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## The Ordeal of Reconstruction, 1865–1877

### PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

#### A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. define the major problems facing the South and the nation after the Civil War.
2. describe the responses of both whites and African-Americans to the end of slavery.
3. analyze the differences between the presidential and congressional approaches to Reconstruction.
4. explain how the blunders of President Johnson and the white South opened the door to more radical congressional Reconstruction policies.
5. describe the actual effects of congressional Reconstruction in the South.
6. indicate how militant white opposition gradually undermined the Republican attempt to empower Southern blacks.
7. explain why the radical Republicans impeached Johnson but failed to convict him.
8. explain the legacy of Reconstruction, and assess its successes and failures.

#### B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **treason** The crime of betrayal of one's country, involving some overt act violating an oath of allegiance or providing illegal aid to a foreign state. In the United States, treason is the only crime specified in the Constitution. "What should be done with the captured Confederate ring-leaders, all of whom were liable to charges of treason?" (p. 477)
2. **civil disabilities** Legally imposed restrictions of a person's civil rights or liberties. "But Congress did not remove all remaining civil disabilities until thirty years later. . . ." (p. 478)
3. **legalistically** In accord with the exact letter of the law, sometimes with the intention of thwarting its broad intent. "Some planters resisted emancipation more legalistically. . . ." (p. 479)
4. **mutual aid societies** Nonprofit organizations designed to provide their members with financial and social benefits, often including medical aid, life insurance, funeral costs, and disaster relief. "These churches . . . gave rise to other benevolent, fraternal, and mutual aid societies." (p. 480)
5. **confiscation (confiscated)** Legal government seizure of private property without compensation. ". . . the bureau was authorized to settle former slaves on forty-acre tracts confiscated from the Confederates. . . ." (p. 481)
6. **pocket veto** The presidential act of blocking a Congressionally passed law not by direct veto but by simply refusing to sign it at the end of a session. (A president can pocket-veto a bill within ten days of a session's end or after.) "Lincoln 'pocket-vetoed' this bill by refusing to sign it after Congress had adjourned." (p. 483)
7. **lease** To enter into a contract by which one party gives another use of land, buildings, or other property for a fixed time and fee. ". . . some [codes] even barred blacks from renting or leasing land." (p. 484)

8. **chain gang** A group of prisoners chained together while engaged in forced labor. "A black could be punished for 'idleness' by being sentenced to work on a chain gang." (p. 484)
9. **sharecrop** An agricultural system in which a tenant receives land, tools, and seed on credit and pledges in return a share of the crop to the creditor. "... former slaves slipped into the status of sharecropper farmers. . . ." (p. 484)
10. **peonage** A system in which debtors are held in servitude, to labor for their creditors. "Luckless sharecroppers gradually sank into a morass of virtual peonage. . . ." (p. 484)
11. **scalawag** A white Southerner who supported Republican Reconstruction after the Civil War. "The so-called scalawags were Southerners, often former Unionists and Whigs." (p. 492)
12. **carpetbagger** A Northern politician who came south to exploit the unsettled conditions after the Civil War; hence, any politician who relocates for political advantage. "The carpet-baggers, on the other hand, were supposedly sleazy Northerners. . . ." (p. 492)
13. **felony** A major crime for which severe penalties are exacted under the law. "The crimes of the Reconstruction governments were no more outrageous than the scams and felonies being perpetrated in the North at the same time. . . ." (p. 493)
14. **terror (terrorist)** Using violence or the threat of violence in order to create intense fear in the attempt to promote some political policy or objectives. "Such tomfoolery and terror proved partially effective." (p. 493)
15. **president pro tempore** In the United States Senate, the officer who presides in the absence of the vice president. "Under existing law, the president pro tempore of the Senate . . . would then become president." (p. 495)

## PART II: Checking Your Progress

### A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark **T**. Where it is false, mark **F**, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- \_\_\_ 1. The South was economically devastated by the Civil War.
- \_\_\_ 2. Military defeat in the Civil War brought white Southerners to accept the reality of Northern political domination.
- \_\_\_ 3. The newly freed slaves often used their liberty to travel or seek lost loved ones.
- \_\_\_ 4. The focus of black community life after emancipation became the black church.
- \_\_\_ 5. Lincoln's "10 percent" Reconstruction plan was designed to return the Southern states to the Union quickly and with few restrictions.
- \_\_\_ 6. Southerners at first feared Andrew Johnson because he had been one of the few elite planters who backed Lincoln.
- \_\_\_ 7. The cause of black education was greatly advanced by white Northern female teachers who came South after the Civil War.
- \_\_\_ 8. The enactment of the Black Codes in the south strengthened those who supported a moderate approach to Reconstruction.
- \_\_\_ 9. Congressional Republicans demanded that the Southern states ratify the Fourteenth Amendment in order to be readmitted to the Union.

- \_\_\_ 10. Radical Republicans succeeded in their goal of redistributing land to the former slaves.
- \_\_\_ 11. During Reconstruction, blacks controlled most of the Southern state legislatures.
- \_\_\_ 12. The Republican Reconstruction legislature enacted educational and other reforms in Southern state government.
- \_\_\_ 13. The Ku Klux Klan largely failed in its goal of intimidating blacks and preventing them from voting.
- \_\_\_ 14. Johnson's impeachment was essentially an act of political vindictiveness by radical Republicans.
- \_\_\_ 15. The moderate Republican plan for Reconstruction might have succeeded if the Ku Klux Klan had been suppressed.

### B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- \_\_\_ 1. After emancipation, many blacks traveled in order to
  - a. return to Africa or the West Indies.
  - b. seek a better life in Northern cities.
  - c. find lost family members or seek new economic opportunities.
  - d. track down and punish cruel overseers.
- \_\_\_ 2. The Freedmen's Bureau was originally established to provide
  - a. land and supplies for black farmers.
  - b. labor registration.
  - c. food, clothes, and education for emancipated slaves.
  - d. political training in citizenship for black voters.
- \_\_\_ 3. Lincoln's original plan for Reconstruction in 1863 was that a state could be re-integrated into the Union when
  - a. it repealed its original secession act and took its soldiers out of the Confederate Army.
  - b. 10 percent of its voters took an oath of allegiance to the Union and pledged to abide by emancipation.
  - c. it formally adopted a plan guaranteeing black political and economic rights.
  - d. it ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution.
- \_\_\_ 4. The Black Codes passed by many of the Southern state governments in 1865 aimed to
  - a. provide economic assistance to get former slaves started as sharecroppers.
  - b. ensure a stable and subservient labor force under white control.
  - c. permit blacks to vote if they met certain educational or economic standards.
  - d. gradually force blacks to leave the South.

5. The congressional elections of 1866 resulted in
- a victory for Johnson and his pro-Southern Reconstruction plan.
  - a further political stalemate between the Republicans in Congress and Johnson.
  - a decisive defeat for Johnson and a veto-proof Republican Congress.
  - a gain for Northern Democrats and their moderate compromise plan for Reconstruction.
6. In contrast to radical Republicans, moderate Republicans generally
- avored states' rights and opposed direct federal involvement in individuals' lives.
  - avored the use of federal power to alter the Southern economic system.
  - avored emancipation but opposed the Fourteenth Amendment.
  - avored returning the Southern states to the Union without significant Reconstruction.
7. Besides putting the South under the rule of federal soldiers, the Military Reconstruction Act of 1867 required that
- Southern states give blacks the vote as a condition of readmittance to the Union.
  - blacks and carpetbaggers be given control of Southern legislatures.
  - former slaves be given land and education at federal expense.
  - former Confederate officials and military officers be tried for treason.
8. The Fourteenth amendment provided for
- an end to slavery.
  - permanent disfranchisement of all Confederate officials.
  - full citizenship and civil rights for former slaves.
  - voting rights for women.
9. The Fifteenth Amendment provided for
- readmitting Southern states to the Union.
  - full citizenship and civil rights for former slaves.
  - voting rights for former slaves.
  - voting rights for women.
10. Women's-rights leaders opposed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments because
- they objected to racial integration in the women's movement.
  - the amendments granted citizenship and voting rights to black and white men but not to women.
  - they favored passage of the Equal Rights Amendment first.
  - most of them were Democrats who would be hurt by the amendments.
11. The right to vote encouraged southern black men to
- form a third political party as an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans.
  - seek an apology and reparations for slavery.
  - organize the Union League as a vehicle for political empowerment and self-defense.
  - organize large-scale migrations out of the South to the West.
12. The radical Reconstruction regimes in the Southern states
- took away white Southerners' civil rights and voting rights.
  - consisted almost entirely of blacks.
  - included white Northerners, white Southerners, and blacks.
  - eliminated the public education systems in most Southern states.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Most of the Northern "carpetbaggers" were actually
- former Union soldiers, businessmen, or professionals.
  - undercover agents of the federal government.
  - former Southern Whigs and Unionists who had opposed the Confederacy.
  - Northern teachers and missionaries who wanted to aid the freedmen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The radical Republicans' impeachment of President Andrew Johnson resulted in
- Johnson's acceptance of the radicals' Reconstruction plan.
  - a failure to convict and remove Johnson by a margin of only one vote.
  - Johnson's conviction on the charge of violating the Tenure of Office Act.
  - Johnson's resignation and appointment of Ulysses Grant as his successor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. The skeptical public finally accepted Seward's purchase of Alaska because
- there were rumors of extensive oil deposits in the territory.
  - it was considered strategically vital to American defense.
  - it would provide a new frontier safety valve after the settling of the West.
  - Russia had been the only great power friendly to the Union during the Civil War.

### C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Common term for the blacks newly liberated from slavery
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Federal agency that greatly assisted blacks educationally but failed in other aid efforts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The largest African-American denomination (church) after slavery
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Lincoln's 1863 program for a rapid Reconstruction of the South
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The constitutional amendment freeing all slaves
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The harsh Southern state laws of 1865 that limited black rights and imposed restrictions to ensure a stable black labor supply
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The constitutional amendment granting civil rights to freed slaves and barring former Confederates from office
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Republican Reconstructionists who favored a more rapid restoration of Southern state governments and opposed radical plans for drastic economic transformation of the South
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Republican Reconstructionists who favored keeping the South out of the federal government until a complete social and economic revolution was accomplished in the region
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The black political organization that promoted self-help and defense of political rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Supreme Court ruling that military tribunals could not try civilians when the civil courts were open
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Derogatory term for white Southerners who cooperated with the Republican Reconstruction governments

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Derogatory term for Northerners who came to the South during Reconstruction and sometimes took part in Republican state governments
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Constitutional amendment guaranteeing blacks the right to vote
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. "Seward's Folly," acquired in 1867 from Russia

#### D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

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| _____ 1. Exodusters                          | A. A constitutionally questionable law whose violation by President Johnson formed the basis for his impeachment                      |
| _____ 2. Oliver O. Howard                    | B. The first congressional attempt to guarantee black rights in the South, passed over Johnson's veto                                 |
| _____ 3. Andrew Johnson                      | C. Born a poor white southerner, he became the white South's champion against radical Reconstruction                                  |
| _____ 4. Abraham Lincoln                     | D. Secretary of state who arranged an initially unpopular but valuable land deal in 1867  |
| _____ 5. Civil Rights Bill of 1866           | E. Laws designed to stamp out Ku Klux Klan terrorism in the South   |
| _____ 6. Charles Sumner                      | F. Black Republican senator from Mississippi during Reconstruction  |
| _____ 7. Thaddeus Stevens                    | G. Secret organization that intimidated blacks and worked to restore white supremacy  |
| _____ 8. Military Reconstruction Act of 1867 | H. Blacks who left the South for Kansas and elsewhere during Reconstruction   |
| _____ 9. Hiram Revels                        | I. Congressional law that imposed military rule on the South and demanded harsh conditions for readmission of the seceded states      |
| _____ 10. Ku Klux Klan                       | J. Beaten in the Senate chamber before the Civil War, he became the leader of Senate Republican radicals during Reconstruction        |
| _____ 11. Force Acts of 1870 and 1871        | K. Problack general who led an agency that tried to assist the freedmen   |
| _____ 12. Tenure of Office Act               | L. Leading Black political organization during Reconstruction   |
| _____ 13. Union League                       | M. Author of the moderate "10 percent" Reconstruction plan that ran into congressional opposition                                     |
| _____ 14. Benjamin Wade                      | N. The president pro tempore of the Senate who hoped to become president of the United States after Johnson's impeachment conviction. |
| _____ 15. William Seward                     | O. Leader of radical Republicans in the House of Representatives  |

**E. Putting Things in Order**

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

- \_\_\_ Constitution is amended to guarantee former slaves the right to vote.
- \_\_\_ Lincoln announces a plan to rapidly restore southern states to the Union.
- \_\_\_ Northern troops are finally withdrawn from the South, and Southern state governments are reconstituted without federal constraint.
- \_\_\_ An unpopular antiradical president escapes conviction and removal from office by one vote.
- \_\_\_ Johnson's attempt to restore the South to the Union is overturned because of congressional hostility to ex-Confederates and southern passage of the Black Codes.

**F. Matching Cause and Effect**

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
___ 1. The South's military defeat in the Civil War	A. Provoked a politically motivated trial to remove the president from office
___ 2. The Freedmen's Bureau	B. Intimidated black voters and tried to keep blacks "in their place"
___ 3. The Black Codes of 1865	C. Prompted Republicans to refuse to seat Southern delegations in Congress
___ 4. The election of ex-Confederates to Congress in 1865	D. Destroyed the southern economy but strengthened Southern hatred of "yankees"
___ 5. Johnson's "swing around the circle" in the election of 1866	E. Successfully educated former slaves but failed to provide much other assistance to them
___ 6. Military Reconstruction and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments	F. Forced all the Southern states to establish governments that upheld black voting and other civil rights
___ 7. The "radical" Southern state Reconstruction governments	G. Embittered white Southerners while doing little to really help blacks
___ 8. The Ku Klux Klan	H. Engaged in some corruption but also enacted many valuable social reforms
___ 9. The radical Republicans' hatred of Johnson	I. Weakened support for mild Reconstruction policies and helped elect overwhelming Republican majorities to Congress
___ 10. The whole Reconstruction era	J. Imposed slaverylike restrictions on blacks and angered the North

## G. Developing Historical Skills

### Interpreting Photographs and Drawings

Answer the following questions about the photographs and drawings in this chapter.

1. *The Faculty of a Freedmen's Bureau School near Norfolk, Virginia* (p. 481)

What is the ratio of black to white teachers on the freedmen's school staff? Who appears to be the principal of the school? Where are the black teachers positioned in the photograph? Might this suggest anything about the relations between white and black teachers in the school?

2. *A Family of Sharecroppers at the End of the Civil War* (photograph, p. 485)

What physical details suggest the poverty of these former slaves? How would you characterize the attitudes of the people in the photograph?

3. *Freedmen Voting, Richmond, Virginia, 1871* (drawing, p. 482)

What appears to be the economic status of the new black voters portrayed here? How does their condition differ from that of the voting officials, black and white? What does the drawing suggest about the power of the newly enfranchised freedmen?



### Part III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. What were the major problems facing the South and the nation after the Civil War? How did Reconstruction address them, or fail to do so?
2. How did freed blacks react to the end of slavery? How did both Southern and Northern whites react?
3. How did the white South's intransigence and President Johnson's political bungling open the way for the congressional Republican program of military Reconstruction?
4. What was the purpose of congressional Reconstruction, and what were its actual effects in the South?
5. What did the attempt at black political empowerment achieve? Why did it finally fail? Could it have succeeded with a stronger Northern political will behind it?
6. Why did Reconstruction apparently fail so badly? Was the failure primarily one of immediate political circumstances, or was it more deeply rooted in the history of American sectional and race relations?