteristics of the colored man. For example, because in this Southern state as in the others the Negro was often itinerant, it was provided that to be eligible to exercise the franchise a citizen must have resided for twelve months in the state and ninety days in the county prior to the election. Another provision designed with the Negro in mind was that any individual convicted of felony or otherwise infamous crime was barred from the privilege of the ballot. These provisions, together with the one asserting that secret political societies would not be tolerated, lessened the possibility of a revival of Negro-Republican domination.⁴ They did not, however, have the immediate effect of greatly reducing the number of colored participants in North Carolina elections.

The first election held under the provisions of the new

⁴For the complete text of the constitution see George A. Glynn (comp.), The Convention Manual for the Sixth New York State Constitutional Convention, 1894, American Constitutions (Albany: Argus Printing Co., 1894), II, Part II, pp. 72-86.

constitution occurred in 1876. In this election, after a campaign in which the race issue was of paramount importance, the Democratic candidate, Zebulon B. Vance, was chosen to fill the office of governor.⁵ This election marked the downfall of Republican power and apparently made white supremacy secure for the state as a whole. Yet, the immediate position of the able Vance and his Bourbon cohorts was somewhat tenuous. In the western counties of the state the small white farmer class possessed great political strength, and in eastern North Carolina there were twenty-two counties in which the population was over fifty per cent colored.⁶ If the whites of the up-country ever decided to revolt from Bourbon rule and in so doing cooperated with the Republican directors of the Negro vote, the position of the Bourbons was in danger. By the very nature of the political situation, then, it was requisite for the leaders of the party of white supremacy to try and divide the colored vote and, at the same time, to maintain the loyalty of the mass of whites by continually expounding on the possibility and dangers of Negro domination.

In an effort to assure Bourbon ascendancy the Democrat-controlled legislature enacted legislation in 1877 which, according to one historian, "violated every principle of local self-government."⁷ This law, known as the county-government act, provided that justices of the peace would be appointed by the legislature. These individuals were in turn to select

⁵Vance polled 123,339 votes to 110,909 for his Republican opponent. The Tribune Almanac and Political Register (New York: The Tribune Association, yearly), for the year 1877.

⁶Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, pp. 784-85.

⁷J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, North Carolina Since 1860 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919), pp. 192-93.

from three to five persons in their counties to serve as a board of county commissioners. Thus, the principal county offices were made appointive. Consequently, since the legislature was largely composed of white Democrats, the potentially Republican "black" counties of the eastern section were subject to the control in their local affairs of a powerful machine.⁸

The undemocratic county-government act undoubtedly contributed to the fact that independent political movements did not sweep North Carolina in the period before the 1890's as they did some of the other Southern states.⁹ The Bourbons were too firmly entrenched in the legislature for Independents, of whatever political persuasion, to compete successfully for political control without arranging a fusion agreement with the Republicans and their Negro allies. Even had the white farmer element been willing to conclude such an alliance, their task would have been difficult. Not only did the Bourbon-dominated legislature of 1876-77 solidify their control by enacting the county-government law, but other measures were passed by this session in order to fortify the position of the Democratic party. For example, the party benefited from the fact that this session of the legislature gerrymandered wards in some of the cities to the advantage of Democratic candidates.¹⁰ In addition, the legislature

⁸Mabry, The Negro in North Carolina Politics, pp. 18-19.

⁹The Alliance movement was an important feature of North Carolina politics after 1889, but the Greenbackers and Independent Democrats posed little threat to the Bourbons. The Republican party was the primary contestant of the Democrats before 1890. See the Tribune Almanac for the years 1876-91.

¹⁰Congressional districts were also gerrymandered. The "Black Second" was more or less surrendered to the Republicans. Mabry, The Negro in North Carolina Politics, p. 19.

changed the election laws so that the registration books were to be opened two working days before the election. This posed a problem for those who had to travel long distances. They would be reluctant to make the trip for the purpose of registering and then return such a short time later to cast the ballot. This, coupled with the fact that the registrar could demand proof of identity, age, and residence, lessened the number of those seeking to register and worked to the benefit of the Democratic party.¹¹ All of these devices, enacted into law shortly after the downfall of Republican power, enabled the Bourbons of North Carolina to resist any political challenges which might be hurled by dissident groups within the state.

Any recounting of the political situation in North Carolina in the period between 1877 and 1890, however brief, must give some consideration to two seemingly incompatible attitudes of the Bourbons. First, as in other Southern states, there was the idea that the people of North Carolina respected the colored man and had no intention of depriving him of his rights. Secondly, there was the continuing expounding of the idea that the Negro vote posed a distinct threat to the white man's way of life and it was necessary for whites of every economic station to continue to cooperate politically.

Despite the fact that electoral procedures were changed by the Democrat-controlled legislature in 1877--changes which seemingly assured the ascendancy of the party in power--the colored man did not cease to be

¹¹ Election judges were to be appointed by justices of the peace. Public Laws of North Carolina, 1876-1877, chap. CCLXXV, pp. 518 ff., cited in ibid., pp. 20-21.

a factor in the politics of North Carolina. Leaders of the Democratic party, while in favor of Negro suffrage only when it was to their benefit, did not as immediately become as rabid on the subject as did their counterparts in some of the other Southern states. For instance, Governor Vance informed a touring member of the English Parliament in 1878 that colored members of the state legislature, while for the most part illiterate, were generally well disposed and sensible individuals.¹² Only one year earlier the state legislature--the same one that enacted restrictions which made it possible to lessen the effectiveness of the colored vote--adopted a resolution which proclaimed to all the purity of North Carolina's intention toward the colored man. This resolution stated that the General Assembly recognized the amendment to the Constitution of the United States and the laws of North Carolina which conferred suffrage and citizenship upon the Negroes, and said that "we are disposed and determined to carry out in good faith these as all other constitutional provisions."¹³

Although the Bourbons continued throughout the period to state their acceptance of the right of the colored man to exercise the franchise freely and without fear, they also continued to attempt to maintain white solidarity by evoking the specter of prospective Negro domination. Dissatisfaction of the whites in the western section with the county-

¹²George Campbell, White and Black: The Outcome of a Visit to the United States (New York: R. Worthington, 1879), p. 298.

¹³Quoted in Guion G. Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy, 1876-1910," Essays in Southern History, ed. Fletcher M. Green ("James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science," Vol XXXI; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), p. 150.

government law intensified as the period progressed. That it did not result in open rebellion against the Bourbons was not the least caused by the fact that the press of the state continually warned of the dangers inherent in the colored political control. For instance, the prominent Bourbon newspaper, the Raleigh News and Observer, stated its acceptance in 1881 of the idea that the Negro should be treated with justice and kindness, but said "we are against their holding high office of trust among our people where their dealings will not be entirely with their own race."¹⁴ Three years later, in the face of white revolt, the same journal proclaimed that the whites must hold together or their interests would be in jeopardy. "The issue," said the editor, "is white supremacy, with all that exalts and enobles humanity, in opposition to a base amalgamation, seeking respectability under the name of coalition."¹⁵ Again, another three years later, the same partisan journal carried an editorial on the purpose of the Conservatives--an editorial which closed with the statement that "we are primarily organized to maintain Anglo-Saxon supremacy in North Carolina and in every part of it. We wish to dwell on this fact; we wish to make it plain."¹⁶

¹⁴Raleigh News and Observer, March 24, 1881.

¹⁵Ibid., June 29, 1884. Republican candidates often attempted to arouse the passions of the Negro against the Bourbons. For example, James L. Moore, Republican candidate for the state senate in 1884, said that the only cry of the Democratic party was "Nigger, Nigger, Nigger . . . The Nigger is the Democratic stalking horse. Down in Hell--and Hell's where the Democrats belong--Down in Hell you can tell a Democrat every time. There he sets holding some skinny-headed Negro between him and the fire." Quoted in Robert W. Winston, It's a Far Cry (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1937), p. 157.

¹⁶Raleigh News and Observer, December 18, 1887.

Undoubtedly the Bourbons of North Carolina wished to dwell on the fact that it was necessary to maintain white supremacy. Robert Winston, active in the politics of the state during the period, said that it became the purpose of the Bourbons to dwell on this subject and to continually ask the white man if "he was going to give up his government to the black man."¹⁷ A partial answer to the question as to why the Bourbons emphasized the dangers of the Negro domination may be provided by a brief consideration of colored participation in the politics of the state.

Albion W. Tourgee, a Negro Carpetbagger, proclaimed in 1878 that the Republican party was dead in North Carolina. An examination of the political situation, however, indicates that not only was his statement not justified but also that a majority of the members of his race maintained their loyalty to the party of Abraham Lincoln.¹⁸ Despite Tourgee's pessimism, Republicans--many of whom were colored--continued to stand for and be elected to local and county offices, the state legislature, and even to the National Congress.¹⁹

¹⁷Winston, It's A Far Cry, p. 159.

¹⁸Democratic efforts to attract Negro support may be seen from the fact that the General Assembly elected several colored magistrates in 1877. Nine white Democrats protested this as being "inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the party." North Carolina, House Journal, 1876-1877, pp. 872-74, quoted in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of The New South, 1877-1914, Vol. X of A History of the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 80.

¹⁹During the entire period Negro Republicans sat in the General Assembly. For a summary of their numbers see Monroe N. Work (comp.), "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," Journal of Negro History, V (January, 1920), 76-78. Of the Negro Congressmen elected from North Carolina the first, John A. Hyman belongs to the pre-Redemption era and the last, George H. White, to the post-Bourbon period. Of the others, James O'Harra ran in 1878

To a great extent, the success achieved by these Republican candidates was due to the colored vote. While official figures breaking down the registered voters by races are not available for North Carolina, contemporary statements indicate that colored membership in the Republican party was between ninety and one hundred thousand and that some thirty-five thousand whites belonged to the same organization.²⁰ This disparity in numbers, when related to the Republican vote polled in the various presidential campaigns of the period, indicates that most of the success achieved by the Republicans was due to the Negro vote. For example, in 1880 Garfield polled 115,874 votes in North Carolina and Hancock garnered 124,208.²¹ By accepting at face value the estimation of thirty-five thousand white Republicans, it would mean that some 80,874 colored men marked their ballots for Garfield. Assuming, however, that the estimation was incorrect and that there was twice as many white Republicans, it would have been necessary for some 45,874 Negroes to have voted for Garfield for him to have achieved that total.

Perhaps even more to the point, however, is the vote cast for gubernatorial candidates during the period. For example, in 1880 the

and was defeated, but won in the "Black Second" in 1882 and 1884. His defeat in 1886 by a white Democrat may have been due to the fact that he was also opposed by another Negro, Israel B. Abbott. Henry P. Cheatham, a mulatto, won in the Second District in 1888 and 1890. Tribune Almanac for the years 1879-91.

²⁰The Goldsboro Star, a Negro newspaper, estimated in 1881 that 96,500 Negroes and 35,000 whites comprised the Republican party of the states. Quoted in Raleigh News and Observer, May 21, 1881. The latter estimated on June 25, 1882 that 90,000 colored men belonged to that organization and on May 20, 1884, its estimate was 96,000.

²¹Tribune Almanac for the year 1881.

Republican nominee, Buxton, polled 111,590 votes and the Democrat, Jarvis, eased his way into the governor's chair by commanding 112,830 ballots--a differential of only 1,240 votes.²² Four years later the Democratic candidate did somewhat better--polling 143,249 votes to 123,010 for his opponent.²³ Nevertheless, the fact that the vote in statewide elections was sometimes relatively close was alarming to the Bourbons. It meant to these leaders that any white revolt which resulted in fusion with the Republicans could bring about their political downfall. Largely for that reason, then, it was to the advantage of the Bourbons of North Carolina to keep the idea that the colored man was a staunch supporter of the Republican party firmly implanted in the mind of the whites of the state. Consequently, the specter of Negro domination and the experiences of Reconstruction were continually raised, and Bourbon journals, such as the Raleigh News and Observer continually editorialized that "those who vote with the negroes in behalf of radicalism should be rendered odious. Those who undertake to direct the negro vote in opposition to white supremacy should be taught their treachery to their race in no uncertain terms."²⁴

While the political situation in North Carolina was of interest to the people at the North, it was undoubtedly the attitude of the white citizens of South Carolina toward the colored population which attracted the greatest interest. First of the Southern states to secede, ravaged by war, and exploited to the utmost by the Carpetbagger-Scalawag-Negro combination during the long and dismal period of Reconstruction, it might

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., for the year 1885.

²⁴Raleigh News and Observer, February 4, 1888.

be expected that in this state the conservative whites would never again condone a recurrence of colored participation in politics. This is especially true because the population of South Carolina was composed of a greater percentage of colored people, and it was potentially possible for them to dominate the political life of the state.²⁵

Home rule was not restored in South Carolina until 1877. The election of 1876, termed by one prominent South Carolinian ". . . a struggle . . . for emancipation from negro and alien rule . . .," pitted Republican Daniel Chamberlain against Democrat Wade Hampton for the office of governor.²⁶ After a campaign in which both contestants appealed for colored support, and one which was marked by fraud, intimidation, and outright violence,²⁷ Hampton was eventually declared elected. His assumption of the governorship, coming directly as a result of the Compromise of 1877, inaugurated fourteen years of Bourbon rule--a period during which the Negro vote was greatly reduced from the peak it had reached during Reconstruction, but one in which the colored man continued to vote and be elected to office. During this period, however, the Republican party actually became a nominal force in the state, and the doctrine of white supremacy became of overriding importance to the Democratic party.

²⁵According to the Census of 1880 there were 604,322 Negroes and 391,105 whites in the state. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. lll, table 13, p. 44.

²⁶Arney R. Childs (ed.), The Private Journal of Henry William Ravenel, 1859-1887 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1947), p. 385.

²⁷A biased observer, a former abolitionist then resident in the state, gives an indignant account of the fraud perpetrated by the Democrats in this election. Rupert S. Holland (ed.), Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884 (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1912), p. 225.

It would be inaccurate to state that the Republican party of South Carolina disappeared when the Red Shirts redeemed the state in 1876, but after that date it was more or less moribund in state politics. As was true in other areas of the South, some whites maintained their Republican affiliation because of the patronage which came to them when the national party was in power. In election years the party went through the motion of holding state conventions, but usually dispensed with the nomination of a slate of candidates for state offices.²⁸ Republican candidates did, however, continue to seek election to Congress and to county and municipal positions. In some instances their quest was not in vain.

In the area of local politics Republican candidates, both white and colored, continued to vie for positions in the state legislature during most of the period of Bourbon rule. The election of 1876 resulted in some thirty-five members of that party being seated in the lower house and seven in the senate. These numbers were diminished in 1878 to three in the house and five in the senate, a figure which, except for continued reduction and final elimination of the Republican members of the upper house in 1888, remained fairly constant until 1895.²⁹ In addition to

²⁸In 1880 the Republicans nominated a state ticket, but the slate made no campaign. James Welch Patton, "The Republican Party in South Carolina, 1876-1895," Essays in Southern History, ed. Fletcher M. Green ("James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science," Vol. XXXI; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), p. 95. In 1884 another slate was nominated, but every candidate except Daniel Straker, a Negro running for Lieutenant-Governor, withdrew before the election. George B. Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952), p. 41. In 1880 and 1882 an effort was made to fuse with Greenbackers, but this combination had indifferent success.

²⁹Of the thirty-two Republicans who served in the legislature between 1878 and 1896, thirty were Negroes. All were from the "black"

these, other members of the Republican party were sometimes chosen to fill minor county and municipal positions.

Unlike in Tennessee or North Carolina, where the white mountaineers often added their numbers to the Republican party, the membership of that organization in South Carolina was almost entirely composed of colored men. For that reason most of the men chosen by the Republican party to seek office in the state were of the Negro race. This was especially true in elections on the local level of government. Not always was it the case, however, when the party nominated men to seek election to Congress. In those contests white Republicans, termed by one prominent Negro as ". . . political parasites who seek to use us for power and office . . .," often made such races as proof of their loyalty to the National organization, and thus to establish their eligibility for a lucrative appointive position.³⁰ Their efforts to win election to Congress were, however, usually in vain, and it was only colored Republicans who achieved any success as candidates for such positions during this period.

From 1876 until 1882 South Carolina was entitled to five Congressmen, but increased population and a new apportionment in the latter year raised the number to seven. In 1876 three of the five Republicans seeking election to Congress were Negroes and all three were elected.³¹ Resto-

counties of Beaufort, Berkeley, and Georgetown. Patton, Essays in Southern History, p. 94.

³⁰The Negro making this charge was Straker. Columbia Register, August 31, 1884, cited in Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, p. 97.

³¹The three were Joseph H. Rainey, Robert Smalls, and Richard Cain. Cain, a preacher, was free born, of pure Negro blood, and had some college training. Samuel D. Smith, The Negro in Congress, 1870-1901 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), pp. 5-8.

ration of home rule in 1877, however, made repetition of such event extremely unlikely. Thus, in 1878 when two of the incumbent Negroes, Joseph H. Rainey and Robert Smalls sought reelection they were resoundingly defeated. This fact did not deter Smalls from again standing for election in 1880. His perseverance was rewarded by the Republican-dominated Congress who investigated his charges that his apparent defeat was the result of fraud and gave him the contested seat.³² In 1882 seven new districts were created and one of these, the Seventh, was a gerrymandered "black district" usually conceded to the Negro Republicans by the Democrats. First elected from this district, however, was a white Republican, E. W. M. Mackey. When he died in office a special election was held and Robert Smalls trounced his opposition in a successful bid to return to the halls of Congress.³³ Smalls was reelected in 1884, but two other colored candidates, E. H. Deas and E. J. Dickerson, were unsuccessful in their bid for nomination from other districts.³⁴ In 1886 Smalls was again victorious--he was the only Republican seeking a Congressional position in this election--but two years later he was replaced by another Negro, Thomas E. Miller.³⁵ Colored candidates continued with some success to seek

³²Chester H. Rowell (ed.), A Historical and Legal Digest of all the Contested Election Cases in the House of Representatives of the United States from the First to the Fifty-Sixth Congresses, 1789-1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 381.

³³In the special election held on March 18, 1884, Smalls polled 9,092 votes to 32 cast against him. Tribune Almanac for the year 1885.

³⁴Smith, The Negro in Congress, p. 135. Deas polled 3,289 votes to 10,465 for the Democrat. Dickerson was swamped by a vote of 1,920 to 11,419. Tribune Almanac for the year 1885.

³⁵Ibid., for the year 1889 gives the total vote of Miller as being 7,003 and 8,358 for William Elliott, his Democratic opponent. Miller

election in South Carolina throughout most of the 1890's, but certainly the heyday of the colored man in Congress from this state was the fateful year of 1876.³⁶

There were many reasons for the paucity of Republicans elected to office in South Carolina during these years, but not the least were the attitudes and practices of members of the opposition party. Negroes were certainly not eliminated from public life after the Bourbons gained political dominance in 1877, but their participation was greatly reduced. Actually, the Bourbons adopted the policy of winning the colored vote where possible and intimidating it when necessary. The latter method of controlling the voting by Negroes, however, was an expedient which the Bourbon leaders preferred not to use. As has been pointed out by one historian of the Negro in South Carolina, the Bourbons of the state were characterized by the ante-bellum ideal of noblesse oblige toward the colored man. Unlike the poor white they did not fear his economic competition, and once there was no longer danger of his political domination they were willing to accept him in public life--but in a clearly subordinate position.³⁷

Wade Hampton, South Carolina's first Bourbon governor, entered the office in 1877 and pledged to "know no race, no party, no man, in

contested but the House of Representatives refused to seat him. Rowell (ed.), Digest of the Election Cases of the House of Representatives, p. 461.

³⁶ George W. Murray was elected in the Seventh District from 1892 through 1896. Smith, The Negro in Congress, p. 6.

³⁷ George B. Tindall, "The Campaign for the Disfranchisement of Negroes in South Carolina," Journal of Southern History, XV (May, 1949), 212.

the administration of the law,"³⁸ and he was watched closely by men of both races to see what course he would follow. It soon became apparent that he intended to pursue a policy of moderation. Colored men were promised that rights already granted were safe in the hands of the Democrats, and a number of colored men were appointed to minor office. Nevertheless, Hampton's program, negatively liberal though it was, did win some Negro support. When it was learned, for example, that the governor would seek reelection in 1878 many prominent colored men spoke out in his favor. Robert Smalls, then a Negro Congressman, while addressing a Republican meeting in Beaufort County referred to the "just and liberal course of the Governor which has recommended him to the confidence of the people."³⁹ Ex-Justice Jonathan Wright informed a newspaper reporter prior to the election that Hampton ". . . has kept every pledge he has made and . . . he will be reelected Governor almost unanimously. He will get nine-tenths of the colored vote There is not a decent negro in the State will vote against him."⁴⁰ This idea was seconded by a meeting of colored men in Barnwell County. Resolutions were passed by this group condemning the Republican State Convention for refusing to endorse Hampton and advising the colored people to witness that since his first inauguration "unprecedented peace and security has pervaded all classes of people."⁴¹

Hampton's program of moderation was not pleasing to all Negroes

³⁸ Charleston News and Courier, April 7, 1877, quoted in Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, p. 20.

³⁹ Charleston News and Courier, July 17, 1878, quoted in ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁰ Columbia Daily Register, August 21, 1878, quoted in ibid., p. 25.

⁴¹ Galveston Daily News, September 29, 1878.

nor acceptable to all whites. Although some clubs were organized among and some minor candidates selected from the colored population, many Negroes supported Hampton only because they had no opportunity to cast their ballots for a Republican nominee.⁴² The acceptance of colored men within the party of white supremacy, however, evoked some criticism among the whites--especially those in the lower economic strata. In Edgefield County, for instance, Negroes were excluded from the Democratic primary in the election of 1878, and a resolution was adopted by white members of that party stating that ". . . we regard the issue between the white and colored people of this state, and of the entire South, as an antagonism of race, not a difference in political parties."⁴³ It was only in Edgefield County, however, that an extreme policy was adopted in 1878. Negro Democratic clubs were organized in several other counties and many colored men voted for Hampton in his successful bid for another term as governor."⁴⁴

The clash over racial policies was evident in the abortive Edgefield revolt in 1878 and was symptomatic of the dissatisfaction which arose against Bourbon policies in South Carolina. Leader in the early stages of the revolt was General Martin Gary of upland Edgefield County.

⁴²The previously cited member of the English Parliament was in South Carolina during this election, and he did not notice a great amount of violence or intimidation. It was his impression, however, that the Negroes almost considered it a religion to support the party responsible for their freedom. Campbell, White and Black, p. 181.

⁴³Charleston News and Courier, June 4, 1878, quoted in Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, p. 26.

⁴⁴Hampton polled 119,550. The Republicans had no candidate and only 213 diehards voted against the incumbent. Tribune Almanac for the year 1880.

At the outset this leader of the small white farmers denied Bourbon contentions that the colored vote had largely contributed to the Democrats success in achieving Redemption in 1876. This, coupled with Hampton's policy of moderation toward the colored electorate, was more than Gary could accept. He maintained that he would prefer to lose his right arm rather than to support the Bourbon policy of "fusion" with the Negroes. It was for that reason, then, that Gary called in 1878 for South Carolina Democrats to return to the "Mississippi plan."⁴⁵

The demagogic appeal of Gary, as previously noted, had no effect in the campaign of 1878. It does, however, demonstrate that uplanders in South Carolina were early dissatisfied with Bourbon racial policies, and affords some clue as to the reason for the rise of an Independent party to contest with the Bourbon's for control. The primary political opposition afforded by groups opposed to Bourbon policies in the period prior to 1890 came in 1882 when the National Republican party endorsed the Greenbackers in South Carolina.⁴⁶ This farmer-oriented party nominated a candidate for governor and either Greenbackers or Republicans sought election for all of the Congressional seats.⁴⁷ The campaign brought

⁴⁵The statements made by Gary may be found in the Charleston News and Courier, May 4, 1877, September 20, 1877, and February 3, 1878, quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 80. A Northern correspondent, describing the election of 1878, claimed that Hampton's vaunted moderation meant nothing because the Negro was bulldozed and his votes thrown out of the ballot box after he contrived to get it in. Edward Hogan, "South Carolina Today," International Review, VIII (February, 1880), 106.

⁴⁶Coalition was an important part of the Republican program. William Chandler, patronage dispenser for Arthur, seconded the opinion expressed in his newspaper that "the cry should be 'anything to beat the Bourbons.'" Washington National Republican, August 5, 1882, quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 102.

⁴⁷One of the Independent Greenback and Republican candidates was

forth reports of four political murders, a lynching, and intimidation of various types, and it also resulted in an overwhelming defeat for the Greenbackers and their Republican allies.⁴⁸ The resounding defeat, however, had another effect. It was the last time that opposition to Bourbon policies elicited an Independent challenge until the advent of the Farmer's Alliance.

One reason for Bourbon success in combating the Independent movements was undoubtedly the fact that Hampton's policy toward the colored man was continued even after he was elected to the United States Senate. The Negro population of South Carolina, ostensibly Republican, largely preferred to cooperate with the Bourbons in state elections rather than to follow the example of their white leaders and endorse candidates of Independent parties--candidates largely drawn from the class which was the traditional antagonist of the colored race. Consequently, the Negro entered into "fusion" arrangements with the Bourbons, and, as has already been noted, were rewarded with some minor state offices and with one seat in Congress. Yet, the Bourbons were manifestly not satisfied that this psuedo-liberal policy would always be successful for the Democrat-controlled legislature early enacted legislation which was designed to

E. B. C. Cash. As a Democrat he had been accused of atrocious murders by the Republicans, but when he quarreled with his party and came out as an Independent he was given patronage to aid in his election. Ibid. Cash, running in the Fifth District, polled 7,171 votes to 8,518 for his opponent. Tribune Almanac for the year 1883.

⁴⁸The Greenbacker gubernatorial candidate, McLane, polled 11,719 votes to 67,158 for his opponent. No Greenbacker was elected to Congress, but the Republican, Mackey, was chosen in the "Black Seventh." No Democrat contested Mackey and he overwhelmed his Independent Republican opponent. Tribune Almanac for the year 1885.

curtail potential Republican majorities. In March of 1878, for example, the legislature passed legislation which abolished voting precincts in areas with a heavy Republican vote. This resulted in colored men, if they desired to cast a ballot, being required to travel twenty miles or more and to cross rivers where the ferries were somehow always "out of order" on election day.⁴⁹ In other instances the colored population was sometimes subjected to bulldozing and other intimidating practices, and in 1878 and 1880 the use of tissue ballots was widespread.

Widespread use of fraudulent methods to insure continued Bourbon control resulted in many Democrats arriving at the conclusion that perhaps such practices also posed a threat to the party of white supremacy. Certainly continued use of force would not convince many Negroes that the Democrats had their best interests at heart. Also, there was the distinct possibility that a Republican-controlled Congress would deem it politically advantageous to enact a restrictive Federal election law--a result of which in South Carolina would undoubtedly be a breakdown of "fusion" and a return to power of the Republican party.

To cope with the situation a joint committee of the General Assembly was established in 1880 for the purpose of recommending new registration and election laws which would obviate the use of violence. This committee requested a prominent attorney and historian, Edward McCrady, to examine the situation and make suggestions for its consideration. After careful consideration, McCrady presented a proposal which he believed would make unnecessary the continued use of fraud and

⁴⁹Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, III, 771.

violence--an educational qualification for eligibility to the franchise. He informed the committee that "we complain of the great and cruel injury done to the white race . . . by forcing upon us the ignorant negro vote The remedy is in our hands. Raise the standard of citizenship, raise the qualification of voters." But, admonished McCrady, "raise them equally. If we are the superior race we claim to be, we, surely, need not fear the test."⁵⁰

Prominent South Carolinians such as Christopher G. Memminger agreed that McCrady had arrived at the correct solution, but it was not until 1882 that the legislature acted upon his suggestion and enacted a complicated and stringent registration law.⁵¹ At the same time, the legislature provided for a voting device known as the Eight Box Law which, in essence, did include an educational qualification.⁵² These

⁵⁰Edward McCrady, Jr., The Necessity of Raising the Standard of Citizenship and the Right of the General Assembly of South Carolina to Impose Qualifications Upon Electors (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Printers, 1881), p. 38.

⁵¹C. G. Memminger wrote McCrady on April 13, 1881, that McCrady had the answer to the situation. "I feel," he wrote, "that the real objection to your solution is concealed. It is the apprehension that many whites will be exposed by exclusion." Ibid., p. 111. The legislature made registration a prerequisite for voting and required prospective electors to register during May and June of 1883. After that the books would be opened on the first Monday of each month from December to July in order that persons coming of age or whose certificates had been lost or defaced to register. Supervisors were given full discretion as to who was entitled to register. Statutes at Large of South Carolina, XVII, 1110-15, cited in Patton, Essays in Southern History, p. 104.

⁵²The Eight Box Law accomplished disfranchisement through indirection. It was provided that at each polling place there would be as many boxes as there were offices to be filled and that each elector must, without assistance, deposit each ballot in the correct box. Those found in the wrong box would not be counted. Statutes at Large of South Carolina, XVII, 1116-21, cited in ibid., p. 106. By occasionally shifting positions of the boxes, election managers could prevent poll watchers

measures largely had the desired effect. After their enactment the Bourbons could not only regulate the number of colored men participating in any election without resorting to intimidation, but they could also control the white supporters of Independent organizations.

The legislature of 1882 was also charged with the responsibility of dividing the state into seven instead of five Congressional districts. The responsibility for the drawing of new boundaries came at a time when there was increasing criticism of Bourbon economic policies by disgruntled whites, and this undoubtedly contributed to the fact that the Bourbon legislature devised one of the most complete gerrymanders ever drawn by a legislative body. When their artistic endeavor was completed there were white majorities in two districts, a small colored majority in four districts, and a colored majority of over twenty-five thousand in the Seventh or "black" district.⁵³ Thus, while there were many more Negroes than whites who were registered electors, it was only in one district that the colored men were allowed to bring the full weight of their number to bear in the period prior to 1890.⁵⁴ There is no doubt that this was the

from memorizing and communicating to illiterates the order in which the various ballots should be deposited. It was also easy for the managers to give assistance to those who would vote for the "right" candidates--generally Democrats.

⁵³The Seventh District was a curious gerrymander. Its boundaries ran from Columbia nearly to Savannah, Georgia--a distance of 150 miles. It embraced the Republican portions of three former districts, but included only three whole counties and a portion of six others. At one place the boundary was extended into the Atlantic Ocean in order to exclude some Democratic precincts. Patton, Essays in Southern History, p. 104.

⁵⁴In 1882 a total of 116,969 Negroes and 86,900 whites were registered. Of these, 32,839 colored and 7,695 whites were located in the Seventh District. Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia, VII, 748.

intention of the Democratic leadership. To the majority of the members of that party the Republicans were "under the lead of the most unprincipled, brutal leaders ever known . . .,"⁵⁵ and the Democrats were justified in any action which might be taken to insure white supremacy! Consequently, while the Bourbons freely entered into "fusion" arrangements with the Negro leaders in an effort to utilize the colored vote for their own purposes, the Negro in South Carolina was subject to such control that he was never able to bring to bear the influence which his numbers might well have justified.⁵⁶ Even more was this to be the fate of the Negro after the political wings of the Bourbons were clipped by the agrarian element. As the primary representative of that class, Benjamin Tillman, proclaimed in his inaugural address in 1890: "The whites have absolute control of the government, and we intend at any hazard to retain it."⁵⁷ It goes almost without saying that they did just that!

The political situation in Tennessee during the Bourbon period was almost completely alien to that which arose in South Carolina. Undoubtedly

⁵⁵Columbus Daily Register, July 22, 1882, quoted in Patton, Essays in Southern History, p. 110.

⁵⁶While most of the Negroes in South Carolina were Republicans, that party was never able to return the state's electoral vote for Republican presidential candidates. It is interesting to note the decline in the popular vote of both parties after the enactment of the Eight Box Law. For instance, in 1880 Garfield polled 38,071 votes and Hancock 112,312. In 1884 Blaine received 21,733 and Cleveland a total of 69,890, and in 1888 Harrison garnered 13,736 while Cleveland's total dropped to 65,829. Tribune Almanac for the year 1889. It should be reiterated that Negroes were elected to office as Democrats as well as Republicans in South Carolina. The editor of the Charleston News and Courier lists a number of such instances. See William Watts Ball, The State That Forgot: South Carolina's Surrender to Democracy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1932).

⁵⁷Quoted in Johnson, Essays in Southern History, p. 133.

a major reason why Tennessee, first of the ex-Confederate states to be redeemed, did not have as distinct and pressing a problem with the colored voter was that she had a smaller Negro population on a percentage basis than did any of her sister Southern states except Texas.⁵⁸ Important, too, was the fact that while the Republican party was relatively strong in this state, its major strength among the whites was in the mountainous region of East Tennessee--an area in which the whites despised the Negro as a race. Consequently, in order not to alienate the whites of the eastern section of the state, the Republican leaders, although continuing to seek the electoral support of the Negro, were hesitant in granting colored men too much recognition.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Negroes registered, voted, and were elected to minor offices during the entire period under discussion.

In 1870 the Democrats of Tennessee elected John C. Brown to the office of governor and also succeeded in capturing control of both houses of the state legislature.⁶⁰ Almost immediately the newly elected Democratic legislature made its presence felt because a committee of the

⁵⁸ There were 403,151 Negroes and 1,138,831 whites in the state in 1880. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. 111, table 13, p. 44. Percentage-wise only Texas had a smaller Negro population among the former Confederate states. Ibid., chap. 1V, table 5, p. 51.

⁵⁹ Robert E. Corlew, "The Negro in Tennessee, 1870-1900," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Alabama), p. 105.

⁶⁰ It might be noted that there was discord among the Redeemers of this state during most of the period. Of the two main factions in the Conservative party, one wing was the Whig-industrialist group led by Colonel Arthur S. Caylar; the other, led by Senator Isham G. Harris, was based mainly on the support of the cotton farmers of western Tennessee. Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 2-4, 21.

senate proposed to redistrict the state along lines which would benefit the majority party. The chairman of the committee that proposed the bill stated that its main purpose was so "to redistrict the State that for the next ten years not a Republican can be elected to the Legislature I believe," he said, "in the law of revenge. The Radicals disfranchised us, and now we intend to disfranchise them."⁶¹

If the Democrats really hoped that gerrymandering the state would prevent the Republicans from seriously contesting for control, then their dreams were built on sand. As a matter of fact, the election year of 1872 saw the Republicans and their Independent allies win a majority of the seats in the very body from which some Democrats hoped to exclude them for at least a decade. In this campaign there is little question that the pliant Negro vote was utilized largely by the Republicans. Not only was this true, but it is interesting and perhaps significant to note that for the first time in the history of Tennessee a colored man was elected to serve in the General Assembly. Speaking of this individual, Sampson W. Keeble of Davidson County, the Nashville Union and American said, on December 6, 1872, that "he is by no means a 'bigoted nigger,' as might reasonably be expected, but upon the contrary, while he knows the laws of the country guarantee him equal political rights with the other members, he is fully conversant of the fact that there is a social difference between them, as great as the difference between night and day."⁶²

⁶¹Quoted in Philip M. Hamer (ed.), Tennessee: A History, 1673-1932 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1933), II, p. 676.

⁶²Quoted in Alruthesus A. Taylor, The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880 (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers Inc., 1941), p. 247.

Keeble was the only Negro elected to serve in the state legislature of Tennessee by either party before 1880. Some members of his race, however, were either elected or appointed to municipal positions and no barrier was placed in the way of colored candidates seeking election to any office in the state.⁶³ In fact, during the canvass of 1876 a prominent Knoxville Negro, William F. Yardley, caused consternation among Democrats and Republicans alike by announcing he would run as an Independent for the office of governor. Not only did he announce; he also campaigned for the position--an event which elicited from Republican orators and journals the charge that he had been hired to make the race by the Democrats in the hope that he would split the colored vote.⁶⁴ The Democrats denied this charge and a party newspaper, the Daily Memphis Avalanche, predicted that Yardley would win if the white Republicans decided to support him. Little fear of that event was entertained, however, for, as the Avalanche said on September 8, 1876, "the white Republicans, like the Democrats, do not want a negro for governor."⁶⁵ It was obvious from

⁶³In 1876 colored men were candidates for positions in several municipalities. The Daily Memphis Avalanche, on January 13, 1876, noted that two Negro candidates had been defeated for school visitors and the same was true of a colored candidate for councilman. Two Negro magistrates, however, were elected. A report from Lebanon, published in the Nashville Daily American, on August 30, 1876, stated the Negroes had voted solidly and had elected a colored magistrate for Wilson County over four white candidates. In 1878 two Negro alderman were elected in Chattanooga and two were elected councilmen in Nashville. Others were also elected to municipal positions in this and later years. See ibid., pp. 249-50.

⁶⁴The Knoxville Tribune noted that this charge was being levied by some Republican and the Knoxville Chronicle noted that the colored Hayes and Wheeler club of that city had denounced him as a traitor to the party. Cited in ibid., p. 254-55.

⁶⁵Daily Memphis Avalanche, September 8, 1876, quoted in Corlew, "The Negro in Tennessee," p. 155. Yardley occasionally debated with the

the results of the election that the Avalanche was correct and that the whites of Tennessee were not as yet ready to have a Negro in the governor's chair. Of the four candidates who offered their names to the electorate the Democrat polled 123,740; another Independent commanded the support of 73,612; the Republican nominee received 10,436, and eliciting the support of 2,165 electors was Yardley.⁶⁶ It is interesting to compare the vote cast for the gubernatorial candidates in this campaign with those polled by the presidential aspirants. The Democratic candidate for governor, as previously noted, polled 123,740, and in the same election Tilden received the ballots of 133,166 electors. Hayes, the Republican presidential nominee, received 89,566 votes and a combined total of 86,217 voters exercised their franchise for the three candidates opposing the Democrat for the governor's office.⁶⁷ While it is not unusual for presidential candidates to receive more support than those seeking state positions, it might be conjectured that Tilden received the vote of some electors who refused to cast their ballots for a Democrat for governor and likewise refused to give it to any of his opponents.

After the election of 1876 there is little doubt that, except for a brief period during the eighties, the political significance of the Negro in Tennessee declined. That is not to say that steps were taken by either of the major parties which looked to the disfranchisement of the

Democratic candidate and consequently received a lot of free publicity. He was a mulatto and was representative of the Negro political leader of East Tennessee. A lawyer by profession, he was a Knoxville alderman in the years immediately prior to 1876. Ibid.

⁶⁶ Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, II, 710.

⁶⁷ For the total vote see the Tribune Almanac for the year 1877.

colored race;⁶⁸ nor does it mean that either organization abandoned its efforts to attract colored electoral support. It does mean, however, that the Negro sought few elective positions after that date.⁶⁹

Without doubt one of the primary reasons that the colored men, unlike in some of the other Southern states, held no high elective office in Tennessee was that their numbers were relatively small. Colored leaders such as Edward Shaw and James C. Napier realized that their race was viewed with distrust even by the Republicans and they considered it futile to seek election to anything more than a minor office. Consequently, it was their purpose to demonstrate their loyalty to the Republican party, and thus to make themselves and their people eligible for Federal appointive offices. That they had some success in this effort is apparent from a

⁶⁸ Under provisions of the constitution adopted in 1870, the one which remained in force all during the period, an individual was eligible to vote if he was a citizen, twenty-one years of age, and a resident of the state for one year and the county for six months preceding the election. Up until 1874, when it was repealed, he must be able to furnish proof to the judge of elections that his poll tax had been paid. Glynn (ed.), American Constitutions, II, 440 ff. In 1890 the legislature passed the Dortch law which provided the state would employ a printed ballot and it would be cast in secrecy. Because an elector must be able to read the names printed on the ballot it might be argued that it was something of a literacy test. Since it applied equally to black and white, however, it cannot be maintained that its purpose was to disfranchise the Negro. For a brief discussion of this law see Corlew, "The Negro in Tennessee," pp. 140-42.

⁶⁹ Some colored men were chosen to the lower house of the state legislature; one served in the session of 1879-81; four in 1881-83; three from 1883-85; five in 1885-87; one in 1889-91. None served in the state senate. Monroe N. Work (comp.), "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," Journal of Negro History, V (January, 1920), p. 113. No Negro was ever elected to Congress from Tennessee and there was only one unsuccessful aspirant from that state. See Smith, The Negro in Congress, p. 135, and A. A. Taylor, "Negro Congressmen A Generation After," Journal of Negro History, VII (April, 1922), pp. 127 ff.

communication of L. C. Houk, Republican Congressman and chief patronage dispenser, to Oliver Temple, another politician from East Tennessee. In 1883 Houk complained to Temple that too many positions were going to Negroes and that "it would not only be good politics but . . . equitable Republicanism" to distribute appointments "among all classes--Americans, Germans, Irish, and Colored people."⁷⁰ This statement is symptomatic of the attitude held by the white Republicans of Tennessee toward the Negro during the entire period. They desired to use his vote in contest with the Democrats, but because the Republican party of Tennessee was not entirely dependent upon the colored vote as was the case in most of the Southern states, they were unwilling to allow the Negro to stand for major offices or to have much of a voice in party councils.

Although a majority of the colored men continued to exercise their franchise for candidates of the Republican party, the Democrats sought to solidify their position as the majority party by encouraging the Negro to desert his traditional alliance.⁷¹ This was especially apparent in

⁷⁰Houk especially complained of the situation in the Ninth Ward of Knoxville "where the colored men have everything." Quoted in Corlew, "The Negro in Tennessee," p. 179. Napier was successful in getting appointments for himself. As late as 1910 he was named United States Register of the Treasury. Shaw worked with the Republicans until 1885 when he left the party and received a Federal appointment from the Democrats. Ibid., 151-59.

⁷¹That the Democratic party was the major party can be seen from the fact that the electoral vote was always returned for its presidential aspirant. That the Republican party was strong in the state may be seen from the popular vote. In 1880 Garfield received 107,677 votes to 128,191 for Hancock; in 1884 Blaine polled 124,078 and Cleveland 133,258; in 1888 Harrison garnered 138,988 and Cleveland 158,779. Tribune Almanac for the years 1881, 1885, and 1889. Sectionalism in Tennessee is evidenced by a breakdown of votes cast by sections in the presidential election of 1888. In East Tennessee, a Republican stronghold, Harrison received 60,275 and Cleveland 35,206; in Middle Tennessee the totals were 44,842 and 72,499;

elections beginning in 1880 and continuing throughout the remainder of the Bourbon period. In 1880 the Democrats organized Negro clubs in various communities, but they had little success in attracting the colored vote. It was in this year that the Republicans surprised the Democrats by electing their candidate for governor and by greatly increasing their membership in the state legislature.⁷²

Probably as a result of the debacle of 1880 the Democrats made a greater effort to win colored votes in succeeding elections. In 1882, for example, the Nashville Daily American addressed the Negro electorate of Davidson county as some of the "most intelligent in the South." They were informed by this journal that the Republicans had given them little for their years of loyalty and that they were "bound by the laws of self-preservation to draw nearer . . . to the political majority of this state . . .," and that if they did so they "need not fear a sequestration of . . . rights."⁷³ While the Democratic appeal to the colored voters of this and other counties may not have been the reason, enough of the

in West Tennessee they were 33,871 and 51,254. Ibid., for the year 1889. Republican Congressmen were elected from the districts of East Tennessee during the entire period. Ibid., for the years 1877-91.

⁷²The Republican candidate, Hawkins, polled 102,969 votes and Wright, the Democrat, 79,191. The Republicans also won control of the lower house of the legislature. Ibid., for the year 1881.

⁷³Nashville Daily American, September 18, 1882, quoted in Corlew, "The Negro in Tennessee," p. 129. In this election a Negro newspaper in Virginia noted that a Negro in Memphis had announced for governor, and predicted that, even though he could not be elected, if he would stay "on the track" it might be possible to bring the Republican party in the state to terms. Two months later the same journal noted that the Democrats had placed two colored men on the ticket and said this indicated the color line was disappearing in Tennessee. Lancet (Petersburg, Va.), August 19 and November 4, 1882.

electorate switched their vote that the Republican incumbent was defeated in his bid for reelection.⁷⁴

It was not at all rare in the years after 1882, a period in which the Democrats dominated the state politically, to find members of the party of white supremacy in Tennessee advising the colored man that his best interests would be served by deserting the Republican party. For instance, in 1884 when the Republicans were warning the Negroes that the election of Cleveland would result in their reenslavement, the Democratic press was endeavoring to marshal colored support for their nominee. The Clarksville Semi-Weekly Tobacco Leaf termed Republican charges "too absurd to refute" The editor said that "for twenty years the Republican party has taught the negro to fear the ascendancy of the Democratic party . . . but this is a bugaboo The Democratic party is the friend of the negro and we predict that no longer will the colored vote be cast solidly for the Republican party."⁷⁵ At the same time a Pulaski journal warned the colored man that "white Republicans have got no use for the negro except to get his vote," and the Jonesboro Journal invited the colored man to "cast a solid vote" against the Republican candidates.⁷⁶

Although Cleveland won the electoral vote of Tennessee in 1884 there is little evidence to suggest that his relatively narrow victory over Blaine was the result of Negro voters deserting the Republican party.

⁷⁴Bate, the Low-Tax Democrat, polled 119,297, and Hawkins, the Republican, received 91,693. Tribune Almanac, for the year 1883.

⁷⁵Clarksville Semi-Weekly Tobacco Leaf, September 12, 1884, quoted in Corlew, "The Negro in Tennessee," p. 131.

⁷⁶Pulaski Citizen, April 10, 1884; Jonesboro Journal, August 14, 1884, quoted in ibid.

Nevertheless, the campaign of the Democratic press continued the following year with the Bolivar Bulletin assuring the colored men of West Tennessee that "the Democratic party is the true friend of the colored people and will defend their rights" ⁷⁷ This campaign of the Democrats was recognized as an attempt to build their totals by the Pulaski Citizen which charged that the Nashville Daily American was so patronizing of the Negro that it was trying to "slobber" him into the Democratic party. ⁷⁸ This fascination of the Democrats with the possibility of attracting the Negro vote, as is evident from articles comparable to the ones quoted above which appeared with regularity in the party press, continued during most of the Bourbon period. ⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Negro interest in politics appeared to wane after Cleveland's election, and little success was achieved from the Democrats propaganda campaign. When the Negro chose to cast his vote it generally went to the Republican party. This may be accounted for by the fact that there was little intimidation in Tennessee, and, unlike in some of the other ex-Confederate states, the Republican party was a relatively strong organization. Consequently, in this state

⁷⁷ Bolivar Bulletin, quoted in Clarksville Semi-Weekly Tobacco Leaf, May 17, 1885, quoted in ibid., p. 133.

⁷⁸ Pulaski Citizen, July 30, 1885, quoted in ibid.

⁷⁹ Thorton Alden, a minor colored politician from West Tennessee, became a Democrat when Cleveland was elected. In 1888 he informed his colored brethren that ". . . while I belonged to the Republican party I was taught so many bad things I got in the penitentiary for a short time, but thanks to the influence and teaching of an honest Democrat, I was liberated and am now trying to lead an honest life Thieves and gamblers by birth and inclination drift into the Republican party." Quoted in Paris Post-Intelligencer, September 14, 1888, quoted in ibid., pp. 164-65. During the election of 1888 reports from Chattanooga said Republican Negroes were bulldozing those of this race trying to vote the Democratic ticket. Atlanta Constitution, November 8, 1888.

the Negro largely remained loyal to the party responsible for his freedom in the years before 1890.

Unlike in Tennessee, events of the period in Virginia largely explain not only why antagonism toward Negro suffrage developed in that state, but also, to some extent, throughout most of the South. In the Old Dominion the colored population was located mostly in the Tidewater and Piedmont sections and constituted a majority in about thirty-five of the counties.⁸⁰ With the advent of Radical Reconstruction the colored man was for the first time injected into the political life of the state as a voter. Virginians could not believe that their former servants, only so recently freed from the tobacco patch, were educationally or morally competent to engage in the political game at which the whites of the state had so long been adept. Negro suffrage came quickly to be associated with Carpetbag and Radical rule--anathema to nearly everyone who had ever uttered a Rebel yell!

Former Rebels in Virginia had something about which to yell in 1869. In that year the Conservative party won a victory which, the next year, brought the state back into the Union under the control of the native whites. This was a tenuous control, however, for a Republican still occupied the White House, blue-clad soldiers still rode the valleys of Virginia, and in some communities of the state the Radicals still dominated. By 1874, however, the Conservatives had so increased their numbers in the legislature that they were able to defeat the Radicals with the

⁸⁰In 1880 the Negro population of Virginia was 631,616 and the white was 880,858. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population, chap. 111, table 13, p. 44.

ballot as decisively as they themselves had been defeated by the bullet, and there began a period of white domination during which the process of undoing Reconstruction was to be completed.

The process of curtailing the Radical program through legislative enactment began in 1871 when the state was reapportioned. Five times in the period before 1891 this device was employed to add seats in the legislature for the Conservatives. Of immediate importance, however, was the first reapportionment because it enhanced Conservative strength in the legislature and enabled that party to amend the constitution of the state in 1874 so as to abolish the New England township system which had been imposed upon Virginia by the Carpetbaggers. Extinguishing this legacy of Reconstruction resulted in about one-third of the local offices in the state, many of which were occupied by Negroes, being abolished. The next year the constitution was again amended in order that a citizen could be disqualified from exercising the franchise unless he had paid a poll tax. This change in the fundamental law, coupled with the one which added conviction on a charge of petty larceny to the list of actions for which an individual was subject to disfranchisement,⁸¹ was undoubtedly designed to eliminate the political influence of both the Carpetbagger and his political cohort.

⁸¹Richard L. Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1865-1902 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1919), pp. 91-94. See also Frank B. Williams, Jr., "The Poll Tax as a Suffrage Requirement in the South, 1870-1901," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Vanderbilt University), p. 19. The legislature of 1883 altered the city charters so that representation given to large Negro communities would be reduced. Paul Lewinson, Race, Class, and Party: A History of Negro Suffrage and White Politics in the South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 65-66.

With the elimination of the Carpetbagger, the race issue in politics was temporarily in abeyance in Virginia. Negroes continued to occupy a few seats in the state legislature and appeals were made by both parties for their vote,⁸² but it was not until a controversy over the state debt gave rise to the Readjuster party in 1879 that the colored elector again assumed the position of importance which he had occupied during the brief period of Reconstruction. The origin of the state debt was in the ante-bellum period when Virginia had contracted financial obligations in order to pay for a system of internal improvements. During the war payments were not made on the principal and accumulating interest increased the total amount which was owed. This, coupled with the extravagance of the Radical government during the period of Reconstruction, burdened the tax-payers of Virginia with a debt which approached forty-three million dollars.⁸³ The culmination of Reconstruction saw a movement underway in most of the former Confederate states for a general scaling down of monetary obligations, but in the "Old Dominion" certain elements of the

⁸²In the legislative session of 1875-76 there were three Negro senators and thirteen colored members of the house. In the session of 1877-79 the senators were still there, but only four Negroes were elected to the house. Work, "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions and Legislatures and of Congress," Journal of Negro History, V (January, 1920), 118-19. The Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser claimed, on November 7, 1876, that in a contest of that year many Negroes had voted for Conservative candidates. On November 10, 1876, the same newspaper said that "it was a grievous sin . . . for the radicals to scare the negroes as they did at the late election. The poor, ignorant creatures had been led to believe that, in case of Tilden's election, everyone of them would be remanded to slavery"

⁸³Virginia and West Virginia engaged in a long drawn-out controversy as to what share of the debt would be assumed by the latter. Eventually a compromise was reached. Virginia later scaled her debt down a \$19,000,000. Francis B. Simkins, The South Old and New: A History, 1820-1947 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 232.

Conservative party--including some lawyers, businessmen, and members of the old aristocracy--insisted that "honor" demanded that Virginia must meet her financial obligations. Under the direction of this wing of the party, the state legislature enacted legislation in March of 1871, which funded the debt on a basis favorable to her creditors. Unfortunately, the Conservatives did not also deem it necessary to pass legislation to accumulate a fund which would make possible a systematic retirement of the bonds.⁸⁴ Instead, only one week after enacting the Funding Act, that body authorized the sale at a sacrifice of the state's stock in her most valuable asset, the railroads. After this, with corporate interests invoking charter exemptions to escape taxation, and with falling wages and lower profits during the depression of the 1870's making higher taxes unfeasible, the Virginia Conservatives found it increasingly difficult to meet the state's obligations. Consequently, they turned, as did the Bourbons of so many other states, to effecting savings by curtailing expenditures on vital state services.⁸⁵

By 1877 there was so much dissatisfaction with the financial policies pursued by the Funder wing of the Conservative party that some

⁸⁴It was provided that the old bonds could be exchanged for new ones bearing six per cent interest at the rate of two-thirds of the amount of old bonds plus accrued interest. Interest bearing certificates would be given for the other one-third and payment on these would be made in accordance with the future settlement with West Virginia. Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, pp. 88-91. For a complete account of this entire controversy see Charles C. Pearson, The Readjustment Movement in Virginia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917).

⁸⁵The Conservatives, soon to be called Funders, diverted some money belonging to new public schools by withholding sums due them. Some Funders, including Governor Holliday, announced their willingness to scuttle the schools in order to fund the debt. Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 92.

twenty-two Independents were elected to serve in the state legislature. Most of these individuals were followers of William Mahone, a former major-general in the Confederate army and a prominent railroad organizer and executive. Mahone had failed in his quest for the gubernatorial nomination of the Democratic party in 1877, and he seized upon the idea of "readjustment," or partial repudiation of the state debt, as a means of gaining popular support for his political ambitions. Although Mahone's allies were able to make their presence felt in the state legislature, they did not possess sufficient strength to side-track the corporate orientation of the Conservative-Funder wing of the party. Consequently, the Readjusters concluded by 1879 that there was no hope for their policies within the Conservative party and that the time was propitious for revolt.

In February of 1879 the Readjusters, led by Mahone, John Massey, H. H. Riddleberger, and Abram Fulkerson, met in Richmond and organized for a state campaign against the entrenched Funders.⁸⁶ While the governorship was not at stake in this election, the Readjusters hoped to be able to choose enough members of the legislature that they could launch their program of debt reduction. The campaign which ensued was bitter and intense with candidates of both parties seeking to win the support of the colored man. Funder leaders sought to maintain white support for their party by charging that the Readjusters were seeking to ride into office on the back of the colored voter.⁸⁷ At the same time these conservative whites, well

⁸⁶ Some members of the old aristocracy were Readjusters. Among these were John Barbour, William E. Cameron, and John S. Wise. Leading Funders were Governor Holiday, J. L. M. Curry, John R. Tucker, and John W. Daniel. Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, p. 106.

⁸⁷ The Readjuster John Massey answered the Funder charge that his party was trying to use the Negro vote by saying that he was a Democratic

aware that Mahone and the Readjusters were informing the Negro that the Funders would increase their tax burdens but that they would respect the rights which had been bestowed upon them, strived to divide the Negro vote by working through colored leaders. Negro speakers were hired to extoll the virtues of the Funders, clubs were established for the benefit of the colored man, and individuals bearing the label of Republicans were entered as candidates in an attempt to split the Negro vote away from the Readjusters.⁸⁸ All such efforts on the part of the Funders were futile. In this campaign the colored men largely remained loyal to their old leaders, now on the side of the Readjusters, and voted against the Funder nominees. This event drew the comment from the Conservative Richmond Dispatch that "if it had not been for the negro vote there would have been scarcely a dozen agitators elected."⁸⁹ Although this complaint may have been "whistling at the darky," it is apparent that the Readjusters utilized newly found Negro allies to elect enough members to both houses of the state legislature to control those bodies.⁹⁰ Consequently, they were

Readjuster and would continue to be so! He asked his opponent if it was not true that the Funders also desired their vote? Each party, he said, "wishes to secure all the votes it can, and if it secures them fairly, neither one can complain of the other for doing it." Elizabeth H. Hancock (ed.), The Autobiography of John E. Massey (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1909), p. 176.

⁸⁸The Republican party had been on the decline in Virginia for several years. A Republican Congressman was elected from the Fourth or "Black" District in 1876 and again in 1878. The party polled 95,558 votes for Hayes against 139,670 for Tilden, but the Republicans did not bother nominating a candidate for governor in 1877. Tribune Almanac for the years 1876-79.

⁸⁹Richmond Dispatch, n.d., quoted in Nation, XXIX (November 13, 1879), 317.

⁹⁰In the lower house there were eighty-two Democrats. Exactly

able to launch their program of debt reduction.

The Readjuster program of debt reduction was prevented from reaching maturity for a time because the Conservative-Funder, Colonel F. W. M. Holliday, occupied the governor's mansion. His veto power neutralized the Readjuster majority in the state legislature from 1879 to 1881, but before the end of the second session of the legislature of 1879, Governor Holliday acquiesced in the passage of the McCulloch bill. Supported by the Council of Foreign bondholders and by prominent New York bankers, this measure offered creditors new bonds with tax receivable coupons and a sliding scale of interest.⁹¹ The McCulloch bill, however, was too conservative for many of the Readjusters and in 1880 they sought to have it replaced with a measure known as the Riddleberger bill. Although the Readjuster-dominated legislature passed the bill, it was impossible to get it past Holliday's veto. Consequently, the Readjuster's determined to remove the last vestige of Conservative control by winning the crucial election of 1881.⁹²

half of these were Readjusters and they combined with fifteen of the seventeen Republicans to choose a Readjuster Speaker. Eleven of those cooperating with the Readjusters were Negroes. That party also controlled the senate with Republican assistance. Tribune Almanac for the year 1880; Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia, IV, 195. Work, "Some Negro Members of Reconstruction Conventions, Legislatures and of Congress," Journal of Negro History, V (January, 1920), 118.

⁹¹Becoming law on March 28, 1879, the McCulloch bill provided that the tax free bonds would bear three percent interest for ten years, four per cent for twenty years, and five percent for ten years. Pearson, The Readjuster in Virginia, pp. 103-04.

⁹²In the election of 1880 Garfield polled 83,639 votes in Virginia. Mahone and the Readjusters refused to cooperate with the regular Democrats in support of Hancock. The Readjuster ticket for Hancock polled 31,527 votes and the regular Hancock ticket 96,449. Tribune Almanac for the year 1881.

In 1881 Mahone, who had been elected to the United States Senate by his rubber-stamp legislature, led his party in a bitter campaign to capture the governor's office for the Readjuster nominee. Earlier in the year Mahone had been forced by a curious set of circumstances to show his affinity for the Republicans. When the Senate was ready to organize by appointment of committees in March of 1881, the membership of that body was equally divided between Republicans and Democrats. One Independent, elected by Democratic votes said that he would ballot with that party for the purpose of organization. This left only Mahone, supposedly a Democrat although he wore the label of Readjuster. Mahone cast his vote for organizational purposes with the Republicans, a tie resulted, and, with the Republican Vice-President casting the tie-breaking vote, that party was able to organize the Senate. As repayment for this favor Mahone was allowed to dispense the patronage for the Republican party in Virginia. While Mahone was attacked during the statewide election of 1881 as a traitor to his race and as a Republican in Readjuster clothing, there was so much dissatisfaction among the agrarian class with the policies of the Funders--the Virginia Bourbons--that Mahone's machine was able to elect William C. Cameron as governor of the state.⁹³ His victory elicited prediction of a woeful future for Virginia from Bourbons throughout the South. The Raleigh News and Observer more or less set the tone of such forecasts by declaring that "Mahone and his cohorts will eventually surrender to the dictates of the lower strata of the party Whatsoever the negroes demand as the price of future allegiance will be granted."

⁹³Cameron received 111,473 votes to 99,757 for his Democratic opponent, John Daniel. Ibid.

According to this editor, however, that was not all that was in store for Virginia. "Political equality," he said, "will certainly be followed by social equality, and the barriers being down the prejudices of that race whose votes are courted will certainly be observed."⁹⁴

While there was early some discontent manifested within the Readjuster party with the political methods of Mahone, it held together long enough to enact into law several liberal measures. Confirming the worst fears of the Conservatives were acts which abolished the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting, authorized the chartering of labor unions, increased the funds allotted for public education, lowered taxes on the farmers, and required that insurance companies post a higher bond.⁹⁵

The Conservatives could certainly have lived with these liberal measures, but anathema to the leaders of this party was the fact that the tax assessment against the property owned by railroads and other corporate interests was increased. Piling woe upon misery, also, was the Readjuster settlement of the debt question through the medium of the Riddleberger bill. In the eyes of the Conservatives this act, which lowered the principal of the debt that the state was willing to admit that it owed to approximately twenty million dollars, "besmirched the honor of Virginia."⁹⁶ Nevertheless, during the political canvass of 1883 the

⁹⁴Raleigh News and Observer, November 11, 1881.

⁹⁵Other Readjuster measures abandoned the whipping post as a form of punishment and outlawed dueling. Pearson, The Readjuster Movement in Virginia, pp. 144-47.

⁹⁶Bonds on this amount were to bear three percent interest. Neither the bonds nor the coupons were tax exempt, and the coupons were not tax receivable. The legality of this measure was upheld by the highest courts. Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, p. 114.

principle incorporated in the Riddleberger bill was accepted by the Funders as the final settlement of a confusing question.

By 1883 Virginia had been under the political direction of the Readjusters for two years, and the groups which were dissatisfied with their program were closing their ranks. The Funder wing of the Conservative party was, of course, antagonistic toward the liberal legislation which had been passed. Of more importance, however, was the fact that the development of a personal political machine by Mahone had alienated many of his former adherents. Consequently, these groups united into the newly-named Democratic party.⁹⁷ In the political canvass of that year the major issue was "Mahonism," and especially the policy of his party toward the colored man. While the Readjuster movement had never been a predominately Negro affair, Mahone had sought the support of the colored electorate. As a result of this, the Democratic candidates in 1883 charged that the party of Mahone favored mixed schools, mixed marriages, and complete social equality between the races. Throughout the state Democratic orators, seeking to solidify the whites in opposition to Mahone, ranted that the election of his party would mean a continuation of Negro rule. John Daniel, defeated by the Radicals in his race for governor in 1881, informed one cheering audience that "I am a Democrat because I am a white man and a Virginian."⁹⁸ The Executive Committee of the Waynesboro

⁹⁷ One of the individuals who assisted in the writing of the Democratic platform was the former Readjuster, John Massey. Allen W. Moger, "Origin of the Democratic Machine in Virginia," Journal of Southern History, VIII (May, 1942), 187.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Richmond Dispatch, October 26, 1883, quoted in Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, p. 120.

Democratic Club informed the electors that the issue in 1869 was whether Virginia would have a Negro government and "the same issues are involved now." In order to prevent such a state of affairs it urged that on election day, rain or shine, the whites should come out and vote for the white man's party.⁹⁹ The Richmond State, an organ of the Democratic party, informed the people of the state and nation that Virginians did not hate the colored man nor were they prejudiced against him, but, said the editor, "socially and politically we do not admit his equality, but insist upon his inferiority and the superiority of the white race."¹⁰⁰

Aided by increasing solidification of the white vote, by the electoral support of some dissatisfied colored men, and by the Danville riot,¹⁰¹ the party of white supremacy succeeded in its effort in 1883 to wrest control of the state legislature from the Readjuster party. Immediately upon the assembling of that body a resolution was passed requesting that Mahone and his Readjuster satellite resign their seats in the United States Senate. While nothing came of this request, the Democratic

⁹⁹Quoted in U.S., Congress, Senate, Report of the Committee to Investigate Alleged Outrages in Virginia, 48th Cong., 1st Sess., VII, p. v.

¹⁰⁰Richmond State, n.d., quoted in ibid.

¹⁰¹The riot in Danville, in which a few whites and blacks were killed and injured, occurred a few days before the election. News of the clash spread rapidly over the state and probably contributed to increased determination of the whites to achieve complete victory. For contemporary evidence presented by both sides as to the causal factors, see ibid. After the election a Negro newspaper, one that claimed to be non-partisan, bitterly attacked the colored men who had voted for the Democrats. "You who sold yourself for a dollar to the Bourbon Funders," asked the editor, "you feel ashamed of your conduct? Infamous scoundrels and nefarious traitors to the race, if truth had a hearing you would be placed under the whipping post and the blood run freely from under the lash." Lancet, November 17, 1883.

legislature did move to implement Democratic domination of Virginia's future Congressional delegations by gerrymandering the state so as to benefit that party.¹⁰² Thus, as one historian has analyzed the results of the election of 1883, "white solidarity was made complete and was not changed to any great extent so long as the Negro remained potentially a power in Virginia politics."¹⁰³

That the Negro did remain a potential power in the politics of the state is evident from the fact that in the years after the Democrats defeated Mahone colored men continued to be chosen to fill local offices, especially in the "Black District," and to serve in the state legislature.¹⁰⁴ In addition to this, there was an increasing contest between

¹⁰²The effect of the gerrymandering may be seen from an examination of the Congressional elections. In 1882 eight Republicans stood for election in eight of the nine districts and the at-large position. None of these candidates polled a large number of votes because they were renegades who were not abiding by the party's decision to cooperate with the Readjusters. In 1882 the Readjusters won four of the ten seats available, but in 1884, after the Democrats had gerrymandered the state, the Readjusters--now calling themselves Republicans--won in only two of the Congressional districts. In 1886 their fortunes improved and seven of the ten seats went to opponents of the Democrats, but in 1888 that party reversed the situation and won seven seats. See the Tribune Almanac for the years 1881-89. In 1888 the seat in the Fourth District went to a Negro, John Langston, but only after he contested his apparent defeat. Rowell (ed.), Digest of the Election Cases of the House of Representatives, p. 458.

¹⁰³Moger, "Origin of the Democratic Machine in Virginia," Journal of Southern History, VIII (May, 1942), 205.

¹⁰⁴There was never a session of the legislature between 1876 and 1890 which did not have at least one Negro member. A significant commentary on Mahone's control of the Republican party is the fact that despite agitation from Negroes the Congressional candidates of the party were usually whites. One Negro ran in 1884 as an Independent. The only one to achieve his goal, however, was John Mercer Langston who, despite opposition from the Mahone Forces, stood for election from the Fourth District in 1888. He apparently was defeated by the Democrat, E. C. Venable, but contested and was seated by the House. Rowell (ed.), Digest

the Democrats and Republicans for the support of the colored electorate in state elections. In 1889, for example, Mahone, whose party had given official credence in 1884 to what was already a recognized fact by changing their title from Readjuster to Republican, tried to recoup his political fortunes by standing for the office of governor. Earlier a prominent Negro journal had complained that ". . . Mahone undoubtedly has stabbed and mortally wounded the hopes and aspirations of intelligent and able colored men,"¹⁰⁵ and the colored men increasingly became reluctant to support candidates endorsed by his party.¹⁰⁶ In 1889 there was full-scale revolt against Mahone. John S. Wise and William E. Cameron, former stalwarts of the Readjuster party answered his candidacy by holding a convention which issued a statement that his defeat was essential to the future of the Republican party.¹⁰⁷ In the campaign itself pressure was brought upon the colored men through the agency of their leaders, but more Negroes probably voted for Mahone than against him. Despite this fact the Democratic candidate, Philip W. McKinney, won a decisive victory, and in the legislative races the Democrats won the greatest majority since the Negro was enfranchised.¹⁰⁸ His defeat was applauded throughout the

of the Election Cases of the House of Representatives, p. 458. For Langston's version of his race see John Mercer Langston, From Virginia Plantation to the National Capital (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Co., 1894).

¹⁰⁵Lancet, January 17, 1885.

¹⁰⁶In 1885 it was reported that in Norfolk many Negroes were voting Democratic. Nation, XL (June 4, 1885), 451.

¹⁰⁷Morton, The Negro in Virginia Politics, p. 128.

¹⁰⁸McKinney polled 162,645 votes and Mahone 120,477, Tribune Almanac for the year 1890.

South and elicited from one Democratic journal the comment that "Virginia shakes hands with Georgia, and the Democracy of the whole south may sleep peacefully, for we have scored the biggest victory since 1876."¹⁰⁹

The fact that the Negro was a potent political force in Virginia and that Mahone had been able to attract enough support from that race to threaten Bourbon dominance was alarming to the entire South. While the Democrats also sought to win their vote, Bourbon journals in every state often pointed to the situation in Virginia when admonishing the whites to remain loyal to the party of white supremacy.¹¹⁰ They noted that Negroes continued to be elected to office and that they blindly followed the dictates of their leaders and made the Republican party a force to be considered in Virginia. When some of the colored men tired of the political game it was a noteworthy event to Southern journals. Thus the Atlanta Constitution found the statement of an old Negro living in the country a few miles from Richmond to be worthy of publication. "Boss," said the colored man in reply to a question from a newspaper reporter, "I ain't no democrat, I ain't no 'publican, I ain't no readjuster, and all I axes is to be left alone by these Angry-Saxons."¹¹¹ Such an attitude was undoubtedly pleasing to the majority of the whites of Virginia and of the entire South. They would have been more pleased at the end of the Bourbon period had a majority of the Negroes manifested such a disinterest!

¹⁰⁹ Richmond State, n.d., quoted in Atlanta Constitution, November 6, 1889.

¹¹⁰ For example see the Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta Journal, New Orleans Picayune, Galveston Daily News, and Raleigh News and Observer for this period.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Atlanta Constitution, November 3, 1889.

CHAPTER VI

SOUTHERN ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGRO

VOTING-PROPONENTS

The political situation which developed in the former Confederate states during the period from the end of Reconstruction to the advent of the Populist uprising was one in which the basic issues which might have been expected to divide the electorate were often subordinated to the single, overriding one of race.¹ As was noted in preceding chapters there was a cleavage within the white man's party in some of the Southern states because of dissatisfaction with and distrust of the governmental and economic policies pursued by the Bourbon leaders. As a whole, however, this latent animosity did not erupt in full-scale revolt for a relatively long period because of the racial problem. Nevertheless, there was always a divergence of opinion among white residents of the South as to the niche in the political structure which should be occupied by the colored race.²

¹One author contends that it was an economic factor which led to the race issue and that without the planter element there would have been no such question or it would have assumed a different form. "It was primarily his [the planter's] need for labor," contends this observer, "and for authority over labor in a situation where men did not voluntarily offer themselves as laborers which led to the idea of race as a principle of control." Edgar T. Thompson, "The Planter in the Pattern of Race Relations in the South," Social Forces, XIX (December, 1940), 244.

²Naturally, some members of the colored community were little concerned as to whether they had the franchise. At the outset of Reconstruction and for several years thereafter, however, a relatively large

During the Bourbon period some Southerners, probably a preponderance, were unwilling to accept the fact that the Negro was legally entitled to the franchise and to some other basic rights bestowed upon him by the states under the direction of the Federal government. Many of these individuals, most of whom belonged to the poor white class, were exponents of the theory that the colored men should be relegated to a political and social limbo through the medium of disfranchising and other restrictive legislation. A smaller portion of the Southern body politic was willing to accord to the Negro the minimum rights guaranteed by the amendments to the Constitution of the United States, by Federal law, and by the fundamental law of the individual states. An even smaller body of protagonists held to the view that the colored men were legally the equal of their white neighbor and that they were due protection and encouragement not only in the exercise of their basic political rights but also in those which might be characterized as social privileges. Thus, to borrow the nomenclature of current political philosophy, it might be said that during the Bourbon period the attitude of the Southern white toward the Negro vote fell either into the category of radical, moderate, or liberal.³

percentage of the Negroes registered and voted. Some of this interest in political affairs was undoubtedly due to the fact that the ballot was tangible evidence of their emancipation. Most of the Negroes maintained membership in and, where possible, voted for candidates of the Republican party as a mark of their gratitude. As late as 1959, a one-hundred year old Missouri Negro, born a slave, when asked her political affiliation replied that "I'm a Republican. Heavens, yes, he [Lincoln] set us free!" George Gallup and Evan Hill, "The Secrets of Long Life," Saturday Evening Post, 232 (April 15, 1959), 18.

³It should be noted that use of the terms radical, moderate, and liberal as classifications of attitude implies no connection with those so-identified in earlier chapters as groups within the political parties.

It is easily recognized, however, that there is danger in such broad classifications. Certainly some of the radicals were more liberal in their attitude than were others, and it is just as obvious that some who might be termed liberal or moderate would necessarily be more radical than would others. Not only did the subject of the Negro vote result in the development of these broad and fluid classifications, but when attitude is considered two other elements enter in--colored leaders in the South and politicians in the North who sought to make political capital from this issue. With all of these groups, liberals, moderates, radicals, Negroes, and Republicans, expressing a different and often antagonistic attitude toward the colored vote, it is little wonder that the issue of race became the subject of the "Great Debate" during the Bourbon period.

The only body of white Southerners who consistently expounded the thesis that the colored man was morally as well as legally entitled to the franchise were those who occupied the category of liberals. Such individuals were sincere in their belief that the Negro race could be advanced educationally, socially, economically, and morally only if its members could be assured that their rights as citizens were respected by the people who had held them in bondage. To some extent they could agree with the New York Times when it said that "the old slave masters must domineer and tyrannize; they must keep the colored man in subjection and misery; they must raise a barrier of intolerance against enlightened ideas, and fight against the incursion of those who would work for free institutions"⁴ Liberals would agree with the editor of the Times that the

⁴The editorial continued with the statement that Southerners must recognize that "they can never again tyrannize over the nation The civilization of the South is past" New York Times, January 5, 1880.

Negro was subject to restrictive devices which the Southern leadership class had inaugurated to assure its continued political dominance. They would, in the main, seek a mitigation of this situation by guaranteeing the colored man a free ballot and a fair count in all of the Southern states.

Probably the most caustic critic of the policy pursued by the political leaders of the South toward the Negro was the erudite George W. Cable. This able individual was the product of a union between a father who was born in Virginia and a mother who was of New England stock. Being reared amidst a Creole background in New Orleans resulted in this future critic of the South serving in the Confederate army. After the victory of Northern arms, he watched "the great Reconstruction agony from its first day to its last," and later admitted that he found his "sympathies ranged upon the pro-Southern side of the issue, and his convictions drifting irresistibly to the other."⁵ Yet, his belief that the Negro was being pushed into the depths of political and social degradation by the policies of the Bourbons was not expressed to any great extent in the period immediately after Reconstruction. Instead, he turned his facile pen to exploring the past grandeur of his native state. In 1878 he gained lasting fame as the author of Old Creole Days and within the next two years he followed this literary triumph by publishing The Grandissimes and Madame Delaphine. The wide acclaim with which these works were received undoubtedly made it

⁵George W. Cable, The Silent South (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1885), p. 25. Cable was often the subject of bitter attack by Southern newspapers. The Atlanta Constitution, May 18, 1888, characterized him as a crank who knew nothing about the Negro question. The New Orleans Times-Democrat said he was temporarily deluded by a mania. Quoted in Atlanta Journal, February 26, 1890.

difficult for Cable to turn to a criticism of the South and its attitude toward its colored citizens. Yet, he believed that someone must take up a cudgel in behalf of the Negro and insist that those rights which had been soberly bestowed upon that race must not be honored in the breach.

The development of this belief by Cable resulted in his becoming, by the middle years of the eighties, one of the most outspoken of the propagandists who actively advocated free and unrestricted exercise of the franchise by the Negro. In 1885, for example, he wrote in an article prepared for the Century Magazine that "there are those among us who see that America has no room for a state of society which makes its lower class harmless by abridging their liberties There is a growing number," he insisted, "who see that the one thing we cannot afford to tolerate is a class of people less than citizens" ⁶ This article was only the opening gun in a salvo which Cable was preparing to unleash against what he conceived to be the prevailing Southern attitude toward the Negro. In the same year there appeared a book, The Silent South, which was to constitute the most bitter indictment of Southern racial policy penned by a Southern white during this period. Publication of the article and the book impinged upon Southern sensibilities and elicited a storm of protest throughout the region. Undoubtedly this contributed to Cable's decision to seek a more favorable climate of opinion by removing with his family to Northhampton, Massachusetts, in 1886.

Removal from his Southern homeland, however, did not result in a cessation or even a diminution of Cable's literary bombardment against the

⁶George W. Cable, "The Freedman's Case in Equity," Century Magazine, VII (January, 1885), 413.

policies pursued in the South toward the colored race. As he viewed the situation from his Massachusetts retreat, the Negro question had become the gravest matter in American affairs simply because a small minority of Southern whites were denying to some seven million Negroes the full measure of rights which they would have been freely accorded had they been of European rather than African descent.⁷ As Cable pondered the situation he reached the conclusion that political leaders of the South sought the proscription of the Negro race as a part of their acceptance of and belief in an orientally inclined theory of divine rights. Their theories, maintained Cable, "declares public safety and highest development to require subjugation of the lower mass under the arbitrary protective supremacy of an united but hereditary privileged class, a civil class." He did not believe, however, that this philosophy had as its ultimate purpose the establishment of an aristocracy for, as he saw the situation, "an aristocracy exists, presumably . . . with wide consent of all classes, and men in any rank of life may have some hope to attain it by extraordinary merit and service"⁸ As a corollary to this idea, Cable expressed his belief that as a free man the Negro was not allowed to assert himself and was prevented from emerging from the lower echelons of the caste system because the Southern white feared that his service as a subservient laborer would be irretrievably lost if he was allowed to advance too far. A concomitant to this was, according to Cable, a physical fear of the

⁷George W. Cable, "The Negro Question in the United States," Contemporary Review, LIII (March, 1888), 443.

⁸George W. Cable, The Negro Question (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), p. 27.

Negroes in the areas where they outnumbered the whites.⁹ Thus, he wrote in 1885, "it is only where a people are moved by the fear of Negro supremacy that the simple belief in a divinely ordered race antagonism is used to justify the withholding of impersonal public rights which belong to every man because he is a man, and with which race and its real or imagined antagonisms has nothing whatever to do."¹⁰

The theme that the colored man was subject to stringent social, economic, and political restrictions because Southerners feared losing his labor and also political dominance to him in those areas where he outnumbered the whites was a subject to which Cable often returned. In 1888 he attacked what he termed the "ultra-Southern" position as one in which "to be right is the only real necessity; but where is the community that will not make, and define with treasure and blood, the assumption that what is necessary is right?" Southerners, he said, "may sometimes lack a clear, firm-founded belief that they are right . . . but they have at least a profound conviction that they are moved by an imminent, unremitting, imperative necessity."¹¹ This conviction resulted, he maintained, from the fact that thousands of people in the South were being taught in their schools, churches, homes, and by the press that depriving the Negro of his fundamental rights as a free man was a legal and moral prerequisite

⁹Guion G. Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy, 1876-1910," Essays in Southern History, ed. Fletcher M. Green ("James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science," Vol. XXXI; Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), p. 138.

¹⁰George W. Cable, "In Plain Black and White," Century Magazine, VII (May, 1885), 98.

¹¹Cable, "Negro Question in the United States," 445.

to maintaining cherished Southern institutions.¹²

The only hope that Cable could see for a change in the system whereby the Negro was deprived of his rights was for the members of that race to protect themselves through the medium of the ballot box. In an article prepared for the Contemporary Review in 1888, he noted that the subject of the Negro vote was commanding increased attention in the North and South. "Northern men," he wrote, "often ask perplexedly if the freedman's enfranchisement was not . . . premature and inexpedient; while Southern men as often call it the one vindictive act of the conqueror, as foolish as it was cruel."¹³

Cable gave the opinion that the situation in regard to the franchise was cruel, but only because it was belatedly bestowed upon the Negro race. Certainly, he admitted, the colored man had sometimes been guilty of using the ballot injudiciously; he had given it freely to one party out of a misguided sense of gratitude and had consequently evoked a suspicion of his intent from the whites of the South. It was therefore requisite for the Negro, said Cable, to quell the fears of his white neighbors by making it plain that he did not desire "Negro supremacy." He should demonstrate conclusively that he was not interested in politics merely as the agency through which he could secure some lucrative political sinecure. He should go even further, advised Cable, and, while endeavoring to maintain his political rights, demonstrate that no single party could be certain of receiving his electoral support. "It means," he cautioned, "that without venality or servility, you must hold your

¹²Ibid., 446.

¹³Ibid., 448.

vote up for the honorable competitive bid of political parties" because "a vote is not a free-will offering to the past; it is a debt to the present."¹⁴

Cable, a prolific writer, probably penned more words on the subject of the Negro than did any of his contemporaries. Incessantly he argued that the colored race could be elevated more quickly if the Negro was free to exercise the ballot, and he would have him protected in this right. In this attitude Cable was joined by some other Southerners who had attained some measure of prominence in their section and throughout the nation. For example, in the year that Cable left Louisiana for his self-imposed exile in Massachusetts, a former Confederate officer and now Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Kentucky, Thomas Dudley, wrote that the Negro must be welcomed back to the polls and into the fellowship of the white churches. "The separation of the negro race from the white race," he warned, "means for the negro continued and increasing degradation and decay. His hope, his salvation, must come from association with that people among whom he dwells, but from whose natural guidance and care he has been separated largely by the machinations of unscrupulous demagogues."¹⁵

¹⁴George W. Cable, "What Shall the Negro Do?" Forum, VI (August, 1888), 634-38. In an article published in December of 1888, Cable insisted that the Negro was being denied his legal right to vote at the South. He noted the claims advanced by Southerners that the colored vote had been "abundantly tried, and earned its own condemnation in the corruption and disasters of the reconstruction period." Cable said that this would be a fair statement if the purpose of Reconstruction had been to secure the Negro in his right to vote. As Cable viewed the situation, however, the greater design of the period was "to put race rule of all sorts under foot, and set up the common rule of all" George W. Cable, "A Simpler Southern Question," Forum, VI (December, 1888), 392-400.

¹⁵Thomas U. Dudley, "How Shall We Help the Negro?" Century Magazine, XXX (March, 1885), 278.

The belief expressed by Dudley that the Negroes would have a better opportunity to improve their condition if freely permitted to exercise the ballot was primarily the same idea advanced by another prominent Southern clergyman, the Reverend Atticus G. Haygood. In 1888 Haygood took up his pen to answer the contention, expressed in an article by Senator James B. Eustis of Louisiana, that the colored race posed a problem which should be settled exclusively by the South. Haygood, contending that the Negro must be educated and freely permitted to cast his ballot for the man or party of his choice, maintained that the Negro question was not local in character but was of concern to the entire nation. "If there has ever been any fanaticism, intolerance, or spirit of intermeddling," he wrote, "mixed up in the efforts that have been made by Northern people to improve the negro's character as well as condition . . . such infirmities may deserve rebuke" It was the thought of this clergyman, however, that such was not the case, but he insisted that it was the duty of every American, Southern as well as Northern, to take an active interest in educating the colored man and making him a fit citizen. Only by so doing would it be possible to advance the Negro to a position whereby they would be equally competent with the whites to understand the responsibilities attached to the privilege of citizenship.¹⁶

Other liberals agreed that the colored citizenry had a right to the franchise and must be protected, by the Federal government if necessary, in the unrestricted enjoyment of that right. For example, Lewis H. Blair, a wealthy Democratic businessman from Richmond, maintained in 1889

¹⁶Rev. Atticus Haygood, A Reply to Senator Eustis's Late Paper on Race Antagonism (Nashville: Open Letter Club, 1889), p. 11.

that the one legal right in which the Negro was not protected in the South was that of the exercise of his franchise. Blair insisted that a situation whereby a portion of the population was in any manner restricted in the right to vote opened the door for the government to be conducted in the interest of corrupt political rings ruled by venal bosses. He admonished the Southern states to encourage the colored man to participate in elections and to cease the utilization of force and fraud to deprive him of his ballot.¹⁷ Blair also took cognizance of the claim advanced by some prominent Southerners to the effect that it was necessary to prevent the mass of Negroes from exercising the franchise in order to preserve a stable, civilized government and to prevent a return to the conditions which prevailed during Reconstruction. "To perceive all these changed conditions [since Redemption]," he said, "and to be afraid of a return to former evil days is to prove that we are cowards, not Anglo-Saxons, or if we are Anglo-Saxons, that we are unworthy of our ancestry" To be aware of changed conditions, he continued, "and to be unwilling to restore the freedom of the ballot to the negro is to commit a crime against freedom" It was therefore requisite for the whites of the South, maintained Blair, to rise up in righteous indignation and insist that the rights of the colored man be observed. Only by so doing would peace and prosperity return in full measure to that troubled section.¹⁸

¹⁷ Blair said that in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, where the Negro was led by able and strong white minorities, he exercised the ballot freely and was little subject to fraud. He went ahead to say that in the other Southern states the Negroes had been deprived of the ballot and the whites of their servile labor. Lewis H. Blair, The Prosperity of the South Dependant upon the Elevation of the Negro (Richmond: Everett Waddley, 1889), pp. 66-70.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

While the liberal element in the Southern states insisted that the Negro was legally entitled to a free ballot and a fair count, they consistently couched their arguments as to why this right should in no wise be curtailed on the basis of moral considerations. Certainly, according to the liberal viewpoint, the colored man had a legal right to the franchise, and if this right was upheld and he was guided in the exercise of it, he would become better educated in the art of government. In the past the Negro had been merely a pawn in the political chess game, and consequently he had not been able to demonstrate his full potential. Not only was this the case, but the insistence on the part of some white leaders that the Negro posed a threat to Southern institutions had resulted in the utilization of fraud and intimidation to cope with the imagined danger. This, in turn, had resulted in an undermining of the political morals of the mass of Southern whites and was evoking an increased cynicism on the part of the general electorate. Thus, if the colored man was encouraged to cast his ballot upon issues rather than for or against a particular man or party it could only redound to the benefit of the South. It would have the effect of removing him as the overriding issue in the political life of the section, would contribute to his moral and educational advancement, and would open an avenue to material, economic, social, and political accomplishment in the Southern states.

Agreeing in essence with the white liberals that the colored man should freely be allowed to exercise the ballot but emphasizing it as a legal rather than a moral right were some of the politicians in the North and most of the Negro leaders of the South. As has been previously noted,

the national leaders of the Republican party early became disenchanted with their colored cohorts and abandoned them to the extent that the Republican party organization in the Southern states was encouraged to ally with any white Independent organization which might rise to compete with the Bourbons. One Republican-oriented journal, the New York Tribune, rationalized the abandonment of the colored man shortly after Redemption by declaring that the Negroes had been given "ample opportunity to develop their own latent capacities," and had only succeeded in demonstrating that "as a race they are idle, ignorant, and vicious."¹⁹ Such a blatant declaration was, however, the exception rather than the rule. Instead, despite the fact that as the years rolled by the Republican party leaders determined that their purposes could best be served by making their organization in the South "lily-white," the party press and leaders generally found it politically expedient to give lip service to the principle of Negro suffrage. In almost every election, therefore, Republican journals contended that the colored man had been and continued to be intimidated and disfranchised at the South. They continually charged that Southern Democrats were seeking to evolve a system whereby the Negro would be remanded to slavery in fact if not in name, and insisted that this could be prevented only if the colored man was protected in his legal right to the franchise.²⁰

¹⁹New York Tribune, April 7, 1877.

²⁰See, for example, the St. Louis Globe-Dispatch and the New York Tribune for the years from 1876 to 1891. Setting the theme of the arguments advanced for the benefit of Northerners was an article by William E. Chandler, patronage dispenser for President Arthur. In 1882 he had advised Southern Republicans to abandon the Negro and to cooperate with Independents in the area. In 1888, however, he charged that the Negro

At the same time that Republican journals and orators were expounding the thesis that the Southern Negro must by all that was right be guaranteed a free and unencumbered ballot, another group was also expostulating upon the subject. Like their Republican mentors but unlike the liberal white Southerners, the literate Negroes emphasized that the colored man must be allowed to vote because it was a legal right accruing to every citizen. As was true of the statements made by the liberals, however, expressions by colored authors on this subject reached a peak in the late 1830's. Undoubtedly one of the primary reasons for this was that by the latter half of that decade there was increased suspicion that the Bourbons had as their ultimate purpose the disfranchisement of the Negro. Consequently, Negro leaders reached the conclusion that Federal action must be taken to lessen the possibility that the Southern program could be brought to fruition.

One of the most able and certainly the most prolific of the Negro authors who gave consideration to the subject of suffrage and who, like most of his colored colleagues, viewed the situation with alarm was a North Carolinian, Albion W. Tourgee. This able individual early manifested an interest in political affairs and especially events which could possibly effect the members of his race. In 1878 Tourgee took cognizance of the attitude of President Hayes toward the Negroes and their membership in the Republican party by proclaiming that this shortsighted policy meant that "the Republican party of North Carolina is dead--dead beyond all hope

had been intimidated and disfranchised in the South. He insisted, too, that the period of Reconstruction, during which the Negro voted freely, was one of material accomplishment. William E. Chandler, "Our Southern Masters," Forum, VI (July, 1888), 508.

of resuscitation or resurrection."²¹ Tourgee thought that Hayes' policy toward the Negro would lessen the effectiveness of the Republican party and would result in the colored man losing his political rights. This was the theme which he carried out in subsequent books and articles.

As early as 1880 Tourgee was complaining that the Southern whites would never admit the Negroes to the rights accorded them by law.²² It was in the latter half of the decade, however, that he really began caustically to indict the whites for what he considered to be their attitude toward the colored race. The year 1889, for example, found him declaring with some heat that the Negro question was the most momentous one which had ever faced the American civilization and that "the present phase of the question is a controversy touching the Negro's right to exercise freely, peacefully, and effectually the elective franchise, and to enjoy without hindrance its resulting incidents."²³ Maintaining that the elective franchise was a right and not a privilege as had been asserted by some Southern politicians, Tourgee went ahead to complain that it was the purpose of many individuals in the South to deprive the colored race of the ballot.²⁴ Even if the claim advanced by some whites as to the

²¹The "C" Letters as Published in "The North State." (Greensboro, 1878), pp. 21-25, quoted in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, Vol. IX of A History of the South, eds. Wendell H. Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 100.

²²Raleigh News and Observer, October 3, 1880, said of Tourgee's statement that "we do not doubt there is much misrepresentation of facts in it."

²³Albion W. Tourgee, "Shall White Minorities Rule?" Forum, VII (April, 1889), 144.

²⁴Tourgee maintained that until duly conferred the franchise was a privilege which no individual or class had a right to demand, but once

inherent superiority of the Anglo-Saxon was correct, he said, it did not logically follow that this constituted sufficient grounds to justify disfranchisement of the Negro. The whites, Tourgee vehemently insisted, did not have any divine authority to rule and as far as he was concerned past events had amply demonstrated that they were not fair or just guardians of the rights of their former slaves. Southern whites, he complained, "would not hesitate to destroy the Negro's opportunity for development in order to keep him weak, dependent, and manageable. Not because the Negro is ignorant or incapable," he continued, "do they object to his exercise of the right of suffrage, but because he is a Negro, and as such they will spare no pains to keep him weak."²⁵

Tourgee's suspicions of the motives of the Southern whites and his insistence that the franchise was not merely a privilege but constituted a right which the colored race must be freely permitted to enjoy were but manifestations of the themes which were the predominant arguments of most of the leaders of the Southern Negroes during the Bourbon period. For example, W. S. Scarborough, a prominent colored educator, agreed with Tourgee, in an article which he wrote in 1889, that the South was determined to make the Negro bend to its desires. Every effort of the colored man to raise his economic standards and his most peaceful efforts

granted it became a right which the sovereign had to maintain and enforce. Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 147-48. Tourgee insisted that the reason for Southern states not changing their constitutions to disfranchise the Negro was because it would result in a reduction of Southern representation in Congress and the Electoral College. However much "the southern man may object to the Negro as a political force," he said, "the southern politician is desperately fond of him as a political counter." Ibid., 148.

"to exercise the privileges conferred upon him by the Constitution," said Scarborough, "are construed [in the South] as a movement toward 'Negro supremacy.'"²⁶ Such a fear was not and could not be justified. Actually, insisted the professor, "Negro supremacy has no part in the Negro's plans for his future, nor is it desired by him. He simply seeks to exercise undeterred the freedom to enjoy the rights guaranteed him by the Constitution."²⁷

Scarborough and other colored leaders continued their campaign to see the colored man guaranteed a free ballot and a fair count well into the 1890's. Obviously their purpose in speaking and writing on the subject was not to convince the mass of illiterate Negroes that it was requisite for them to insist that their rights must be respected. Nor did they hope that they would be able to appeal successfully to the better instincts of the leadership class in the South. Instead, their arguments were so couched as to convince Northerners that it was necessary to reinstitute restrictive legislation which would insure the colored man that his franchise would be protected by the Federal government. For example, in November of 1890 the Reverend Amory D. Mayo suggested in an article prepared for a Northern journal that the South was too far immersed in

²⁶W. S. Scarborough, "The Future of the Negro," Forum, VII (March, 1889), 80.

²⁷Ibid., 82. Scarborough insisted that Southern fears of a return to the excesses of Reconstruction were groundless and did not constitute the true reason for the whites suggestion that the Negro vote should be curtailed. The key to the disturbance, as he saw it, was one of color and caste coupled with the Bourbon's fear that they would lose political power through the adherence of the colored man to the opposition party. He said that the only hope of the Negro was to present a united political front and to appeal for Federal supervision if a fair vote was denied. Ibid., 83-83.

constitutional nationalism to be really concerned with the welfare of her some eight million colored inhabitants. Since such was the case, he proclaimed, the rights of the colored race, now subject to political wrenching in the South, could be guaranteed only by concrete Federal action.²⁸

The thesis advanced by Mayo at a time when Congress was giving consideration to an election measure was seconded by Professor Scarborough in an article prepared for the first of the muckraking journals, The Arena, in 1891. Noting that there was a great deal of the sentimental and the sensational in the discussions then current on the so-called "Negro Problem," he suggested that only the passage of years could bring forth a satisfactory solution. Yet, like Mayo, he insisted that his Northern audience must not fall prey to a suggestion advanced by a United States Senator from Mississippi that the solution to the problem be left to "the sound judgment of the Southern people." Instead, said Scarborough, the colored man must be disengaged from politics and from political manipulation and must be protected in the full enjoyment of his constitutional rights.²⁹

The articles written by Tourgee, Scarborough, Mayo, and others of their type on the subject of the colored man and the ballot represents the thinking of only a small minority of the Negro race. That is not to say that the majority of the colored men did not believe that they were legally entitled to a free and full enjoyment of the ballot, but the race was mired so deeply in illiteracy that the average colored man was unable to

²⁸Amory D. Mayo, "The Progress of the Negro," Forum, X (November, 1890), 335-45.

²⁹W. S. Scarborough, "The Negro Question from the Negro's Point of View," Arena, IV (July, 1891), 291.

comprehend the various arguments advanced on the subject.³⁰ As a whole the Negro electorate tended blindly to follow a course of political action charted for them by their colored leaders. While most of these individuals were of the Republican persuasion and led the black masses along those lines, if the leaders decided to cast their lot with a Democrat the chances were more than good that they could sway a large percentage of the colored voters to emulate their action.³¹ Such an event tended to bear out the contention of some Southerners that the Negroes had a propensity for casting their ballots for individuals rather than upon issues.

Although many, if not most, of the white Southerners also ignored issues when casting their vote, the leaders of the colored race recognized that such a situation constituted a problem. The more literate members of that race continually exhorted the Negro voter to be less concerned with party labels and with the advice of colored bosses. Instead, they cautioned, the Negroes should manifest an independence and cast their

³⁰The percentage of illiterate Negroes in the population of the individual states is given in the Census of 1890. It shows that in Virginia the percentage of illiterates among both sexes was 57.2; in North Carolina 60.1; in South Carolina 64.1; in Georgia 67.3; in Florida 50.5; in Tennessee 54.2; in Alabama 69.1; in Mississippi 60.8; in Arkansas 53.6; in Louisiana 72.1; in Texas 52.5. In each of the states the percentage of illiterates was higher among the females, but only in Florida and Arkansas was the percentage among males less than fifty per cent. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), chap. XVI, table 23, p. 419.

³¹In 1883 John Lynch informed his colored cohorts in the Republican party of Mississippi that it mattered little whether the county machines decided "to fuse with the Independents instead of the Democrats, or with the Democrats instead of the Independents, or to make straight party nomination instead of fusing with either;" all good party men had a duty to follow the machine, "although they may honestly believe the decision to be unwise." Quoted in New York Globe, October 30, 1883, as quoted in Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 217-18.

ballots on the basis of the programs offered by the individual candidates. This, they thought, would serve to convince white Southerners that there was no danger of a revival of the Republican-Negro combination which had prevailed during Reconstruction. Yet, although this type of advice was freely given the major theme of the arguments advanced by literate colored men was that regardless of the Negroes propensity for voting as a group and despite the fact that a majority of that electorate was illiterate, the Negro race had an inalienable right to the franchise and should in no wise be subject to restriction. That the protestations of the colored propagandists had little or no effect on the attitude of Northern and Southern white leaders, however, is easy to see from the vantage point of the nineteen-sixties. Certainly they were unable to entice concrete support for their suggestion that the Federal government should intervene to insure the colored man that his constitutional rights would be protected. Certainly, too, they suffered the same fate as did the white liberals in their efforts to convince the people of the South that the bugaboo of Negro supremacy was only an ephemeral thing and that measures should not be taken to effect the disfranchisement of a majority of the colored race.

In the debate which raged between 1876 and 1890 over the right to exercise the ballot, the position occupied by the white liberals and by the illiterate Negroes was so far to the left of that occupied by the Bourbons that it might appear that they should be classified as archconservatives. Actually, the position of the Bourbons and those who adhered to their philosophy is in some elements the most difficult to grasp. Certainly they do not deserve to be grouped with that rather numerous segment of the Southern population which believed that the colored race should be

remanded to a semi-legal position of political and economic slavery. Neither do they fit into the narrow category of liberals who seemingly believed that because the Negro was of a different race and had once been held in bondage he was entitled to special consideration. Nor does the fact that the Bourbons were often found adjuring the whites of the South to accept the fact that the colored man was legally entitled to the franchise and that his right must be respected and almost in the same breath issuing dire warnings that the ballot in the hands of the Negro was a weapon which posed a threat to cherished Southern institutions give any real clue as to the attitude of this class toward the colored vote. Obviously the Bourbons were pragmatists, but it is unfair to characterize them and their adherents as Machiavellis who were interested in the Negro only as an instrument through which they might assure their political dominance. At the outset of the Bourbon period, then, Redeemers such as Lamar, Hampton, and Vance were probably less guilty of hypocrisy than they have generally been charged with being. As was mentioned earlier, this class was the cultural heir of the ante-bellum aristocracy and their attitude toward the colored man contained much of the paternalism romantically associated with the Old South. Undoubtedly the Bourbons recognized that the South had a responsibility to assist the people they formerly held in bondage to make the transition to a society where their every thought was not directed by an overlord. Yet, they believed that it had been a mistake to effect a rapid political change and place the colored man at the political helm, but because they were essentially a law-abiding class they recognized that the legal rights bestowed upon the Negro could not lightly be taken away. They could accept and applaud the sentiments expressed by

the Georgia editor of the Southern Watchman who wrote in 1867 that "we hope there is no reason to believe that the freedmen are going to array themselves against the whites in elections on account of race" But, he said, "although the whites believe that the majority of colored people are not now qualified to vote understandingly, they nevertheless know that it is not their fault that they have been declared voters and hence harbor no unkind feelings toward them on that account. Let the colored man," admonished this editor in a phrase which anticipated the Bourbons, "see to it that they do not act in such a manner as to destroy present kind feelings between the races."³²

The statement by the editor of the Watchman as to the attitude current in the South on the subject of the Negro vote and his gratuitous advice to the members of that race presented a picture which could be accepted by many Southerners at the time it was written. Yet, events of the period known as "Black Reconstruction" foreshadowed a reversal of attitude. Whether there was an "orgy of misrule" during this period or whether, as Professor Howard K. Beale suggests,³³ the entire subject must be restudied, it is evident that the Redeemers were able to make political capital out of the situation. Once native control was restored, however, the Redeemers began to tone down the often voiced demands that the Negro be deprived of

³²The editor of the Southern Watchman on March 27, 1867, advised the colored men to "see to it that they vote for men they believe to be best qualified to fill the office; and let them, above all things, avoid saying or doing anything which can get up bad feelings between the two races." Quoted in Ralph Wardlaw, Negro Suffrage in Georgia, 1867-1930 (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1932), p. 23.

³³Howard K. Beale, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," American Historical Review, XLV (July, 1940), 815.

the ballot. Actually, many of these individuals returned to the position they had assumed shortly after the Confederate defeat and became moderate in their attitude toward the colored vote. That is, they often ceased their propagandizing as to the necessity for disfranchising the Negro and emphasized their belief that he was and should be protected in his right to vote by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the individual states. They widely proclaimed that the traditional Southern respect for law must not be subordinated in the desire to remove the Negro as a participant in the political arena. It was, of course, advantageous to the party leaders in their relation with the colored man to insist that his right to the ballot would be guaranteed. Not only did such an idea enable the Bourbons to appeal for colored support, but the fact that the Negro continued to vote lessened the possibility that the white vote of the South would divide upon issues. In line with the latter point is the fact that the party press continually raised the specter of potential Negro domination as a device to insure continued support for the party of white supremacy. Despite this, however, the utterances of the Bourbons on the subject and editorials which periodically appeared in journals in the North and South indicate that they were not as adamant against the exercise of the franchise by the colored man as has been thought.

At the outset of the Bourbon period most of the statements made by the moderates on the subject of the "black ballot" indicated that they were willing to accept the situation imposed on the South by Federal bayonets. They were willing to admit that they would not have indiscriminately enfranchised the colored man had they had a free choice, but they insisted that the people of the North realize that they desired to effect no change.

For example, in 1876 the New Orleans Daily Picayune complained that "the greatest political trouble under which our section now labors is the apparent inability of other sections to understand that it has thoroughly recognized the fact that 'old things have passed away.'" The editor of this journal insisted that the people of his state and of the entire South "recognize the emancipated and enfranchised African as a fellow-citizen in every sense of the word." Southerners, he continued, "mean to go to the polls with him, and to count his vote as we would count our own; but we mean to control his vote, if we possibly can, by every fair means."³⁴

Although the editorial in the Picayune appeared a few months before Louisiana was redeemed to native white control, it is a classic example of the attitude of the members of the higher economic and social class throughout the South. While such Southerners might march in parades clad in cleaner versions of their Confederate uniforms and deliver homilies glorifying the "Lost Cause," they knew that the old way of life in the South had been irretrievably lost and that it was necessary to make the best of the situation. Part and parcel of the changes with which their section was confronted was the new position of the colored men. Although the Bourbons might privately bemoan the situation they did strive to convince themselves and their white cohorts that Southern interests would be better served if the Negro was accepted as an elector and convinced that his future was interwoven with the whites of his section. Thus, while the moderates would not accept the liberal viewpoint that colored men were equal to the whites, they were willing to experiment

³⁴New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 12, 1876.

with the Negroes having the franchise. Their moderate posture, however, had as its ultimate purpose the utilization of the colored vote for their own political purposes.

In 1878 Wade Hampton, prototype of the moderate Bourbon, informed an audience composed mainly of colored men that "you must stand on your own footing. You cannot be put upon any better one merely because you are colored men." The whites of the South, proclaimed the governor, "propose to protect you and give you all your rights; but while we do this you cannot expect that we should discriminate in your favor, and say simply because you are a colored man you have a right to rule the State."³⁵ As has been noted, while serving as governor Hampton fulfilled his promise to give the Negro his rights and in so doing elicited some colored political support. He was also interested, however, in convincing potential Northern antagonists, especially those dissatisfied with the Southern policy inaugurated by Hayes, that the enactment of restrictive legislation was unnecessary. In 1879, for example, Hampton carried his campaign to convince Northern doubters as to the purity of Southern intentions toward the Negro onto the pages of a highly respected Northern journal. Proclaiming that

³⁵Yorkville Enquirer, September 26, 1878, quoted in George B. Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952), pp. 21-22. An anonymous correspondent of a prominent South Carolina newspaper wrote a letter in 1878 in which he said there were at least three attitudes held by the whites on the Negro issue. The first group, smallest of the three, regarded the colored men as unworthy of any consideration. The second and most numerous group looked upon the Negroes "as human beings of an inferior order or grade." They would accept limited suffrage for the colored men based on qualifications of education or property. The third attitude, held by the Hampton party, was that the Negro was not responsible for the trouble visited upon South Carolina after the war and that the whites should accept their duty of educating the colored men to their responsibilities under freedom. "Cato" to the Editor, Columbia Daily Register, November 28, 1878, quoted in ibid., pp. 36-37.

the colored men should be educated to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, Hampton said that ". . . it would be almost impossible to disfranchise the negro and, if possible, it would not be carried into effect." The people of the South, he insisted, do "not desire to see this done The negro contributes not only to the wealth of the South, but to her political power, and she is indisposed to deprive herself of any advantage."³⁶

The pragmatic viewpoint expressed by Hampton was seconded and expanded by other moderates who composed a leadership class respected in both North and South. Lucius Q. C. Lamar, for example, proclaimed that the people of Mississippi thought that the ballot had been an education to the Negro, and he agreed with Hampton that there was no widespread desire to see it taken away.³⁷ Hamilton H. Chalmers, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Mississippi, did not agree with Lamar that the people of that state would not welcome a curtailment of the colored vote, but he did agree that the enfranchised Negro did not pose a great threat to Southern institutions.³⁸ Chalmers would go even further and accept the

³⁶James G. Blaine, et al., "Ought the Negro to be Disfranchised? Ought He to have been Enfranchised?" North American Review, CCLXVII (March, 1879), 240-41.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 231, 250. In 1876 Congressman Charles E. Hooker of Mississippi commented on a Senate investigation of affairs in his state. He told his colleagues of the House that the investigation was unnecessary and that the South did not oppose the granting of the franchise to the Negro. Leave the South alone, he said, and the natural relations between the races will adjust themselves. Charles E. Hooker, "On Relations Between the White and Colored People of the South," Speech Delivered in the United States House of Representatives, June 15, 1876 (Washington: R. O. Polkenhorn, 1876), pp. 1-10.

³⁸H. H. Chalmers, "The Effects of Negro Suffrage," North American Review, CXXXII (March, 1881), 239. Chalmers maintained that the deeper

legalistic dogma of Alexander H. Stephens which held that it would be constitutionally impossible to prevent the colored man from enjoying this privilege. "The men of the South," said Chalmers, "must understand once and for all that the negroes, as negroes, . . . can never be disfranchised. Their right to vote, as a race, is as fixed and irreversible as their freedom, and the fifteenth amendment to the national Constitution is no more likely to be repealed than the thirteenth."³⁹

Advice by the moderates to the people of the South to recognize that the colored man was legally entitled to the franchise was often accompanied by suggestions to the Negro that he realize that this privilege entailed some obligations. For example, Zebulon B. Vance, former governor and then United States Senator from North Carolina informed the colored race that their political and social future was largely dependent upon their own ability. According to this moderate, if the Negro continued "to array himself against the whites, following blindly the renegade element of white men, neither he nor his social status could be much improved." As long, he warned, as the Negro "suffers himself to be made a pliant political tool, casting his vote as directed from the outside of his own community, and refusing to identify himself with the property and intelli-

and more lasting effect of their enfranchisement had been to demoralize Southern politics. He said that "when elections cease in his imagination to be fraught with his liberty . . . the enormous negro vote of the South will afford a field for the art of the demagogue and the bribes such as the world has never seen"

³⁹Ibid., 247. Chalmers advised the Southern whites to realize that force and fraud was not the answer to their political woes, but that it could only be found in limiting the right of suffrage by imposing educational and property qualifications. While he was more radical than moderate, Chalmers did realize that the South must accept the fact that the Negro could not be disfranchised as a race.

gence of the section where he lives . . . he will be an element of danger to the welfare of society."⁴⁰

The idea of Vance on the future of the Negro was also that expressed by a true moderate and one of the best friends of the colored race, General Samuel C. Armstrong. Also writing in 1884 this Northerner, largely responsible for the success of the educational experiment at Hampton Institute in Virginia, maintained that the Negro was unfit, as a class, to use with ability the political power with which he had been entrusted. He noted realistically that the colored race would never be permitted, even in those states where they constituted a numerical majority, to become politically dominant. Consequently, according to Armstrong, the Negro would be better off in a political sense if he would assume a middle ground and not cast his vote solidly for one party out of a misguided sense of loyalty. It would be wise for the colored man, he advised, to "make the most of himself, but, if possible, forget grievances, and obey the dictates of common sense."⁴¹ That is exactly what the Southern moderates continually advised him to do.

The moderate viewpoint as to the future position of the Negro

⁴⁰Zebulon B. Vance, "The Future of the Negro," North American Review, CXXXIX (July, 1884), 86. C. M. Clay of Kentucky later wrote that the only solution to the race question was for the North to become solid, secure control of the government, and enforce all penalties. It was his opinion that such a situation would result in some Southerners ceasing their efforts to disfranchise the Negro. Cassius M. Clay, "Race and the Solid South," North American Review, CXLII (February, 1886), 134-36.

⁴¹S. C. Armstrong, "The Future of the Negro," North American Review, CXXXIX (July, 1884), 96. Armstrong was a friend of Booker T. Washington and like that Negro leader believed that the colored men should be less concerned with political and social rights, and should work to make himself economically indispensable. When that occurred those rights would come as a matter of course.

race in the political structure of the South was promulgated not only in articles prepared for journals of national import, but it also commanded much attention in the Southern press. While arguments on the subject were heard from almost every available forum, it was undoubtedly the newspaper which had the greatest effect in the molding of Southern opinion during the period.⁴² Percentagewise, the number of whites who had an opportunity to hear a Hampton, a Colquitt, or a Vance, or to read a journal of the type represented by the North American Review or the Nation was indeed small. But nearly every Southerner, regardless of whether he was fortunate enough to possess the ability to read, was generally made aware of the comments of his leaders, and for that matter of their Northern antagonists, through the medium of the local newspaper. Every county and sometimes it seemed that every crossroads hamlet could boast a journal of varying degree of merit--a paper which was easily accessible to every farmer, laborer, and townsman, regardless of whether they paid for a subscription. Citizens of a community would often assemble, especially in the slack season for agriculture, on some rickety porch, under some spreading tree, or perhaps in a back room of some favored business establishment and discuss the momentous events of the day. They mulled the news over, chewed tobacco on it, lauded it, or denounced it. They accepted

⁴²As has been pointed out by a leading Southern historian the influence of the better daily newspaper was very great in the South. By a system of "exchanges" journals such as the Atlanta Constitution reached the desk of nearly every country editor, and many of the smaller periodicals simply fed their readers the editorial opinion expressed by such prominent journalists as Henry Grady and Henry Watterson. Thus, publishers in the large cities directly influenced rural Southerners who never saw their paper. Thomas D. Clark, "The Country Newspaper: A Factor in Southern Opinion, 1865-1930," Journal of Southern History, XIV (February, 1948), 8.

the interpretation of the editor as to the deeper meaning of the news and how it effected their section, state, and locality, or they decided that he was not aware of the true situation. Thus, either in the sanctity of private homes or in open forum was the primary medium of communication--the newspaper--read and digested. It can be considered no wonder, then, that the local publisher, an individual not the least hesitant about publishing his own views or pirating something expressed in one of his exchanges, was an important factor in the molding of Southern opinion during the period.⁴³

Undoubtedly the major issue attracting attention from the Southern press during the Bourbon period was that involving relations between the races. For a few years after home rule was achieved the press as a whole was moderate on the subject of the Negro vote. Naturally those newspapers published by colored men and those which were Republican-oriented advocated Negro suffrage as a right, but even Democratic journals often followed the example set by the Bourbon politicians and admonished Southern whites to accept the fact that the colored man was legally entitled to the ballot. By doing so they hoped to convince colored leaders that their intransigent support of the Republican party was an error. For example, the New Orleans Daily Picayune editorialized on July 19, 1876, that the Negroes were at last awakening to the utter hopelessness of their situation under Radical leadership. They see, said the editor, "that they have been alienated from their best friends, that they have been assisting an unscrupulous horde of political adventurers to rob themselves, as well as the whites,

⁴³Ibid., 27.

. . . and that ten years of allegiance to the Republican party has profited them nothing."⁴⁴ Two years later another Louisiana newspaper, noting that election day had come and gone with little discord, announced to the colored men that "for ten long years, have we, born together and linked in one common tie of interest, been estranged, but today we are united forever. Colored men, we salute you as citizens, friends and brothers!"⁴⁵

From Texas to Virginia the Southern newspaper proclaimed to all who would heed that "the black man wants peace and he will have it as soon as the sectional agitators are overthrown."⁴⁶ The same newspapers agreed that the Negro, as long as he acted like a "good old Southern darky," was entitled to all rights accorded him by law.⁴⁷ They lauded the "gallant colored men" who cast their ballots for Democratic candidates, and boasted that "we believe in treating the negroes with exact justice, with kindness and in every way seeking to advance their material and personal welfare."⁴⁸

⁴⁴New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 19, 1876.

⁴⁵Natichitoches Vindicator, n.d., quoted in New Orleans Weekly Democrat, November 28, 1878, quoted in Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana, 1877-1900" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Louisiana State University), p. 134.

⁴⁶Galveston Daily News, September 24, 1880.

⁴⁷The "uppity nigger" was bitterly castigated, but the colored man who remained loyal to his master was lauded. As late as 1904 Thomas Nelson Page commented on the new generation of Negroes as being unworthy and a threat to the South. He said that "the disfranchisement of the main body of the Negro race in the Southern states was a measure of high necessity." Thomas Nelson Page, "The Negro: The Southerner's Problem," McClure's, XXIII (May, 1904), 129. For his view on how the old-time Negro was loved and respected in the South see Thomas Nelson Page, "The Old-Time Negro," Scribner's Magazine, XXXVI (November, 1904), 522-32.

⁴⁸Aberdeen (Miss.) Examiner, October 25, 1883, quoted in Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), p. 15. See also Raleigh News and Observer, March 24, 1881.

Nevertheless, in the midst of these homilies there was always an admixture of threat. Editors were not at all reluctant to warn that the South had no intention of permitting a continued alliance between the colored men and the Republicans to endanger native control. The reason for such an attitude was explained in 1838 by the editor of the bellwether of the Southern press, the Atlanta Constitution. Republican misrule and its attendant corruption, said the editor, had been tasted by the South and had proved to be a bitter physic. "This is the real problem and this is the fear," he wrote. "The negro is not now and never has been a menace. There is no danger of social equality and nobody fears it." But, he continued, the dangers inherent in Republican rule was something else to be considered. All Southerners, he proclaimed, remembered vividly the excess of the period of Reconstruction and consequently they could not and would not countenance anything which might contribute to a revival of alien control.⁴⁹

Expressions on the part of the Southern press as to the willingness of the South to accord the Negro the privileges which were legally his lessened in frequency as the years of Bourbon domination slowly passed. At almost the same time the tenor of articles and speeches authored by the political leaders also began to change. Near the end of Reconstruction and at the outset of the Bourbon period the press and the party bosses were lavish in their praise of those colored men who risked ostracism by members of their own race to support candidates of the Democratic party. Their efforts to attract additional support from this group

⁴⁹Atlanta Constitution, May 2, 1838.

resulted in their expressions on the subject of the Negro vote to be moderate in tone. Although they early stated that it was their feeling that it had been unwise to enfranchise the freedman indiscriminately, the Bourbons and the party press continually asserted that they would be unwilling to see a change effected. Nevertheless, it was not many years before this posture of moderation began to crumble under the realization that a majority of the Negroes, however agreeable and amenable they might be on other subjects, were adamant in their refusal to abandon their traditional loyalty to the Republican party. As long as the Bourbons were able to attract colored support in state politics through fusion arrangements there was always the possibility that this allegiance would erode and a phalanx of Negro voters would troop to the polls to cast a solid vote for Bourbon Democracy. But, while fusion was successful in some areas, the Negro remained a potential Republican, and in contests of national import it was sometimes found necessary to use fraud and intimidation to preserve a Democratic victory. This, coupled with the fact that as the years passed the Bourbon position was increasingly under attack from disenchanted elements within the party, convinced the moderates that some means of curtailing the Negro vote might be necessary. Such an event would serve two purposes. In the first place the gullible and easily led Republican Negroes, who might be guaranteed their voting privileges through national legislation, would be removed as a potential dominating force in the politics of the Southern states. Secondly, the Bourbons would be entitled to assert more emphatically their claim that they were striving to maintain white supremacy and thus combat the increasing dissatisfaction which was becoming more manifest within the party.

It was largely for political reasons, then, that the vaunted moderation of the Southern leadership class began to split asunder as the decade of the eighteen-eighties reeled to a close. Although the Bourbons, who largely loved the Negro in the abstract, continued to extoll the virtues of the "good old Southern darky," and did not advocate the outright disfranchisement of the Negro as a race, they did increase their output of articles, speeches, and editorials on the subject of the necessity of imposing limitations upon the colored vote. Thus, at a time when the liberals of the class represented by Cable, Haygood, and Blair were increasing their attacks upon Southern policy toward the Negro, the moderation of the Bourbons was being replaced by an attitude which was nearer the radicalism of the poor whites. It was indeed unfortunate for the political future of the colored man that his status as a voter had to become entwined in the maze of party discord which was visited upon the South in the decade of the nineties.

CHAPTER VII

SOUTHERN ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGRO

VOTING-OPPONENTS

During the entire period from 1876 to 1890, as demonstrated earlier, colored men exercised the franchise in varying degrees of intensity in all of the former Confederate states. While no legislation nor changes in the fundamental law of any state contemplated the disfranchisement of the Negro as a race, the amount of actual colored participation in politics was often governed by the whims of those whites exercising political control. Although the Bourbons were often moderate in their personal attitude toward the Negro vote--undoubtedly because they sometimes found it useful for their own purposes--the intensity of colored voting was dependent upon the interworking of many different factors. Included among those elements upon which the unfettered exercise of the ballot by the Negroes rested was the ratio of whites to blacks in the population of the individual states, the ability of those individuals who had directed the campaign for Redemption to prevent dissatisfied whites from bolting the party, the potential threat of a renewal of Federal control over election procedure, and a myriad of other factors of greater or lesser importance depending upon the time, locality, and situation.

Although many general factors entered in to the development of

attitudes toward the Negro vote there are so many ramifications to the problem that it is a patent impossibility to say that one specific thing or another motivated the whites of the South at one particular place or one especial time. Always present, however, among the preponderance of Southern whites--those who were not colored or did not fall into the classification heretofore termed liberal--was a firm intention not to permit a revival of alien control based on the Negro vote. While the evils of the Reconstruction period may very well have been overdrawn, the belief that such a situation had prevailed was of utmost importance. In fact, the dangers inherent in a revival of Republican-Negro rule were so continuously impressed upon the Southern mind that they might almost be considered a result rather than a cause of the predominant attitude. At any rate, Southern whites of every economic station became adamant in their intention not to countenance a return to a situation where the "bottom rail was on top."

It would obviously be a fallacy to maintain that there ever existed a single, unified Southern attitude toward participation by the Negro in the political affairs of that section. Certainly the Bourbons, even with their expressions of and belief in the philosophy of noblesse oblige, were not possessive of a single attitude toward the exercise of the franchise by the colored men. As a class and for political reasons they might counsel moderation, but there were always individuals who would raise their voices in dissent. Nevertheless, as a whole, the members of this class were more liberal in their attitude toward the Negro and his vote than were those who occupied the lower rung of the Southern economic ladder. It would require a psychologist possessing the rare ability to

delve with some degree of accuracy into the innerworkings of an individual's mental processes to even approximate some of the reasons why those Southern whites occupying the lower economic strata had such a deep and abiding hatred of their colored neighbor.¹

Generally accepted as one motivating factor in the attitude of this class of Southerners toward the Negro was that it was a heritage of the ante-bellum period when the poor white was often in a worse condition from an economic standpoint than was the slave on the neighboring plantation. About the only manner in which the poor white could salve his ego was to rationalize that since he was a free man of the Caucasian race his station in life was consequently above that of any colored man--free or slave. Events of the Reconstruction period, when the Negro was invested with social and political rights to which he could never aspire while mired deep in the stultifying system of slavery, resulted in an intensification of the bitter antagonism of many of the Southern whites toward the colored race. Reconstruction broadened this group of whites. Not because the Negro was advanced to any great extent in an economic sense, but because hundreds if not thousands of the small farmer class, those who in the ante-bellum period had aspired to the status of planter,

¹For a consideration of some of the psychological overtones of the race problem see Guion G. Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy, 1876-1910," Essays in Southern History, ed. Fletcher M. Green ("James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science," Vol. XXXI; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949). Also deserving of examination are the following: W. O. Brown, "Role of the Poor White in Race Contacts of the South," Social Forces, XIX (December, 1940), 200-16; E. Franklin Frazier, "Role of the Negro in Race Relations of the South," Social Forces, XIX (December, 1940), 217-35; Edgar T. Thompson, "The Planter in the Pattern of Race Relations in the South," Social Forces, XIX (December, 1940), 236-48.

found themselves economically leveled with the colored man. Thus, the Negro was not only legally equated with the whites in a social and political sense during Reconstruction, but he was also the primary economic competitor of an increased number of whites. This situation did not die out when Redemption was accomplished, but it intensified as the South began to diversify its economy. Frustrations piled upon hatred as the years rolled on. Consequently, more and more of the whites of the lower economic stratum began, largely through the agency of its more literate members, to vent their spleen by demanding that the colored man be relegated to a secondary position--politically as well as socially.²

Undoubtedly the political and social advancement of the Negro by Federal decree during Reconstruction was a causal factor in the cooperation of whites of all economic station in their efforts to overthrow the alien rule based primarily on the Negro vote. When the revolution which accomplished this was complete the leaders of the Redemption movement, as previously noted, sought to maintain their hegemony by keeping alive the worst memories of the period.³ Despite their efforts, however, the

²It was the mass of lower class whites who were the primary exponents of "Jim Crow" legislation, and as long as the Bourbons were in control the racial code was not as severe as it later became. In 1875 the Tennessee legislature authorized common carriers and public servants to refuse service to anyone they did not wish to serve, but in 1880 this law was declared unconstitutional by a Federal judge. In 1881 it was replaced by a law requiring separate accommodations for Negroes in first-class cars, but leaving the races unsegregated in second-class coaches. Stanley J. Folmsbee, "The Origin of the First 'Jim Crow' Law," Journal of Southern History, XV (August, 1949), 235-47. Even after the civil rights legislation of the Reconstruction period was declared unconstitutional in 1883 it was a few years before the most typical "Jim Crow" law, that requiring separate accommodations for the races on trains, became common. Beginning in 1887, however, one Southern state after another adopted this type of legislation.

³Southern leaders made political capital from this just as did the

vaunted white solidarity was an ephemeral thing, and as the years passed there was increasing dissatisfaction with the racial and other policies pursued by the Redeemers. This cleavage over racial policies, more important in some of the Southern states than in others, was a contributing factor in the rise of Independent parties. Bourbon utilization of the Negro vote through fusion agreements made it feasible and politically advantageous for the agrarian leaders of Greenback and other political and economic persuasion to attack Bourbon claims that it was necessary to maintain white solidarity to prevent a recurrence of Republican-Negro domination.⁴ Despite such attacks, however, a majority of the whites accepted the Bourbon warning and continued to give electoral support to those leaders during most of the period.

Not only did the upland white manifest a distinct distaste for the Bourbon truckling to the colored vote, but the efforts of these politicians to salve Northern suspicions by assuming a posture of moderation was also viewed with some suspicion. Bourbon protests that there was a free ballot and a fair count in the South did not always jibe with the experiences of some of the whites. They found that any revolt against the political domination of the entrenched Redeemers would often result

Republicans from the "bloody-shirt" technique. See, for example, Hilary A. Herbert, et al., Why the Solid South? or Reconstruction and its Results (Baltimore: R. H. Woodward and Co., 1890).

⁴General Martin Gary, leader of the whites in upland Edgefield County in South Carolina, proclaimed that "it was the Straightout aggressive policy which saved the State in 1876 in spite of Grant's bayonets, as every one knows, not 17,000 negro votes as Hampton says." Charleston News and Courier, May 4, 1877, quoted in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, Vol. IX of A History of the South, eds. Wendall Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (10 vols., Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 80.

in steps being taken to deprive potential white supporters of Independent candidates of the ballot. At the same time colored men would be herded to the polls to exercise their franchise for candidates supported by the higher economic echelon of Southern whites. Thus, while the Bourbons were utilizing the Negro vote in the Black Belt to assure their supremacy in the various states, they were insisting that the colored man was free to choose his own party and that his manifest propensity was to remain solid for the party associated in his mind as being responsible for his freedom. It is not surprising, then, that the majority of the agrarian-oriented whites were confused as to the true situation. Thus, even though there early was evidence of dissatisfaction with the racial, economic, and other policies of the Bourbons, the majority of whites of the lower economic station preferred to "go down the line" with the leaders of the party of white supremacy during most of the period. Any other course of action, they were convinced, would be risking a renewal of Negro-Republican domination.

Although the poorer white element of the South despised the colored man and would have been more than pleased to see him relegated to a secondary economic, social, and political order, the lack of education of this group largely prevented them from effectively vocalizing their opinion. That is not to say that individuals representative of and appealing to the prejudices of this class did not utilize every opportunity to castigate the colored race. Nor does it mean that some of the leaders of this group were not literate and literary. It does mean, however, that most of the pronouncements on race relations and especially on the subject of the Negro vote came from the pens and lips of adherents to the Bourbon cause. As

has been noted, much of what was said on the subject was literature for a purpose or, to employ a word which is bandied about with increasing frequency in the contemporary world, propaganda. One aspect of this literature was designed to convince recalcitrant Southern whites that any split in the party of white supremacy, any fissure in the dike of white solidarity, would unleash a flood of colored votes and a return to the conditions paramount during Reconstruction. Thus, at the same time that adherents to the Bourbon cause were counseling moderation toward the Negro, some members of that group were voicing suspicion of the colored vote. As the years of the Bourbon period rolled inexorably on there was increasingly heard the radical arguments as to why some limitation should be placed on the exercise of the franchise by the colored man. Eventually the seeds of such protests were to fall on fertile soil and were to blossom into disfranchising legislation in all of the Southern states.

Expressions of a radical attitude toward the Negro and his right to vote were common even before the Bourbon period had really dawned. In November of 1876, for example, a prominent South Carolinian opened a new journal of record amidst what he characterized as a time "of great political excitement, attendant on the effort of our people to throw off the incubus of corrupt negro government which has been weighing upon our unfortunate State for the past eight years"⁵ The private musings of this individual, however, were not written with the intent or for the purpose of winning support for his particular point of view. Neither was the

⁵Arney R. Childs (ed.), *The Private Journal of Henry William Ravenel, 1859-1887* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1947), p. 385. Ravenel rarely mentioned the Negro after 1876.

statement made about the same time by a Virginia jurist, ruined financially by emancipation, to a Scottish visitor to his court. "God," said the judge, "made niggers different from white men, and nobody can make them the same."⁶ Nor was the Georgia planter who told the same touring member of Parliament that the Negro was "first rate to 'shovel dirt,' a function for which he was made, but no good for much else,"⁷ seeking to convince anyone that it was necessary to the welfare of the South that the colored man be relegated to a secondary political position. Each of these individuals, none of whom belonged to the poor white class, whether confiding his thoughts to a private journal or casually commenting to a visitor from afar was merely stating what to him was a matter of fact. Each of these individuals, however, would probably have agreed that the colored man was legally entitled to the ballot and that the South must accept the situation. Nevertheless, in making statements of this type they were reflecting the attitude of many if not most of the people at the South toward the Negro as the Bourbon period began.

While the majority of the Southern whites had a firm view on the subject of the colored vote and what it meant to their section, the primary arguments as to why the members of that race were not capable of understanding the responsibilities attached to the exercise of the

⁶George Campbell, White and Black: the Outcome of a Visit to the United States (New York, R. Worthington, 1879), p. 278.

⁷Ibid., p. 358. The Georgia planter told Campbell that the young Negroes who had reached maturity after the Civil War were the bad ones. The older colored men, maintained the Georgian, had some virtues, but since emancipation it was impossible to discipline them. He also complained that the older Negroes could not or would not discipline the younger ones. Ibid., 358-59.

elective franchise were those advanced by newspapers, pamphleteers, and professional politicians. None of these groups were at all hesitant in making their viewpoint known. Generally, the theme of the speeches and editorials coming from facile Southern pens during this period contained one or more of three main ideas. As was previously noted, there was the idea, usually expressed for the benefit of people in the South who disliked the Negro, that the colored man was worthy of trust if he behaved like a "good old Southern dinky." That is, if the colored men were amenable to the freely given advice that their best interests would be served by trusting and supporting politically the representatives of the class which was the true heir of their former masters they would be freely allowed to exercise the ballot. This theme, for the benefit of those who hated the Negro, always contained the thought that the enfranchisement of the colored men had added to the political power of the South and that they really posed no threat as long as they were directed by the Bourbons.

Although the idea that the Bourbons could control the Negro for the benefit of the South continued to be expressed as the years of the period passed, its effectiveness eroded under the realization that in political affairs the colored men were not always receptive to the advice given by this group and that when they were their vote was not being used for the benefit of the South but for the Bourbons. While the Bourbons, largely in an effort to convince Northerners, continued to expound the thesis that the people of their section had an innate understanding of the Negro, the "good old Southern dinky" theme of their speeches and articles was largely replaced before the end of the period with the one

which viewed him as a "bigoty nigger."⁸ This was the theme which viewed the Negro with suspicion; it was the one which insisted that the colored race was morally and educationally unqualified to understand the high responsibilities of the elective franchise. While most Southerners prefaced their statements on the subject with the view that the South had no ulterior motives toward the members of that race, underlying a majority of the pronouncements a few years after the advent of the Bourbon period was the thought that the Negro should not have been enfranchised.⁹ Consequently, the predominant theme by the end of the period--sometimes hinted at; often expressed--was that which expounded the radical viewpoint that the Negro vote should be curtailed.

Before turning to an examination of some of the reasons cited by the radicals as to why the colored men should not have been enfranchised and as to why it might be necessary to limit their political participation, it might be noted that other issues involving relations between white and black assumed political overtones in the Southern press. One of the continuing threads of editorial opinion expressed in newspapers from the Gulf to Chesapeake Bay was that while the South might have been forced to accord political equality to the colored men the whites of that area would never be willing to accept him on an even social plane. For example, the

⁸Thomas D. Clark, "The Country Newspaper: A Factor in Southern Opinion, 1865-1930," Journal of Southern History, XIV (February, 1940), 27.

⁹According to one historian, Southern editors "generally believed that the Negro should be denied the right to vote until by education and extensive experience he could do so intelligently and show that he was free of outside exploitative influences. The Negro, in a significant segment of editorial opinion, was believed to have natural and primitive tendencies which only labor would subdue." Ibid.

Atlanta Express said in 1880 that "as for the freedmen, they are protected the same as white men by the laws, but as for associating with them . . . the suggestion is spurned with contempt."¹⁰ Or, consider the reply made by an accredited organ of the Democratic party in Virginia, the Richmond State, to the claim advanced by Joseph Pulitzer's New York World that the Negro was hated in the South. Such, said the editor of the Virginia newspaper, was simply not the case. "Socially and politically," he said, "we do not admit his equality, but insist upon his inferiority and the superiority of the white race." Nevertheless, he proclaimed, "as to 'hating the negro' or being prejudiced against him in the South, Mr. Pulitzer is altogether mistaken. We do not hate him, nor do we have any prejudice against him. We only demand that he keep his place"¹¹

Demands that the Negro "keep his place" occupied a prominent place in Southern journals during most of the years encompassed within the Bourbon period. The inference that the colored man was seeking social as well as political equality was continuously utilized as a political device to keep potential bolters among the whites in line for the party of white supremacy. Southern newspapers incessantly pointed out that the Negro was legally entitled to the ballot and that he generally cast it for candidates representing that Southern bugaboo, the Republican party.¹² Because the

¹⁰Atlanta Express, n.d., quoted in Galveston Daily News, December 1, 1880. The editor of the Texas newspaper commented that his Georgia counterpart should not express himself with so much warmth, but should content himself with asking Northern exponents of social equality to practice what they preached.

¹¹Richmond State, n.d., quoted in U.S., Senate, "Alleged Outrages in Virginia," Senate Reports, 48th Cong. 1st Sess. 1883-84, VII, p. v.

¹²While Southern journals usually maintained a majority of the

colored man expressed a propensity for remaining Republican the Southern whites were cautioned that if they chose to split over unimportant issues they were running the risk of incurring further social leveling--a prospect that was anathema to most of the whites of that region.

An example of this type of argument is an article which appeared, shortly before the Reconstruction ended in the last of the former Confederate states, in the Charlotte Democrat. The editor raised the cry that it was necessary to maintain white solidarity in order to protect the traditional way of life in the South. "White men of North Carolina," questioned the editor, "are you ready for mixed schools, for Negro judges, for Negro representatives, for Negro Senators? Are you ready to forget that this is a white man's government, framed by the wisdom of the white men, and secured by the blood of the white race?" If the whites of his state were prepared for such momentous events, advised the editor, they should absent themselves from the polls on election day. If, however, they were not ready to accept such a situation they should "come up, every man of you, and vote for the man of your race."¹³

Negroes were adherents of the Republican party, they always carried accounts after an election which proclaimed that large and increasing numbers of colored men were voting Democratic. This may have been for the purpose of counterbalancing Republican claims that Democratic totals in those areas where Negroes outnumbered whites were obtained only through fraud and intimidation.

¹³Charlotte Democrat, August 2, 1875, quoted in William A. Mabry, The Negro in North Carolina Politics Since Reconstruction (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 15-16. The Lynchburg (Va.) News warned in 1881 that the election of that year would determine whether Negroes controlled "the schools to which your little children go Remember it, white people," cautioned the editor, "when you come to vote." Lynchburg News, n.d., quoted in U. S. Senate, "Alleged Outrages in Virginia," Senate Reports, 48th Cong., 1st Sess., 1883-84, VII, p. v. One subscriber of the Nation wrote the editor that one of his friends had

Newspapers throughout the South continually echoed the warning of the Charlotte Democrat that the presence of a mass of ignorant colored voters in the body politic posed a threat to Southern institutions and to white supremacy. For example, the principal organ of the Democratic party in Alabama informed its readers in 1882 that "the downfall of Democracy means the restoration of Negro rule."¹⁴ The editor of the Raleigh News and Observer was not so blatant for he told his readers in 1887 that no true Southerner desired to have the suffrage limited or the Negro remanded to slavery. He qualified his statement on the suffrage, however, by proclaiming that "it would be decidedly more wholesome if the negro were rendered less prominent in affairs of State than he remains after the boost into citizenship given him by the republican party." The colored man, wrote the editor, "has disappeared from the halls of Congress. He should disappear as a prominent feature in the political landscape of the country as a whole." Southerners, he pontificated, would simply "have him assume his normal position and be kept within the degree of his actual importance."¹⁵

The attitude that the Negro should be relegated to the position of his actual importance was a theme advanced by many Southern newspapers during the period, but probably no other journal advanced so many facets

informed a prominent Negro that the Democrats ". . . don't intend to allow those who have neither property nor intelligence nor character to get into power again; they'll die first!" A South Carolina Subscriber to the Editor, Nation, XXVII (December 5, 1878), 349.

¹⁴Montgomery Advertiser, August 2, 1882, quoted in Allen J. Going, Bourbon Democracy in Alabama, 1874-1890 (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1951), p. 31.

¹⁵Raleigh News and Observer, December 21, 1887.

of this idea as did the one edited by the able Henry W. Grady, the Atlanta Constitution. Grady had been one of the first to applaud the decision of President Hayes to remove Federal troops from the South and he conducted a running feud with George W. Cable, characterizing his attitude toward the Negro as being "sentimental more than practical."¹⁶ Grady did not, however, assume the mantle of a crusader and spokesman for the South until 1886. In December of that year he was invited to deliver an oration on "the New South" at the annual banquet of the New England Society in New York. In a speech which has become famous Grady ranged far and wide. He spoke of the desire of the South to let the issues which had resulted in war be regarded as permanently settled; he lauded the New South which had "challenged your spinners in Massachusetts and your iron-makers in Pennsylvania"; he spoke, too, of the Negro problem and its solution. "The relations of the southern people with the negro," he said, "are close and cordial To liberty and enfranchisement is as far as the law can carry the negro. The rest must be left to conscience and common sense." The rights of the colored man, he urged, must be left "to those among whom his lot is cast, with whom he is indissolubly connected and whose prosperity depends upon their possessing his intelligent sympathy and confidence Faith will be kept with him in the future," Grady promised, "if the South holds her reason and integrity."¹⁷

¹⁶Henry W. Grady, "In Plain Black and White--A Reply to Mr. Cable," Century Magazine, XXIX (April, 1885), 909. In this article Grady insisted that the liberal Cable did not truly represent the South. Grady professed to believe that the civil rights and enfranchising legislation of the Federal government was unwise, but he thought the latter was irrevocable.

¹⁷Joel Chandler Harris (ed.), Life of Henry W. Grady Including

Some newspapers in the North attacked Grady's "New South" speech, but, as a whole, it was favorably received in both North and South.¹⁸ The same reception was accorded to a speech delivered by Grady in November of the following year at the Augusta Exposition. Here, on his home ground and addressing an audience largely favorable to his views, Grady bitterly assailed the victorious North for imposing a mass of ignorant, corrupt Negro voters upon the South. To him, it was a part of the Northern plan to punish the Southern people for daring to secede. He went ahead to caution his receptive audience to realize that it was necessary for the South to maintain white solidarity in order to prevent an alien, ignorant, purchasable, and impulsive Negro electorate from assuming control. The Negro vote, he insisted, "can never be merged through logical or orderly currents into either of two parties, if two should present themselves. We cannot be rid of it. There it is; a vast mass of impulsive, ignorant, and purchasable votes."¹⁹ If there was any solution to this problem, according to the young journalist, it could only be arrived at by maintaining the political and social integrity of the white race. If a course of white solidarity was pursued all efforts of the Republicans to ensure Negro supremacy through the medium of Federal election laws would be to no avail. "The Negro," said Grady, "can never be established in dominion over the

His Writings and Speeches, A Memorial Volume Compiled by Mr. Henry W. Grady's Co-Workers on "The Constitution" (New York: Cassel Publishing Co., 1890), pp. 89-90.

¹⁸For an account of the reception accorded the speech see Rayford W. Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought, the Nadir, 1877-1901 (New York: The Dial Press, 1954), pp. 172-82. Logan is extremely critical of Grady.

¹⁹Harris (ed.), Life of Henry W. Grady, pp. 124-26.

white race of the South. The sword of Grant and the bayonets of his army could not maintain them in the supremacy they had won from the helplessness of our people." The situation must not, would not, and could not be reversed. "No sword," proclaimed Grady, "drawn by mortal men . . . can replace them in the supremacy from which they were cast down by our people, for the Lord God Almighty decreed otherwise when he created these races, and the flaming sword of His archangel will enforce His decree and work out His plan of unchangeable wisdom."²⁰

Grady's idea that it was the intention of the Republican party to attempt to dominate the South through the medium of the Negro vote and his view as to the necessity of the whites of his section to prevent this by remaining solid was expressed again and again. In a speech delivered at the Texas State Fair in Dallas on October 27, 1888, for example, he warned that "the supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever, and the domination of the negro race, resisted at all points, and at all hazards--because the white race is the superior race No race," he insisted, "has ever risen, or will ever rise above its ordained place."²¹ The colored race, he informed his audience, must be kept in its assigned position. The whites of the South must at all costs maintain their solidarity and prevent any possible recurrence of Negro domination.²²

²⁰Ibid., pp. 130-36.

²¹For the full text of the speech see the Atlanta Constitution, October 28, 1888. On the same day the Constitution carried opinions voiced by prominent Georgians to Grady's speech. Senator Colquitt said it was an able and eloquent speech which would be attacked by sectional demagogues in the North. Senator Brown said it was full of important facts and wholesome advice to the people of the entire nation.

²²Ibid.

Grady's interpretation of the dangers inherent for the South in the Negro vote did not result in this influential Southerner advocating the outright and complete disfranchisement of the colored race. His belief, however, in the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and of the absolute necessity for maintaining white supremacy at any cost associated him with that large group of Southerners who were radical in their attitude toward Negro suffrage.²³ Certainly he was never as moderate in his opinion as were some of those Bourbon leaders who in the halcyon days of Redemption had reveled in their new found power to the extent that they welcomed the colored man as an elector. It might be noted, however, that in the face of increased opposition from dissatisfied agrarian groups in the South and the increasing possibility of Federal legislation to ensure the Negro a free ballot and a fair count the vaunted moderation of these political directors began to erode and they moved nearer to the attitude expressed by the influential Georgia editor.

It is impossible to state with any accuracy that the Bourbon swing to radicalism began at any specific time for they generally continued to seek political support from the colored electorate during the entire period. Some of these individuals obviously became disenchanted with Negro suffrage earlier than did others.²⁴ For example, Joseph E. Brown,

²³Henry Watterson, a prominent Kentucky editor, had much the same view of the race question as did Grady. In 1885 he wrote that "the stronger race will govern; the weaker cannot. The trial was made and we saw what came of it." Henry Watterson, "The Reunited Union," North American Review, CXL (January, 1885), 28. In 1892 he wrote that to give the Negro "his freedom all at once was a doubtful experiment; to give him the franchise all at once was a dangerous adventure." Henry Watterson, "The Negro in America," Chautauquan, XV (April, 1892), 20-23.

²⁴In 1877 Charles Gayarre, Congressman from Louisiana, complained

a member of the Georgia Triumvirate, informed his colleagues in the United States Senate in 1881 that, while there was a free ballot and a fair count in his state, it would have been better for the country as a whole had the South been permitted to establish a qualified suffrage. The dangers inherent for the South and for the entire nation in the fact that the colored man was indiscriminately enfranchised was apparent because, he said, the Negroes "have no wisdom, knowledge, and some no virtue" ²⁵

The attitude expressed by Brown in 1881 became more common as the years of the decade passed into history. When the Bourbon leadership took up their pens in these years to defend the Southern position they were cautious to emphasize that there was a free ballot and a fair count in the South and that the rights of the colored population were fully protected. ²⁶ Yet, more and more they began to protest that the Negro vote was a corrupt and corrupting influence in the politics of their region and that enfranchisement had been an error because the colored masses were not

that it had been the purpose of the Radicals to place the colored man in a position where he could most harm the South--as an elector. Gayarre said that in those states where the Negro had been politically dominant "the excesses perpetrated under this reign of insane power are such that they will have to be softened by the historian, because truth would appear too much like exaggeration to be believed by posterity" Charles Gayarre, "The Southern Question," North American Review, CXXV (December, 1877), 483-96.

²⁵For a full account of this speech see Herbert Fielder, A Sketch of the Life and Times and Speeches of Joseph E. Brown (Springfield, Mass: Press of the Springfield Printing Co., 1883), pp. 642-49.

²⁶Alfred H. Colquitt, another member of the Georgia Triumvirate, vehemently denied that the Negro vote was suppressed in the South. Nevertheless, he said that "as for the white vote of the South, there is every reason why it should be 'solid;' the very instinct of self-preservation demanded that it be so." Alfred H. Colquitt, "Is the Negro Vote Suppressed?" Forum, IV (November, 1887), 268-75.

mentally equipped correctly to utilize this all-important privilege. For example, Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama wrote in 1884 that "all that has been done by Congress to elevate the negro race . . . has been to wage a conflict with the white race upon the question of caste, and to stimulate individual negroes to demand a social equality which they are not prepared to enjoy" As far as Morgan was concerned the "legislative remedies have failed to remove the negro race from the plane which they appear to have selected for their pursuit of happiness, in accordance with natural laws." To the Alabama Senator "this failure is definite, and it is folly to repeat the attempt."²⁷

A colleague of Morgan's in the United States Senate, James B. Eustis of Louisiana, was even more blatant in his indictment of the Negro race. Four years after Morgan had penned his article for the North American Review, Eustis proclaimed to all the world in an article prepared for the Forum that "the negro question remains a running sore in our body politic." Like Morgan he believed the Negro to be an inferior creature. "The Gulf Stream," he wrote, "that river in the ocean with its own current and higher temperature, is no more distinctly separated from the ocean than is the negro race from the human family, although a branch of it" It was his belief, he said, that the "condition of inequality between the negro and the white race, which has always existed and will always exist . . . springs from a consciousness of superiority in the white man and from a consciousness of inferiority in the negro" Eustis then concluded his philippic that "the negro today has every

²⁷John T. Morgan, "The Future of the Negro," North American Review, CXXXIX (July, 1888), 144-55.

reason to know that under no circumstance will the white people submit to his government and his domination."²⁸

Although the bitter indictment of the Negro by Eustis elicited an answer from the liberals, no prominent Southern politician found it necessary to deny that he was not essentially correct in his interpretation of the situation.²⁹ In fact, Southern political leaders who had formerly been moderate in their attitude toward Negro suffrage were almost as radical as was Eustis at the time he wrote his article. Indicative of this fact is the change in attitude of the foremost Bourbon, Wade Hampton, in the period between 1879 and 1888. In the first year Hampton was saying that "when the negro was made a citizen it followed, as a logical consequence, under the theory of our institutions, that he must become a voter. My objection to his enfranchisement," he said, "therefore, is confined to the time when, and the mode in which, this privilege was conferred upon him."³⁰ A short nine years later the South Carolina Senator was writing that anyone who had lived under the baleful supremacy of the Negro realized a recurrence of such domination would "involve total and absolute ruin to the South, and infinite and irreparable loss to the whole country." Hampton continued his lecture by noting that a large number of men at the

²⁸James B. Eustis, "Race Antagonism in the South," Forum, VI (October, 1888), 144-55.

²⁹The most cogent rebuttal of Eustis' argument was contained in a pamphlet written by a prominent clergyman and liberal. See Atticus G. Haygood, A Reply to Senator Eustis's Late Paper on Race Antagonisms (Nashville: Open Letter Club, 1889).

³⁰Quoted in William E. Chandler, "Our Southern Masters," Forum, IV (July, 1888), 515. Chandler insisted the Negro must have the ballot to protect his rights.

North who were ignorant of conditions in the South and of the characteristics of the colored race believed that the Negro, by right, should rule wherever he was in the majority. "How erroneous are their opinions," moaned Hampton, "and how sound are those of the southern people who have had the direful experience of negro supremacy." Enfranchisement of that race, he concluded, was a "crime against humanity, civilization, and Christianity."³¹

Although Hampton had obviously dropped his facade of moderation by 1888 he still deemed it necessary to qualify his statements against the Negro vote by insisting that the South would willingly accept an enfranchisement policy which would permit the better class of Negroes to exercise the ballot.³² Two years later, however, when there was an increased possibility that the colored people of his state would cooperate with the leaders of the agrarian movement in an effort to overthrow the Bourbons, he dropped all pretense of moderation. In 1890, a year when Congress was discussing the necessity of legislation to ensure the Negro of his right to vote Hampton penned an article for a Northern journal in which he stated that the colored man had changed little since he was first depicted on the monuments of Egypt. "A pregnant fact, . . ." he wrote, "is the white and black races are essentially different, not only in physical organization but in mental characteristics." He then cited the experiences of the Negro race in Liberia, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti to prove that the colored man was incapable of self-government.

³¹Wade Hampton, "What Negro Supremacy Means," Forum, V (June, 1888), 383-84.

³²Ibid., 385.

Surely, said Hampton, the Negro was "not fitted to take a part and a controlling one in shaping the destiny of that other race which has ruled and dominated the world since creation." Yet, according to Hampton, this was the position in which the Negro was placed by what he termed the ill-advised and unconstitutional laws which conferred the right of citizenship upon him. Nevertheless, Hampton accepted the fact that it would be difficult or impossible to deprive the members of that race of their right to vote. Consequently, his solution to the growing problem was to deport the Negroes--by their own consent--to a place where they "could work out their political destiny free from contact with the white race." If such a solution was impossible of attainment, however, Hampton said that he would "wish to see them scattered over the whole country, so that each State of our Union could have the benefit of their presence, or learn by actual experience how baleful an influence they exercise" ³³

The Senator from South Carolina was not the only Bourbon leader who became more radical in attitude toward the colored man and his right to vote, but because of his prominence and prestige his attitude commanded much attention. ³⁴ It was not, however, only politicians of the type represented by Hampton who expounded the radical viewpoint toward the subject of the Negro vote and what it signified for the South. Long

³³Wade Hampton, "The Race Problem," Arena, XI (July, 1890), 132-38.

³⁴For example, a Congressman from Kentucky wrote an article in which he used the Bible to prove that there always had been and would be discord between the races, but that there would be no problem if the Negro was scattered throughout the states. He warned that the whites were going to control public affairs in spite of laws which sought to give the colored man a greater voice. This was because Negroes were incapable of governing themselves and others. William C. P. Breckenridge, "The Race Question," Arena, XI (June, 1890), 39.

before Hampton, Colquitt, Vance, Morgan, and others of their ilk abandoned their moderate position other Southerners, some prominent; some not, set forth arguments against the right or reason for allowing the colored man to participate actively and freely in the Southern electoral process.

Almost at the outset of the Bourbon period individuals representing the radical attitude began to be heard on the subject of the Negro vote. In general they represented the thinking of the poor white class, the category of Southerners traditionally the most antagonistic toward the colored race. Representatives of this class early sought to prove that the most educated Negro was in no way equal to the lowest member of the Anglo-Saxon race. At the outset of the period, however, they were in a distinct minority among the literate group of Southern whites and consequently their wailings of despair fell on infertile political ground. Yet, as the years passed their forces were augmented by demagogues who sought to make political capital out of their traditional antagonism toward the Negro, and, thus, toward the end of the decade of the eighties the mouthings of the radicals against the colored man became more pronounced. Eventually, representatives of the philosophy they advanced were to dominate Southern politics--an event which foreboded eventual disfranchisement for a majority of the colored race.

As would be expected, the arguments advanced by the early radicals were largely based upon the thesis that there was an innate difference between white and black--a difference which precluded any possibility that the colored man would or could be accepted as an equal in any sense, social or political. R. L. Dabney, a prominent Virginia educator, expressed his sentiment in 1879 when he wrote that differences of color, alien blood,

savage morals, and a total absence of property-stake in the common weal, coupled with the propensity of the colored man for accepting "poisonous and malignant outside influences" demonstrated the perils attendant upon Negro suffrage.³⁵ Agreeing with this idea, but expressing it a little differently, was a South Carolina clergyman who informed the editor of the Nation in 1880 that "it was a great mistake to confer the franchise upon the negroes indiscriminately" because most of them were unworthy of such trust and their presence in the body politic was degrading since they could never blend with the whites as one people.³⁶ This attitude was seconded by another minister, the Reverend J. L. Tucker of Jackson, Mississippi, who informed an Episcopal Church conference at Richmond, Virginia in 1882 that the Negro lacked honesty, morality, and modesty. He would, according to Tucker, lie, cheat, and steal, and was a hypocrite who desired more than one wife. Thus, he insisted, "no one can do very much for the negro."³⁷

Other radicals who wrote in the eighties had little desire to see anything done for the colored man. Beginning about the middle of the decade these individuals increased the tempo of their attacks upon the colored race. Always they emphasized the differences between the races and proclaimed the superiority of the whites. This racist complex

³⁵R. L. Dabney, "Free Schools," Southern Planter and Farmer (January, 1879), p. 6.

³⁶J. H. T. [J. H. Tillinghast] to the Editor, Nation, XXXI (September 2, 1880), 170.

³⁷Quoted in the Lancet (Petersburg, Va.), November 11, 1882. This was a Negro newspaper and the editor, naturally prejudiced, said that Tucker's tirade was disgusting to every man of sense in the audience.

is well illustrated by a pamphlet written in 1886 by the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, Sidney M. Finger. This individual, Southern born but New England educated, maintained that claims of the Negro to equality of intellect or force of character with the Indo-European rested upon a hair-thin foundation. Finger stated that he did not know whether it was the size of the Negro's brain which marked him as inferior, but insisted that ". . . history is against the claims of the negro to equality with the white nations."³⁸ Finger also believed that the colored race was not morally or educationally worthy of the franchise, and in this attitude he was joined by a Virginian, Noah K. Davis, who in the same year complained that, in general, the Negro had no conception of the ballot except to use it as directed. This, Davis maintained, posed a distinct danger to Southern institutions because the colored man was an easy prey for the demagogue. "The silly negro," he wrote, "has been a blind and passive tool of his political master, used and abused as a mere instrument, degraded from a busy producer to an idle nuisance, allowed only to hold the stirrup for vaulting ambition."³⁹

That the colored man had been and was merely a political tool totally unaware of the responsibilities attached to the franchise privilege and consequently unworthy of its use came to be the keystone of the radical argument. A concomitant, however, was that members of the white

³⁸Sidney M. Finger, Educational and Religious Interests of the Colored People of the South (Washington: National Educational Association, 1886), p. 1. A copy of this pamphlet may be found at the University of Virginia Library.

³⁹Noah K. Davis, "The Negro in the South," Forum, I (April, 1886), 129.

race, regardless of their social and economic position or of educational qualifications, were fully and freely entitled to the franchise simply because they belonged to the superior race. For example, Horace S. Fulkerson of Mississippi wrote in 1887 that "color has much if not everything to do with the relation of races to civilization In so far as the races . . . are concerned race characteristics, determined by color, are as immutable as any of the laws of nature" ⁴⁰ Fulkerson, insisting that "the benign influence of American slavery . . . was to that race a beneficence," proclaimed to all that enfranchisement of the colored men loosed "a flood tide originating on the benighted shores of Africa to mingle with a stream purified by the learning, the wisdom, the valor, and the patriotism of countless ages." ⁴¹ This action, he complained with vehemence, was a sacrilege and a "degradation of the highest privilege belonging to a civilized man!" ⁴² Enfranchising the colored men, he insisted, had tainted and degraded the ballot for all time because no one could possibly respect its exercise by the ignorant mass of corrupt Negroes. "It is no palliation of the offense," he maintained, "to be told that some white men are no better. Why increase an evil--make it fourfold when it is only

⁴⁰H. S. Fulkerson, The Negro; As He was; As He is; As He Will Be (Vicksburg: Commercial Herald Printers, 1887), p. 4. Fulkerson was born in Kentucky in 1818, but removed to Mississippi in 1836. In 1861 he was sent to Europe as a special agent to purchase arms for the Confederacy. After his return he served the Confederacy in various capacities until, in the last stages of the war, he became a corporal in the army. In 1867 he moved his family to Vicksburg where he engaged in the merchantile business until his death in 1881. For a more complete account of his life see H. S. Fulkerson, Random Recollections of Early Days in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Otto Claiborne, 1937).

⁴¹Fulkerson, The Negro; As He Was; As He Will Be, p. 41.

⁴²Ibid., p. 43.

single? And it should not be forgotten," Fulkerson advised, "that the ballot is the birthright of the native born white man"43

To say that the rantings of Fulkerson were based upon emotionalism and upon an obvious hatred of the colored race and should be regarded in that light would be to ignore the fact that he was expressing the opinion of many of the less literate and less vocal members of the radical group. Individuals associated with this shadowy, ill-defined mass disliked their colored neighbors so intensely that they were anxious to see the Negro--a race they regarded as something less than human--relegated to a position where he could not compete in any manner. It is not surprising, then, to find other Southerners giving voice to the opinion that colored men were entitled to little consideration. Raising their voices in lamentation on the subject of the Negro and the elective franchise, for example, were such other individuals as Frank G. Ruffin of Virginia and a prominent educator from Kentucky, Nathaniel S. Shaler.⁴⁴

In the year 1888 and again in 1890 Ruffin published articles which constituted nothing less than tirades against the Negro race. The first was submitted to the editors of the Forum and the Century, but when they

⁴³Ibid., p. 70.

⁴⁴Others who took a dim view of Negro suffrage included Joel Chandler Harris, Walter B. Hill, and John C. Wicliffe. Hill wrote that the South "is not to be ruled by the blacks, nor by white men at home or from abroad who owe their election exclusively to the blacks." Walter B. Hill, "Uncle Tom Without a Cabin," Century Magazine, V (April, 1884), 882. Wicliffe wrote in 1893, after the Bourbon period, that the Negro "stands just where he did twenty-five years ago--a cipher on the political black-board, valuable only when controlled by other figures, and in nowise affecting the result by reasons of his own worth." John C. Wicliffe, "Negro Suffrage a Failure: Shall We Abolish It?" Forum, XIV (February, 1893), 801. Wicliffe was of the opinion that it was not only feasible but necessary to abolish Negro suffrage.

refused to accept it Ruffin published his philippic at his own expense. In the pamphlet, innocently entitled The Negro as a Social and Political Factor, the Virginian reiterated the often-expressed view that Negro suffrage was imposed upon the South as a punishment for secession and as a means of advancing the cause of the Republican party. At the outset, according to Ruffin, the colored men had little conception of the responsibilities attached to the exercise of the ballot, but, guided by their Republican mentors, they used and were using it in an effort to achieve social equality in the South. To Ruffin such a prospect was anathema. The colored men, he said, were "not descendants of Republican barbarians or pagans, as we are, but of savages; from the beginning of history a race of slaves and despots, lechers, polygamists, cannibals . . . poisoners, thieves, having no record of independent progress"⁴⁵ What possible good could it do, he asked, to give high political rights to such a people? Certainly enfranchisement could not cause any advancement of that race and those who supported a continuation of such an affair could only be regarded as enemies of the South.⁴⁶

Ruffin's first pamphlet was published during the course of a bitter political campaign in his home state, but in 1890 he purposefully

⁴⁵Frank G. Ruffin, The Negro as a Political and Social Factor (Richmond: J. W. Randolph and English, Publishers, 1883), p. 3. A copy of this pamphlet is located in the University of Virginia Library.

⁴⁶To those who believed the suffrage was a civilizing force Ruffin had a word: "Fools and blind! As if there was a vivida vis, a living force in citizenship, to make men fit for freedom. As if the varnish of suffrage could cure inherent defects of the Ethiopian's inner nature any more than whitewash could change his inherent skin!" Ibid. Ruffin warned the people of his state that political solidarity was essential to the maintenance of white supremacy. Ibid., p. 46.

waited until after the canvass of that year to publish his solution to the race issue. It was his contention that Northern idealists and the leaders among Southern Negroes considered miscegenation to be the ideal solution to the problem confronting the races. The aspirations of the colored man, he informed the eighty per cent of the Southern whites that he considered to reside in the rural areas, "lead them to demand not only civil, but social equality; and the greatest stimulus to their aspirations is that the time may come when they can all have white wives."⁴⁷ Ruffin continued his race baiting by insisting that if the Negro was permitted to remain as a permanent resident of the South and continued to be allowed to exercise the franchise there was a possibility that he would eventually dominate the whites. It is, he said, "a portentous evil to have this race as a permanent factor in . . . politics" It was intolerable to consider the prospect of that race living in Virginia upon the same social plane as the white citizens because "that insures degradation of the latter into mongrels."⁴⁸ Consequently, Ruffin concluded that because the Negro was a savage race the only sane solution to the problem was to bodily deport them to Africa. This could easily be brought about, he believed, because the colored people would desire to emigrate if educational and political advantages were withdrawn by all of the states--an event which he

⁴⁷Frank G. Ruffin, White or Mongrel? A Pamphlet on the Deportation of Negroes from Virginia to Africa (Richmond: Everett Wadley Co., 1890), pp. preface, 5. Ruffin said that the twenty per cent of the population residing in the cities and making money wanted to leave the race question alone for fear of agitating the North. Eighty per cent of the population, however, were rural and since there was a coming conflict with industrialists, especially the railroad interests, must gain political strength by getting rid of the Negroes.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 7.

thought should be immediately accomplished.⁴⁹

Ruffin's opinions of the Negro, expressed through the medium of pamphlets because reputable periodicals would not accept his articles for publication, were symptomatic of the attitude of many people in the South toward the members of the colored race. Professor N. S. Shaler, for example, agreed that the Negro was little more than a savage. In fact, he wrote in 1890, the colored race was nearer the anthropoid or pre-human ancestry of man than other variety such as the Aryan, Tartar, or Semitic folk.⁵⁰ No where else was this more evident than in the field of politics. Not only did the colored men make an ignominious failure in government when they were in control of the Southern states, but they became the tool of the basest type of whites during and after that time. To give the ballot any meaning, wrote Shaler, the man who casts it must have a keen and intelligent interest in public affairs and the Negro did not possess this particular attribute. Since the colored man had risen little above the savage state, he said, while writing upon the subject of proposed Federal election laws, "it is more than absurd to devise legislative plans for making him free to use his vote. The enfranchisement can come only by education"⁵¹ To Shaler, then, as to most radicals it was necessary to effect a cessation or at the minimum a limitation upon Negro participation in politics until he could be lifted from his state of savagery. Only by so doing could the white civilization be preserved.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰N. S. Shaler, "The Nature of the Negro," Arena, II (December, 1890), 23.

⁵¹Ibid., 23-35.

The radical attitude toward the Negro and his right to the franchise was expressed in various ways and with ever-increasing frequency during the decade of the eighteen-eighties--a fact which demonstrates the fallacy of the oft-expressed idea that the colored race was illegally but effectively disfranchised when the Southern whites assumed political control with the end of Reconstruction. Had not large numbers of Negroes still exercised the ballot during this decade there would have been no reason for the increase in arguments as to why the colored vote posed a distinct threat to the South and to Southern institutions; there would have been no reason for a change in the predominant theme of "the good old Southern darky" to one which emphasized the "bigoty nigger." Nevertheless, these changes did occur and before the turn of the decade the emphasis was on the fact that it was necessary for the future of the South that some restriction be placed upon the exercise of the franchise by the colored race.

That the radicals could agree that the Northern conqueror had imposed Negro suffrage upon the South as a method of punishment is obvious. By the end of the decade an urbane journalist such as Henry Grady, a politician like Wade Hampton, or a rabble-rouser of the type represented by Frank Ruffin could agree that the Negro should be removed as a factor in the political life of the South. There was, however, a lack of balance among the radicals. They were not always in unison as to the methods which should be utilized to accomplish the desired end or, for that matter, on the actual extent to which the Negro did pose a threat. Grady, for example, emphasized white solidarity as the means whereby the colored man could be controlled. On the other hand, the more radical Ruffin went to

the extreme and suggested that deportation to Africa was the only solution.

The middle of the radical position came to be occupied by the Bourbon leadership. These individuals had based much of their program upon the fact that they were best able to guide and direct the colored race because of past experience and that the rights of the Negro were safe as long as they were in control. As consummate politicians, however, they had been successful in their efforts to convince the mass of Southern whites--a group which was by nature radical in its attitude toward the Negro vote--that it was requisite for the whites to remain solid if they did not desire the colored man to regain his Reconstruction-era importance. Thus, during most of the period they emphasized that the whites of the South must accept Bourbon decisions in all areas of thought in order to maintain the vaunted white superiority. Nevertheless, some of the Southerners who were radical in their attitude toward the colored man and who were disenchanted with Bourbon economic policies early rebelled and launched Independent political parties. Generally, such movements attracted little real support because the Democratic party was associated with the idea of white supremacy. By the end of the decade of the eighties, however, representatives of the rural Southerners were endeavoring to gain control of the Democratic party. Not only were they advocates of white supremacy, but they were the exponents of a program of economic reform which would supposedly be of benefit to the rural white. In an effort to counter their attack the Bourbons changed the complexion of their attitude toward the Negro vote, but the die was cast and their reversal in attitude provided only a brief respite from the inevitable. Thus, in the decade of the nineties the domination of the Democratic party

went to the representatives of the rural white Southerner, and the days of the Negro as an elector were numbered.

CHAPTER VIII

CLOSING THE DOOR

The years encompassed within the decade of the eighteen-nineties constitute a pivotal period in the history of the Negro for it was during this time that the colored elector in the Southern states was relegated to the political limbo from which he had emerged after the Civil War. For a very brief period after that conflict the Negro, protected by Federal law and bayonets, had freely enjoyed the political privilege which gave substance to the fact that he was truly emancipated. Unfortunately for the political future of the colored men, however, the elective franchise had been granted less because the Radical Republicans had a real desire to promote the welfare of the freedmen than because they hoped to use the Negro votes as an instrument through which their personal power and prestige and that of their party might be enhanced. Through the utilization of the colored vote the Carpetbagger and Scalawag were, for varying periods of time, successful in their efforts to dominate and exploit the governments of all those states which had experimented in rebellion. Their employment of the Negro vote, coupled with the saturnalia of corruption with which their administrations were charged, had, however, an effect upon the mass of Southern whites which the Radicals had not anticipated. Faced with the dire prospect of continued control by the Republican-Negro combination and its attendant social, economic,

and political leveling, the whites of the South largely subordinated the differences which had divided them in the ante-bellum period and achieved virtual political solidarity. Led by the "Confederate Brigadiers," the nominal heirs of the old aristocracy, the whites in state after state employed legal, semi-legal, and extra-legal methods to drive from power the Republicans and their colored allies. In state after state their efforts were marked with success until home rule was a fact instead of a dream in all of the former Confederate states.

Restoration of home rule in the last of the Southern states came in 1877 as the result of a bargain between Northern Republicans and Southern-Democrats--an alliance not at all rare in contemporary politics. When the election of 1876 was complete there was a dispute over whether the electoral votes of Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina belonged to Tilden or to Hayes. Although a Republican-controlled electoral commission determined that the votes of each of these states should be counted for Hayes, there was the threat that a Democratic filibuster in the House of Representatives would prevent his inauguration. With the assistance of Southern Democrats, however, the filibuster was broken and Hayes was chosen as the successor of Grant. In exchange for this assistance Hayes, shortly after his inauguration, withdrew support from the Radical claimants to the governorship in South Carolina and Louisiana and also recalled the last of the Federal occupation forces from the South.¹

¹An important part of the political bargain which was concluded contained the promise of the Republicans that they would assist in the securing of a Federal subsidy for the construction of the Texas and Pacific railroad and other internal improvements. Promises of the withdrawal of the troops from South Carolina and Louisiana were made repeatedly between December, 1876, and March, 1877. When a Republican

The beginning of Hayes' conciliatory policy toward the South was full of portent for the Negro. On the day after the election, when he believed Tilden to be the victor, Hayes wrote that "I don't care for myself; and the party, yes, and the country, too, can stand it; but I do care for the poor colored men of the South The result will be that the Southern people will practically treat the constitutional amendments as nullities, and then the colored man's fate will be worse than when he was in slavery."² After Southern Congressmen assisted in his election, however, the tenor of Hayes' statements on the subject underwent a change. In September of 1877, while on a "good-will" tour of the South, he continually reiterated the idea that reconciliation had truly been effected and that harmony between the sections would continue to prevail. Even more important to the Negroes, however, was his assertion in Atlanta that their ". . . rights and interests would be safer if this great mass of intelligent white men were left alone by the general government."³

Although Hayes had reached the conclusion before the end of his administration that the political rights of the colored men were not being respected in the South little effort was made by him or his Republican

newspaper appeared to repudiate these promises, the famous Wormley Hotel conference was held on February 26 and 27, 1877. Apparently the promise of withdrawal of troops was reaffirmed for Southerners respected their agreement. For a complete account of the economic and political bargain which was concluded see C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951), especially pp. 8, 25, 195-96, 201-02, 445-56.

²Charles Richard Williams (ed.), Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes, Nineteenth President of the United States (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1922-26), I, 488-89.

³Quoted in Atlanta Constitution, September 22, 1877.

successors to overturn the agreement of 1877. Investigating commissions were organized in several instances by the Republican-controlled Congress, but no concrete action was taken upon their findings prior to the introduction of the Lodge bill in 1890. Undoubtedly one reason for this was that the conservative Bourbons were closely akin to the Republicans in their political philosophy and their support in Congress often was valuable in the implementation of the Republican program. Nevertheless, the fact that the Republican party maintained its organization in the South and often endorsed anti-Bourbon candidates such as Mahone in Virginia made the colored man remain an important factor in the political life of that section. While some members of that race willingly associated themselves with the Democratic party, the general course of events in national elections saw them maintaining their allegiance to the party responsible for emancipation. This fact enabled the Bourbons, whenever revolt against their program was threatened, to demand that the Southern whites give undeviating loyalty to the party of white supremacy. Otherwise, they insisted, a revival of the Republican-Negro combination and a return to the excesses of Reconstruction was more than a distinct possibility.

Although during the period of the eighteen-eighties many Southern whites expounded upon the desirability of effecting the disfranchisement of the colored race, as long as the Bourbons were in control they prevented this radical suggestion from being brought to fruition. Undoubtedly a major reason for their posture of moderation was their conviction that Northern liberals must be convinced that Hayes' early assertion that the political future of the Negro was safe in the hands of the Southern whites was correct. Otherwise, their conservative allies

among the Republicans in Congress might be pressured into enacting legislation guaranteeing a free ballot and a fair count. Such an event would result in a revival of the Republican party in the South and would threaten Bourbon hegemony. Another, and probably more basic reason, that these leaders did not succumb to the radical argument that disfranchisement was necessary was that they often found the colored vote useful to their own purposes. While the Negro vote was primarily available to the Republican party in campaigns with national overtones that party, as previously noted, made no real effort to contest for control of the Southern state governments after 1876. Consequently, such real opposition as was manifested to the Bourbon program came from dissatisfied elements within the Democratic party. When revolt occurred, and as the eighties progressed it happened with increasing frequency, the Bourbons found that through the medium of fusion arrangements they could win the support of the Negro leaders and through them the vote of the colored electorate. Such an event not only enabled the Bourbons correctly to inform Northern doubters that the Negro was permitted to vote at the South, but it also contributed to the maintenance in power of the group which had led the successful battle for home rule.

To the Bourbons the continuation of their class in political control was basic to the economic advancement of the South. Traditionally that region was one in which the primary economic orientation was agricultural. Prior to the Civil War it had been not only the basis of the wealth but of the entire social structure. Just as a society based upon slavery had crumpled under the assault of Union arms so, the Bourbons were convinced, had that conflict amply demonstrated that there was an

inherent weakness in an economy based almost exclusively upon agriculture. Consequently, after Redemption had freed the South from the political control of the victorious North they began to insist that if their section was to rise phoenix-like from the ashes it must subordinate the agrarian tradition and take advantage of the wealth which was latent in its abundant natural resources and cheap labor. The South, they preached with an almost religious fervor, must emulate the North by fully developing the industrial and commercial potential with which it was endowed.

Diversification of the economy of the South, the Bourbons early realized, would not be possible on the desired scale with the relatively small amount of native capital which was available for investment. Thus, it was requisite for that section to attract funds from the purses of Northern investors. Such would be possible, however, only if there was a more favorable climate for business endeavor in the South than in the North.⁴ It therefore became the purpose of the Bourbons to convince potential investors that the economic weather in their section was as balmy as the climate of Florida. Southern journals launched a continuous propaganda campaign in which the natural resources awaiting exploration and the plentiful supply of cheap and docile labor was emphasized. Real opportunities for investment, they insisted, could no where be better found than in the South.⁵ More important to the actual and potential investor,

⁴It might be noted that the first real effort at industrialization came in the effort to bring the textile mills to the cotton fields. In the eighties this endeavor assumed the proportions of a religious crusade, and it was accomplished primarily with capital raised in the South. For a discussion of this campaign see Brodaus Mitchell, The Rise of the Cotton Mills in the South (Johns Hopkins University Studies, Vol. XXXIX, No. 20; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1921).

⁵Among the newspapers which evidence this are the Atlanta Journal,

however, was the fact that during the eighties the Bourbon-controlled legislatures in state after state enacted legislation which was friendly to the business community. Liberal franchises, subsidies, and tax advantages were freely bestowed upon receptive railroads and manufacturing concerns--a fact which brought dividends as the decade rolled to its conclusion. For example, the railroad mileage in the South in 1890 was more than double that which had been in existence only ten years before. Textile plants had blossomed amidst the cotton fields, the tobacco industry was greatly expanded, and blast furnaces were belching smoke in cities which had not even existed prior to the Civil War.⁶ Truly, the Bourbon's politics were changing the economic complexion of the South.

Progress is seldom possible without sacrifice and in the South it was the agrarian element that made it possible. Undoubtedly the farmers of this region believed that a restoration of home rule would free them from onerous taxation and similar economic policies which had prevailed during Reconstruction. To the disgust of the farmer, however, Redemption did not result in any marked improvement in his position. In essence the agrarian element had merely replaced one group which was oriented toward the business community with another, and upon them had fallen, as one Mississippi newspaper complained, "the burden of taxation, out of all proportion to the value of their property or their ability to pay."⁷

Raleigh News and Observer, New Orleans Picayune, and, especially, the Atlanta Constitution.

⁶For a succinct summary of the success attendant upon the efforts of the South to diversify the economy see Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the Cities, 1878-98, Vol. X of A History of American Life, eds. Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon R. Fox (13 vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1927-48), pp. 1-22.

Bourbon efforts to encourage industrialization through favorable franchises and tax benefits were not, however, the only causal factor in the depressed condition of Southern agriculture during the eighties.⁸ On the national scene the policies pursued by the Republican party worked to the disadvantage of the Southern farmer as well as to that of his counterpart in other sections. One of the primary complaints of the rural element in the South was that the business-oriented Republican party insisted upon maintaining a high protective tariff. This not only resulted in the farmer having to pay a higher price for his manufactured products, but, since other nations usually retaliated by imposing a high tax on the commodities they imported from the United States, usually agricultural products, the farmer also lost a portion of his market.

While the tariff course of the national government was unsatisfactory to the agrarian element another aspect of the Republican's policy was even more bitterly disliked. Farmers throughout the nation, faced with a continual decline in the price received for their products,⁹

⁷Jackson Clarion, December 15, 1886, quoted in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, Vol. IX of A History of the South, eds. Wendell H. Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947--), p. 187.

⁸In the former Confederate states where cotton continued to be the primary crop, all but Florida and Virginia, the number of farms increased from 449,936 in 1860 to 1,110,294 in 1880. During the same period the average size of a farm declined from 347 to 156 acres. In 1880 the census counted as a farm any land worked by a family. Thus, if a plantation owned by one individual was tilled by several tenants each of the smaller tracts would be counted as a single farm. By 1880 some 301,738 of the farms in the cotton states were worked by tenants. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Agriculture, III, 25.

⁹The average price of a bushel of corn in the years between 1874 and 1877 was 40.9 cents. The price declined until the average between 1894 and 1897 was 29.7. Prices received for cotton declined even more

increasingly voiced their dissatisfaction with the government's acceptance of the idea of the necessity for currency contraction. In all sections of the nation farmers complained that at the same time the price they received for their crops was declining the amount of their debts when measured in the terms of production was increasing.¹⁰ This, coupled with the apparent favoritism of the government toward business, convinced the farmer in every section that he was the unloved in the American economic system.

While the downward trend in the prices received was a common grievance of farmers throughout the nation in the eighteen-eighties, the Southern farmer was convinced that his position was worse than that of his Northern counterpart. Not only was he saddled with an outmoded tax structure with land bearing a disproportionate share of the tax burden, but he often found that it was difficult for him to borrow money. In the North and West the farmer could usually secure a loan by mortgaging his land to the local bank, but the Southern farmer was not so fortunate. Not only was the banking system of the South still dislocated as a result of the war, but the value of land in that section was too small to make it attractive for loans.¹¹ Also, many of the Southern farmers did not own

from a percentage standpoint. While the price of corn fell 32.8% in these years that of cotton declined 47.7%. In monetary terms the price of cotton fell from an average of 11.1 cents a pound in the period of 1874-77 to 5.8 cents between 1894-97. John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), p. 56.

¹⁰In other words, due to currency contraction there was less money in circulation and it was consequently more difficult to obtain. Thus, a farmer who had borrowed money when his wheat was bringing one dollar per bushel would often find it required twice as many bushels a few years later to meet his fixed obligations.

their land, but instead tilled the acres belonging to someone else for a share of the crop. Consequently, the funds they so desperately needed for seed, tools, fertilizer, draft animals, and supplies had to be secured from some agency other than a bank. In the South this agency came to be a local supply merchant. This individual, also a Bourbon, would advance credit to the farmer, at a usurious rate of interest, in the form of supplies.¹² Once a farmer had concluded an agreement with a merchant he was required to restrict his business to that individual until the original obligation had been paid. Often the crop which he produced in a single year was not sufficient to meet his debt, and he was forced to place another lien on his next crop.¹³ The ultimate effect of this situation,

¹¹The situation in regard to banking in the South thirty years after the war can be seen from the fact that in 1895 there was in the whole country one bank for every 16,600 people. At the same time there was in all of the cotton states but Texas one bank for every 58,130 people. In Georgia there were 123 counties in 1894 which had no incorporated bank of any kind. Figures cited in Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 183.

¹²Not only was the interest rate extremely high, but the farmer also was faced with a two-price system, the cash price and the credit price.

¹³The farmer not only bought in the highest market, but he usually was forced to sell in the lowest. As soon as his crop was harvested his obligation to the merchant was due and he was forced to sell his crop instead of holding it for a higher price. Usually, too, the merchant insisted upon the production of a crop with which he was familiar, which always would command some sort of a cash price, and which could not be consumed by the farmer and his family. Thus, despite Bourbon efforts to secure crop diversification, the Southern farmer generally produced cotton and tobacco during this period. Many authors have examined the effect of the crop-lien system upon the South. See Matthew B. Hammond, The Cotton Industry; An Essay in American Economic History (New York: American Economic Association, 1877), George K. Holmes, "The Peons of the South," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, IV (Philadelphia: The Academy, 1893), 265-74; Benjamin B. Kendrick, "Agrarian Discontent in the South, 1880-1900," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), pp. 265-72.

given legal sanction by the Bourbon-controlled and business-oriented legislatures, was the development of a system of debt peonage in the South.

The economic ills of the Southern farmer, aggravated and compounded by the policies of the Bourbons, made that class ripe for political revolt as the decade of the eighties rolled to a conclusion. Earlier farmer-oriented movements had not had any lasting effect upon the South because the agrarian element of that section was convinced that any division in the party of white supremacy would result in a revival of Negro-Republican rule and further social and economic leveling. Consequently, the first real attack upon Bourbon political hegemony came late in the decade of the eighties from the agrarian element organized within the Southern Farmers' Alliance. The genesis of this movement came in 1875 when a group of small farmers in Lampasas County, Texas, organized for the purpose of protecting themselves against land syndicates and cattle kings. The movement spread to a few other Texas counties, but in the Greenback campaign of 1878 it was beset with internal political dissension and was disbanded. During the early eighties, however, the Texas Alliance, largely due to the efforts of Dr. C. W. Macune, was revived and expanded. In January of 1887 a meeting was held at Waco, and, despite the efforts of some divisive groups to create dissension, the delegates voted to consolidate with the Louisiana Farmers' Union in a new organization--the National Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union of America, commonly termed the Farmers' Alliance.¹⁴

¹⁴Macune was elected president of the new organization. Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 188-91.

Shortly after the new organization was completed recruiting teams were sent into all of the cotton states with the evangelistic message that effective cooperation would result in a mitigation of the economic ills suffered by the agrarian class. The verbal attack upon the policies of the Bourbons and of the national government was a clarion call to the benighted farmer. In almost every state individual farmers and independent agrarian organizations, convinced that the program offered by the Alliance would improve their financial situation, rushed to cast their lot with the new movement.¹⁵ Share-croppers and cash tenants, small land owners and large, thus demonstrated their belief that the new economic order of the Bourbon benefited only a few.

The organizational success achieved by the Alliance in the South did not end the efforts of agrarian leaders in that section to effect a combination of class-conscious farmers which could successfully challenge the entrenched political parties. In 1889 an attempt was made to merge with a similar agricultural group, the Northern Alliance, which had blossomed among the dissatisfied farmers of the Midwest. An effort was made at consolidation of the two organizations in a joint convention which was held at Saint Louis in that year, but, largely because the Southern leaders insisted that "secrecy" must be maintained, the attempt came to naught.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the two Alliances did recognize that the

¹⁵The largest of these was the Agricultural Wheel which was organized in Arkansas in 1882 and quickly spread into surrounding states. By 1884 it claimed over a half million members. Consolidation of the Wheel and the Alliance was completed in 1889. Also swelling the ranks of the Alliance were the over one million members of the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Cooperative Union. This group was organized at Houston in 1886 and soon spread into all of the Southern states. Ibid., pp. 191-92.

¹⁶It should be noted that the leaders of the Southern Alliance,

problems of the farmers were everywhere alike. They salvaged something from the meeting by issuing a joint statement in which it was proposed that the Federal government should own and operate the railroads, national banks should be abolished, a monetary program which would place more currency in circulation should be adopted, and legislation regulating the activities of the trusts should be enacted. Obviously, the class-conscious rural element was in the mood for revolt in 1889.

The socialistic program advocated by the Alliance was anathema to the Bourbons of the South as well as to the business-oriented Republicans at the North. Establishment of cooperative marketing and purchasing agencies by the Alliance in some states, agitation for the "subtreasury plan," boycotts against those newspapers and their advertisers which attacked the farmers' movement, and sundry other programs which were alien to the philosophy of the New South early convinced the Bourbons that the Southern Alliance posed a distinct threat to the continuation of their program.¹⁷

representing an organization superior from a numerical standpoint, did make some concessions. They accepted, for instance, the name of the new organization suggested by Northern leaders and also agreed to admit Negroes into the Superior Council. Although no new organization was created, the Southern Alliance gained ground due to the fact that some state organizations seceded from the Northern Alliance to follow the Southerners. *Ibid.*, pp. 200-01. See also Leonidas L. Polk, "The Farmers' Discontent," North American Review, CLIII (July, 1891), 5-12.

¹⁷One aspect of the Alliance program which was bitterly disliked by the Bourbons was the "sub-treasury plan," the brain-child of Macune. This called for the establishment of storage facilities and a subtreasury office in every county that offered for sale at least one-half million dollars worth of farm products in a year. The farmer would be allowed to store his nonperishable crops in the warehouses and to receive certificates of deposit which would entitle him to a loan of legal tender notes equal to eighty per cent of the market value of the crops he had stored. For this loan he would pay one per cent plus a small charge for storage

Equally alarming to the Bourbons as the socialistic ideas advocated by the farmers was the possibility that the Alliance might turn to political action in an effort to implement its program. In the early years of its existence the leaders of the Southern Alliance, conscious of the fact that earlier farmer-oriented movements had been wrecked because of their revolt from the proscriptive one-party system, had shunned political action. Nevertheless, there was the possibility that this situation would not continue to prevail. Consequently, the Bourbons increasingly made radical pronouncements upon the subject of the colored vote, warning that any split in the party of white supremacy would result in a revival of the Republican-Negro combination.

That the radical arguments advanced by the Bourbons in regard to the colored vote made an impression upon the leaders of the Southern Alliance is evident from the situation which developed in the elections which were held in the South during 1890. Early in that year the Alliance, now led by the able North Carolinian, Leonidas L. Polk,¹⁸ began its first successful revolt against the political and economic domination of the entrenched Bourbons. Unlike the Greenbacker and some of the Independent parties, however, the Alliance sought to accomplish its ends by dominating the state nominating conventions of the Democratic party.¹⁹

and handling. For a more detailed account see John D. Hicks, "The Sub-Treasury: A Forgotten Plan for the Relief of Agriculture," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XV (December, 1928), 355-73.

¹⁸For an evaluation of Polk's contributions see Clarence Poe, "L. L. Polk, A Great Agrarian Leader in a Fifty-Year Perspective," South Atlantic Quarterly, XLI (October, 1942), 405-15.

¹⁹Potential candidates were informed that they must measure up to the "Alliance Yardstick." Generally, this meant they must sign a pledge to support the Alliance program.

By so doing they lessened the possibility that the Bourbons would be able to defeat their purposes by raising the cry that solidarity in that party was necessary if white supremacy was to be maintained. This political strategy of the class-conscious Alliance leaders paid dividends because signal victories were won in almost every Southern state. In Georgia, for example, the Alliance chose the governor, three-fourths of the senators, four-fifths of the state representatives, and elected six Congressmen, one of whom was Thomas E. Watson.²⁰ The Alliance of Tennessee secured the election of the governor and dominated the legislature to such an extent that one historian has said that it was "distinctly agrarian in character."²¹ In South Carolina, where the Alliance had been unsuccessful in previous elections, the Bourbon dynasty fell under the onslaught of the aroused farmers. Benjamin Tillman was elected governor and the state legislature was filled with his agrarian supporters.²² Texas voters

²⁰For details on the Georgia election see Alex M. Arnett, The Populist Movement in Georgia, Vol. 104: Studies in History, Economics and Public Law of Columbia University (New York: Columbia University, 1922), pp. 114-26.

²¹Daniel M. Robison, Bob Taylor and the Agrarian Revolt in Tennessee (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), p. 148.

²²Tillman launched his campaign for the gubernatorial nomination in January of 1890 when there appeared the Shell Manifesto--written by Tillman but published over the name of G. W. Shell, President of the South Carolina Farmers' Association. In this address it was stated that the farmers had sought to secure economic and governmental reforms for five years, but that all their efforts had been thwarted by the entrenched politicians. Tillman said the whites of the state had accepted the Bourbon program only because they feared division would result in a renewal of Negro rule. He promised that he and his supporters would rectify the ills suffered by the masses, but would do it through the agency of the Democratic party. For the text of the Shell Manifesto see Henry S. Commager (ed.), Documents of American History (Two volumes in one, 4th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), II, 138-42. After Tillman's nomination a North Carolina newspaper said he was to be con-

elected James Hogg, not truly an Alliance man but giving lip service to its principles, and in nearly every other Southern state the farmers elected Congressmen or numerous members of the state legislature.²³ Throughout the South the elation of the agrarian element knew no bounds. One jubilant member of that class, when the results of the election became known, was moved to write that "being Democrats and in the majority we took possession of the Democratic party."²⁴

Although the Alliance had won a resounding victory some of its more important members, among them Leonidas Polk, were already convinced that it would not be politically wise to continue within the Democratic party.²⁵ They believed that the program of the farmers would have a

demned for basing his campaign on the points he had made prominent and for his disreputable and demagogical method of securing office. He was to be commended, however, for making his fight within the Democratic party. Raleigh News and Observer, September 13, 1890. For the best account of Tillman's life see Francis B. Simkins, Pitchfork Ben Tillman, South Carolinian (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944).

²³In Alabama between 75 and 80 of the 133 Assemblymen were supporters of the Alliance, but Reuben F. Kolb, the state leader, was defeated in his bid for the governor's nomination. Florida saw 52 of the 100 seats in the state legislature filled by members of the Alliance, and also a member of that organization was chosen to serve in the United States Senate. Mississippi elected two Alliance members to Congress. Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 203.

²⁴Quoted in ibid., p. 204.

²⁵At the annual Alliance convention, which met at Ocala, Florida, in December, 1890, Western delegates attempted to secure Southern approval of the Populist party. The conservative element, led by Macune, preferred to continue working through the Democratic party, and was able to secure the passage of a resolution postponing consideration of a third party until February, 1892. Macune warned Congress that if they did not meet the farmers' demands a third party was inevitable. New York Herald, December 9, 1890, quoted in ibid., p. 236. At this meeting the Alliance demands were revised to emphasize the "sub-treasury plan" and other Southern ideas. The so-called "Ocala Platform" later became the primary guide of the Populists. For the text of this platform see Commager (ed.),

chance of being brought to fruition if an agreement could be concluded with organized labor and a third party formed to drive the traditional parties from power. Also interested, in fact pushing the idea of a third political force, were the farmer organizations of the Midwest who, unable to gain concessions from the two major parties, had campaigned as Populists or as other third party groups in 1890.

Despite the fact that some of the prominent agrarian leaders in the South were interested in the idea of a third party, an event of the year 1890 prevented the immediate conclusion of such an arrangement. Traditionally, the small farmer class of the South was antagonistic toward their colored neighbor and they had long heeded the warnings voiced by the Bourbons that a split in the party of white supremacy would result in the Negro again becoming politically powerful. This warning was given a semblance of validity even before the electorate went to the polls in 1890 when Congressman Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts introduced a bill in the House of Representatives calling for Federal control of elections.²⁶

Documents of American History, II, p. 142. A resolution was also adopted at Ocala in which the white Alliance protested against the Lodge bill. U. S., Congressional Record, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., XXII, Part 1, 256. The Colored Alliance, meeting separately at Ocala, endorsed the Lodge bill.

²⁶The main difference between this bill and the one of 1870 which was still on the books was in the increased power it gave to supervisors of elections. The Lodge bill provided that supervision would occur in any city on the petition of one hundred voters and in any Congressional District on the petition of fifty. The supervisor was empowered to pass on the qualification of any challenged voter, accept any ballot the state election officers refused to receive, and inform illiterates in which box to place their ballot. When the person declared by the Federal official to be elected was not the same as the one certified by the state canvassers, the Clerk of the House was required to place the one designated by the Federal supervisor on the rolls. For the arguments by Lodge as to the necessity for the measure see U.S., Congressional Record, 51st Cong.,

This measure, immediately termed the "force bill" in the South, aroused extreme excitement in that region. Southern newspapers attacked the proposal as a diabolical plan to impose another Reconstruction upon the South. The Atlanta Journal, for example, maintained that those who were advocating the measure were not really interested in promoting the welfare of the colored men but were, like Republicans of old, engaged in an effort to enhance the power of their party and to improve their own position. If the bill, said the editor, "accidentally stirs up strife and bloodshed at the south, so much the better for their purposes. That will strengthen their wavering lines in the northeast and help them in a desperate effort to get one more president out of the 'bloody shirt.'" ²⁷ The Raleigh News and Observer stated that the people of the South had just cause for complaint against the Republicans because they "treat Southern folks without any consideration . . . , disregard the interests of the South, abuse our section, villify our people . . . and otherwise hold the South as conquered provinces rather than as states in the Union or on an equality with their sister States." ²⁸ In complete agreement with these views was another Bourbon journal--the Atlanta Constitution. This newspaper called attention to the fact that the South had once before been faced with the situation which would prevail if the Lodge bill was enacted into law. Realizing this, said the editor, there should be a revival of "that

1st Sess., XXII, Appendix, 6538-45. A Northern journal said the effect of the measure would be to take "the election of members of the House out of the hands of State officials." Nation, LI (July 17, 1890), p. 44.

²⁷Atlanta Journal, July 22, 1890.

²⁸Raleigh News and Observer, August 26, 1890.

glorious era when the indomitable spirit of the freemen of Georgia was equal to the emergency What we did twenty years ago," he proclaimed, "we can do again."²⁹

Southern manifestations of displeasure with the "force bill" were not confined to the columns of newspapers nor to the members of the Democratic party. Jonathan Norcross, often a Republican candidate for office in Georgia, announced that he was bitterly opposed to the measure and predicted that even if it was passed it would never be enforced in the South.³⁰ S. A. Darnell, United States Attorney in Georgia, protested that not only was such a measure not needed to insure fair elections in the South but that it was unfair to all of the states.³¹ In Florida a Republican convention in the Second Congressional District adopted a platform which included a plank attacking the measure, and in North Carolina a former Republican candidate for Congress complained that passage of the bill would result in the Africanization of the South.³² Most white Southerners,³³

²⁹Atlanta Constitution, July 18, 1890. One Republican journal, the Washington Post, agreed that the Lodge bill was not introduced for the purpose of securing fair elections. "In fact," said the editor, "it is an instrument bubbling over with mischief of a most dangerous nature, and its passage would bring about a state of chaos in all parts of the country that no party could carry and succeed." Quoted in Atlanta Journal, July 11, 1890. The New York Tribune, on the other hand, was loud in its acclaim of the measure. It advised all Republican Congressmen that it "is the only Republican caucus measure of the session except the Silver bill . . . and Republicans certainly ought to be as earnest and attentive in support of it . . . as the Democrats are earnest and active in opposing the bill and upholding fraud and theft in elections." New York Tribune, June 28, 1890.

³⁰Atlanta Journal, July 29, 1890.

³¹Ibid.

³²See the Raleigh News and Observer, August 15 and 30, 1890.

³³In Tennessee a colored convention heard a resolution opposing the Lodge bill, but after considerable discussion it narrowly adopted one

then, agreed with the editor of the Atlanta Constitution who had written in 1889, when the question of the necessity of a more stringent Federal election law was being discussed, that "the American people have never been confronted with an issue like this. It involves the surrender of their liberties, and it gives the government perpetually into the hands of the dominant party." Such a measure, he continued, would put "the south back to the days of 1868--under even worse conditions than then prevailed. It again inspires the negro with the federal drumbeat and fortifies him with federal bayonets."³⁴

The emotionalism which was paramount in newspaper articles and in statements by individuals was seconded in debates on the Lodge bill which ensued in Congress--debates which Southerners of every political persuasion followed with deep and abiding interest. In the House of Representatives the Republicans were in a slight majority and, since the bill was made a party measure, it was almost a foregone conclusion that it would be passed by that body. Nevertheless, Congressmen from the South deemed it necessary to go on record as being opposed to any measure which had as its purpose the regulation of elections.³⁵ In general, their main

favoring the measure. Atlanta Journal, August 1, 1890. In North Carolina a convention of colored Republicans also adopted a resolution affirming support of the measure, and the same was true of a comparable convention in South Carolina. Raleigh News and Observer, August 27 and September 20, 1890.

³⁴Atlanta Constitution, November 3, 1889.

³⁵With rare exception, not including Negro Congressmen, the Republicans from the South were generally opposed to the Lodge bill. For example, Hamilton G. Ewart of North Carolina informed Congress that although he realized that he would have to pay a penalty, a sense of duty required him to go against his party. He insisted that in his state all men were free to cast a ballot and have it counted. U.S., Congressional

arguments consisted of protestations against Republican assertions that the legislation was necessary to protect the Negro in his right to vote, that the bill as proposed was unconstitutional because it violated the right of the states to regulate their elections, and that it had been introduced primarily for the purpose of bolstering the chances of the Republican party in future elections.

As various Southern Congressmen spoke against the measure they usually emphasized one or more of these arguments. Thomas Stockdale of Mississippi, for example, argued that there was no need for such a law and characterized the proposed legislation as un-American, unexpedient, and unnecessary.³⁶ Congressmen Benjamin Bunn and Thomas Skinner of North Carolina couched their arguments on the basis that the Negro voted freely and had his ballot counted. Skinner, in a bitter indictment of the Republicans, said that the leaders of that party were little interested in the colored men as long as it was possible to maintain political control without them. Now, he said, the Republican tariff and silver policy had antagonized the adherents of that party in the West, and consequently the party bosses were attempting to insure their continued dominance through the medium of the colored vote and an election law.³⁷ That this was the

Record, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., 1890, XXI, Part 7, 6688. See also Raleigh News and Observer, August 22, 1890.

³⁶U.S., Congressional Record, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., 1890, XXI, Part 2, 562-72. Stockdale insisted that the Negro needed no protection in the South. He maintained that "the old masters and old slaves are friends today, defying all the viscious schemes put in motion to alienate them." Congressman Joseph Wheeler of Alabama couched his main argument in the terms that the bill was unconstitutional. Ibid., 681-82.

³⁷Ibid., 453-55.

real purpose of the Republicans was also the thought of Congressman Henry H. Carlton of Georgia. Like most of his colleagues, however, his primary purpose was to impress upon the supporters of the Lodge bill that their efforts would be for naught. Passage of the measure, he warned, would solidify the whites of the South in support of the Democratic party as never before--a fact which would make the revival of Republican-Negro rule an impossibility.³⁸

Despite the protests of Democratic Congressmen from all sections of the nation, the Lodge bill was passed by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives in the fall of 1890.³⁹ Consequently, when Congress convened for its second session after the November elections the interest of people throughout the nation turned to the debate which began in the Senate.⁴⁰ Beginning early in December and continuing well

³⁸Ibid., Part 7, 6888-91. With a few exceptions most Southern Congressmen were in agreement with Samuel W. Peel of Arkansas who said that the bill should be entitled "an act to stir up strife and cause bloodshed in the South and to rob the States and the people of the whole country of their right to elect their own officers." Ibid., Part 2, 401.

³⁹The membership of the Fifty-first Congress consisted of 166 Republicans and 159 Democrats in the House and 39 Republicans and 37 Democrats in the Senate. U.S., Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 293. In the House the Lodge bill passed by the slim margin of 155 to 149, with 24 not voting. All of the affirmative votes but one cast by an Independent Union Laborite were by Republicans. Two Republicans voted with the Democrats against the measure. Of those voting against the Lodge bill, 82 were Southerners and 67 were Northerners. U.S., Congressional Record, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., 1890, XXI, Part 7, 6700-735, 6843-900, 6923-941.

⁴⁰New York Daily Tribune, on December 4, 1890, noted that the Republican Senators had courageously entered on their duties--the foremost of which was to secure the passage of the Lodge bill. The Tribune berated the New York Times for opposing the measure, and said that it and other journals pursuing the same editorial policy were

into the new year Republican orators, undoubtedly alarmed at the result of the Congressional elections,⁴¹ castigated the South for depriving the colored men of their legal right to the ballot through force and fraud. They insisted that it was the moral duty of the Senate to give its assent to legislation which would effectively protect all persons, regardless of color, in the free and full enjoyment of their right to vote.⁴²

Republican arguments as to the need for an election bill to protect the Negro elicited nothing but condemnation from the Bourbon Senators. As was the case with their colleagues in the House of Representatives, they generally characterized the Lodge bill as unnecessary, unconstitutional, and a partisan measure designed to perpetuate the domination of the Republican party.⁴³ A few of the Bourbons admitted that the legal

committed to ". . . maintaining fraudulent elections as a permanent feature of the political system"

⁴¹As a result of the election of 1890 the Republicans lost control of the House of Representatives. In the new Congress which would convene in March of 1891 there would be 88 Republicans, 235 Democrats and 9 others--mostly Populists. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, p. 293. Many of the new Democrats were representatives of the agrarian class.

⁴²As a part of his argument, for example, Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts had read into the Record an article which appeared in the Anglo-Saxon Churchman, published at Little Rock in January, 1891. In this article the editor said that "the white people of Arkansas have irrevocably made up their minds that the negroes of the State shall not rule; that is no longer a debated question. The only question open to discussion is the method that shall finally be adopted to nullify the African vote." U.S., Congressional Record, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1890, XXII, Part 2, Appendix, 1399. Senators James K. Jones and James Berry of Arkansas both vehemently denied that Hoar was correct in his impression that the Ohio-born editor of the Churchman was aware of the true conditions in the state. Both Senators assured their colleagues that the Negro was free to vote in Arkansas. Ibid., 1400-01.

⁴³The partisan purpose of the Lodge bill was emphasized by all Senators, but see especially the arguments of John Morgan of Alabama,

rights of the Negro had sometimes been restricted at the South, but they insisted that this had been necessary in order that the whites could protect themselves from the corrupt political control of an ignorant race not far removed from savagery. Senator E. C. Walthall of Mississippi, for example, said that he had never disputed the fact that in the past illegal actions in connection with elections had sometimes occurred in his state. He argued, however, that "palliation for these wrongs is found in the struggle of a spirited and downtrodden people to save themselves from greater wrongs than any they committed for their own protection."⁴⁴

Although Bourbon Senators attempted to couch their arguments in temperate terms, the radical attitude toward the Negro vote may be found in their statements on the measure. Alexander H. Colquitt of Georgia informed the Senate that the Negro had not advanced in civilization since emancipation and that enfranchisement of that race had been a grievous error. In spite of this, he hastened to add, Southerners realized that vote was a permanent fixture and they had no intention of attempting to deprive the colored men of the ballot.⁴⁵ Senator Samuel Pasco of Florida promised that "the Anglo-Saxon will be true to this history. In every quarter of the world where he has been placed side by side with people of other races he has ruled."⁴⁶ James Z. George of Mississippi warned that

Zebulon Vance of North Carolina, John Regan of Texas, and Randall Gibson of Louisiana. Ibid., Part 1, 319 ff. Some Southern Senators argued that the political condition of the "wage slaves" in the North was no better than that of the Negro.

⁴⁴Ibid., 367-74.

⁴⁵Ibid., 451-68.

⁴⁶Pasco tempered his statement by saying that of course the Negro would be protected in his rights as a citizen and property holder. Ibid., 403-18.

if the Republicans secured the passage of the bill then ". . . remembering the history and traditions of our race, we give you notice of your certain and assured failure; it will never come to pass in Mississippi, in Florida, in South Carolina, or in any other State in the South, that the neck of the white race shall be under the foot of the negro, or the Mongolian, or of any created being."⁴⁷ Wade Hampton of South Carolina, who had convinced President Hayes in 1877 that the future of the Negro was safe in the hands of the Southern whites, summed up the arguments of his colleagues. "In my opinion," he said, "the voters who in any State represent the best elements, the capital, the intelligence, and the virtue should govern, despite all finespun theories of fraternity and equality, the sacred brotherhood of mankind, and the divine right of universal suffrage."⁴⁸

Although the Lodge bill failed of passage in the Senate in January of 1891,⁴⁹ it had already served to increase Southern antagonism against the colored man as a voter. The electoral success of the farmers in the elections of 1890 had brought into office representatives of the class which was traditionally the most antagonistic toward the Negro. While some of the agrarian leaders, especially during the next few years when the Populists were contesting for control in the South, sought to reach an understanding with the colored voter, there was early a movement

⁴⁷Ibid., Part 2, 324 ff.

⁴⁸Ibid., Part 1, 498 ff.

⁴⁹The Democrats filibustered the Lodge bill, and, with the aid of several Republican Senators, defeated a move by Senator Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island to invoke cloture. On January 22 the bill was laid aside so that another measure could be considered and was not taken up again. Undoubtedly Southern support of the silver bill earlier in the session won them the support of some Republicans from the silver states.

under way to render the Negro politically impotent. This movement began in Mississippi shortly after the Lodge bill was introduced into the House of Representatives. In this state, where the Negro outnumbered the white, a convention was assembled for the purpose of preparing a new instrument of government. The farmer-controlled assembly encountered little difficulty in adopting a clause which legally circumvented the Fifteenth Amendment. It imposed a poll tax, excluded electors who had been convicted of certain crimes, and prohibited the voting of all individuals who could not read a section of the state constitution, understand it when read, or give a reasonable interpretation of its meaning.⁵⁰

While Mississippi was the only state to effect disfranchisement through the medium of a change in the organic law before the advent of the Populist revolt, the attitude toward Negro voting was more radical in most states after Bourbon control was restricted.⁵¹ In South Carolina,

⁵⁰For the story of the convention and the literacy test which it evolved see Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, pp. 199-216.

⁵¹Although the Alliance had achieved considerable success the conservatives were still an influential element. They were able, in most states, to prevent the adoption of the more socialistic parts of the agrarian program. They were reluctant to call conventions that might write the provisions of the "Ocala Platform" into the organic law. Later the conservatives used the Negro vote to defeat the Populists. When this was accomplished the Southern states began to follow the lead of Mississippi and changed their constitutions to effect the disfranchisement of the colored race by adopting a literacy test. Tennessee, Florida, Arkansas, and Texas accomplished disfranchisement by adopting a poll tax and by other devices. Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 235-63, 321. Most Southern states did not maintain registration records which differentiated between white and colored electors. Louisiana did, however, and the figures can probably be taken as an indication of the state of affairs in most Southern states. In 1897, just before the Constitution of the state was changed to include a literacy test, there were 164,088 whites and 130,344 colored men registered in Louisiana. The figures for 1898 showed 74,133 whites and 12,902 Negroes, and those for 1900 were 125,437 whites and 5,320 colored men. The increase in white registration

for example, Benjamin Tillman proclaimed in his inaugural address on December 4, 1890, that "Democracy has won a great victory unparalleled. The triumph of Democracy over mongrelism and anarchy is most complete." He went ahead to boast that the whites had absolute control of the government and intended at all costs to retain it because the Negroes had little capacity to exercise the franchise intelligently.⁵² This demagogic attitude amply expressed that voiced by the most rabid radical during the Bourbon period and was a portent of the animosity which was to be directed toward the colored race during most of the decade of the nineties.

It was during the years of the eighteen-nineties--a time in which the United States annexed territory populated by other colored peoples and assumed the responsibility for their elevation--that the Southern Negro was largely deprived of the privilege of exercising the ballot. While it is true that large numbers of colored men did troop to the polls when Populists and Democrats were contesting for control of the state governments, when the representatives of the "boys at the forks of the creek" became dominant in the Democratic party in the South the days of the Negro as an elector were numbered. Such an event had occurred by the middle years of the decade and after that time there was little probability that the liberal attitude expressed by Cable and a few other Southerners would be taken seriously. By that time the colored men had

was undoubtedly due to the effect of the "grandfather clause." Figures cited in Philip Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Louisiana State University), p. 196.

⁵²Tillman said that it was not true that all men were created equal. He insisted that the white men were superior. Simkins, Pitchfork Ben Tillman, pp. 171-75, 295.

been abandoned by their Republican mentors, and the Bourbon policy of moderation which had been a noteworthy event of the eighties was an attitude of the seemingly distant past. Thus by 1895 the liberal attitude was a thing of scorn; moderation was dead and the traditional antagonists of the Negro were in political control. By the utilization of the poll tax, strict residence requirements, the literacy test, and eventually by closing the Democratic primary to Negroes, the white supremists embarked the South upon a policy leading to almost complete disfranchisement--a policy of which the echoes are still rolling.

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