



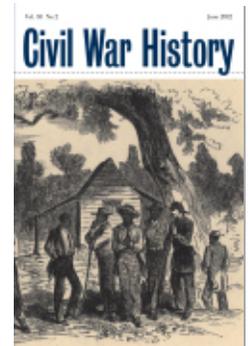
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An Alternative to the Tragic Era: Applying the Virtues of Bureaucracy to the Reconstruction Dilemma

JAMES L. HUSTON

Congress's program for reconstructing the South intended to promote a future characterized by racial harmony and economic advancement, but it ended up failing miserably. Although historians have found innumerable faults in the way Congress handled Reconstruction, the essential problem has long been recognized: the ferocious racism of Southern whites.¹ Any program that did not address white racism was doomed to failure. Because whites were a majority in all but two Southern states, they would be able to control politics and, by either state laws or county regulations or local judicial decisions, they could have undone any land redistribution schemes,

1. On the outcomes of Reconstruction, see Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977); James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); Roger L. Ransom, *Conflict and Compromise: The Political Economy of Slavery, Emancipation, and the American Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 241; U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *Census of 1890*, vol. 25: *Wealth, Debt, and Taxation*, part II (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1895), 14. Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1877* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), chaps. 7, 8. On violence, see especially George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1984); Ted Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana, 1862–1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1984), chap. 9; Brooks D. Simpson, *The Reconstruction Presidents* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1998), 90, 142; Michael W. Fitzgerald, *The Union League Movement in the Deep South: Politics and Agricultural Change During Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1989), chap. 7; Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still Jr., *The Elements of Confederate Defeat: Nationalism, War Aims, and Religion* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1988), chap. 14.

free labor programs, or white political disfranchisement. Only one way existed to control white racial prejudice: bureaucracy was the only hope for a Reconstruction that promised any future justice to both the black South and the white South. And contemporaries had actually stumbled upon this solution—the Freedmen’s Bureau.

African Americans and their Republican allies confronted the social legacy of slavery, and probably Northern Republicans misjudged the legacy’s strength. Since at least the 1830s, and probably starting in the 1780s, white Southerners had justified slavery primarily on the basis of the alleged racial inferiority of Africans. For decades, white Southerners had racial ideas drummed into them that Africans were a degraded people who would not work unless coerced and who could not live responsibly in freedom. The question of the origins of these attitudes is not important for Reconstruction history; by 1865 these racial views had become a dominant power in politics and society from which whites obtained economic benefits and psychological rewards. They were not going to disappear because of a land redistribution scheme or any program that offered them simple pecuniary benefits.²

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND RACIAL PREJUDICE

There are many ways to justify the establishment of a bureaucracy to solve an intractable racial problem, but perhaps one of the more potent is to draw out certain implications from the neoclassical economic model. That interpretation of the good society posits the existence of a government that only enforces contracts, secures property rights, and protects the lives of its citizens—the “negative” state. The society maintains itself without undue friction because of the existence of uncoerced trading—that is, the only exchanges made are those in which both participants improve their position (the famous win-win scenario of economics, Pareto optimality.)³

2. On antebellum racism, see Alexander S. Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990); Stephen A. Channing, *Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974); Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2001). On the current debate on the origins of racism, see David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: vol. 1, Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994).

3. For a tour of the model, see Edward E. Zajac, *Political Economy of Fairness* (Cambridge:

That classical and neoclassical liberalism required some state at all—a police function—is an admission by the theory’s formulators that not everyone would obey the central rule of a free market: all trades must be uncoerced for all participants to obtain optimum benefit. Some would violate this criterion by following self-interest to the point of coercing others to make gains for themselves, regardless of coercion’s effect on other members in society (and thereby on the overall effectiveness of the economy). To stop those willing to make gains from the use of violence (theft, murder, deceit, etc.), and thereby corrode the effectiveness of the free market, classicals and neoclassicals conceded the need for a bureaucracy—a police force.⁴

Extending this analysis a little further demonstrates that a basic assumption about human beings in general governs the neoclassical view of bureaucracy. First, the proposition that the negative state is a viable framework for society derives from the neoclassicals’ *faith* that the mechanism of uncoerced exchanges will satisfy the material desires of the vast majority of any society’s population, so that resort to criminal activity carries too much risk to be attempted. Thus a small bureaucracy may be necessary to contain the few misfits that any large population will produce; but the police function should never grow large enough to endanger political and economic freedom because the vast majority will live in the sunshine of Pareto optimality. But the analysis proceeds from the explicit recognition that when one group refuses to recognize the “rights” of another group (here defined as the right to life, property, and contract without physical coercion), then the solution is the establishment of a bureaucracy to control the lawless. An inference from this analysis, therefore, is that societies may be described as corrupt or virtuous in terms of the amount of law observance within the population: a corrupt society requires so much police force to maintain noncoercive economic and political relations that it is in danger of falling into despotism, whereas a virtuous society is one that has a high incidence of obedience to the law so that the police function is incidental and almost invisible to public life.⁵

MIT Press, 1996), chaps. 1–6; Benjamin Ward, *The Liberal Economic World View* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), chap. 4; Cass R. Sunstein, *Free Markets and Social Justice* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 4–28; Richard D. Wolff and Stephen A. Resnick, *Economics: Marxian Versus Neoclassical* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), chap. 2; L. Susan Brown, *The Politics of Individualism: Liberalism, Liberal Feminism, and Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 1–32; and especially, Milton Friedman, with the assistance of Rose Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962).

4. For the purposes of this essay, a bureaucracy may be defined as a government entity given monopoly police powers over a range of behaviors defined by the legislative component of the state.

5. This observation has an obvious relationship to the ideas of virtue and corruption in

Of course, this version is not the one now offered by free marketeers and libertarians for curing racism—rather, they posit the reverse. According to Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, Milton Friedman, and Thomas Sowell, the market left to its own devices would have cured both slavery and racism because choosing labor inputs (or human capital inputs) based on social criteria rather than output results would have been a constantly losing proposition that no rational economic actor would have taken.⁶ This libertarian notion of rationality, however, forcefully pits the rationality of free trade economists against the rationality understood by historians. Historians assume that behavior repeated over decades inculcates a sense of reward and psychic satisfaction that is ignored by the libertarian-economists' belief in the immediacy of rational economic calculation. Pitting these two rationalities against each other, and recognizing that children are socialized into the racial behavior of the parents and grandparents, one can only conclude that the market would have required at the least centuries to overcome learned prejudices. And in the situation of the United States in 1865, the laissez-faire solution to racial animosities in the South could only lead to white supremacy and black degradation—which is about what happened given the fact that ultimately the laissez-faire solution was applied.

At least in the analysis I offer here, the obvious solution to law-breaking among the population is to construct a bureaucracy to stop the law-breakers. This conclusion derives explicitly as an inference from the laissez-faire model of the just society. If the basic problem is that given freedom of action, one group chooses to use that freedom to coerce another group into economic and political courses not of that group's preferences, then the solution is to create a bureaucracy to enforce obedience to the law.⁷

republicanism; see Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1969); Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29 (Jan. 1972): 49–80; Donald K. Pickens, "The Republican Synthesis and Thaddeus Stevens," *Civil War History* 31 (Mar. 1985): 57–73; Lacy K. Ford, "Republican Ideology in a Slave Society: The Political Economy of John C. Calhoun," *Journal of Southern History* 54 (Aug. 1988): 405–24. The question of how free-market societies are stitched together with so little overt police action was Antonio Gramsci's starting point for the theory of hegemony.

6. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, 21, 109, 155; Thomas Sowell, *Markets and Minorities* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 39–40, 96–99, 105–6, 124; Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, *Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men: A History of the American Civil War* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996); George Stigler, *The Citizen and the State: Essays on Regulation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), 34–35.

7. I have framed the theoretical part of the essay in terms of the neoclassical model of noncoercion and Pareto optimality. That was largely motivated by the recognition that if

A COUNTERFACTUAL EXERCISE: REFIGURING THE
DIMENSIONS OF THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

To run this counterfactual thought experiment correctly, we have to assume that a president as well as a Congress are favorable to a Reconstruction that halts Southern white supremacy. We will just assume that John Wilkes Booth's pistol misfired in his assassination attempt, and that Abraham Lincoln went on to finish his second term. The importance of Lincoln remaining in the White House was his unyielding belief in the free labor ideal, an ideal he extended to African Americans even when under Democratic assault in the public arena.⁸ This attitude of Lincoln's could have sustained a more energetic program than the one Congress implemented.

The Proposed Alternative Congressional Legislation

Instead of the program that Congress enacted 1866 to 1868, I offer the following:

1. The Freedmen's Bureau will be established for thirty years, closing down in 1895.
2. Freedpeople will become semi-wards of the U.S. government; semi-wards in the sense that freedmen can apply to U.S. district courts to become citizens of the United States and slough off their wardship status. But as semi-wards, only federal, not state, legislation would affect their lives.
3. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments will be passed, but they will not be applied until the wardship period ends; if the wardship period ends by judicial decision, then full citizenship rights and voting rights will be given.
4. The bureau agents will act for the freedmen in all economic activity, to ensure fairness of written contracts or verbal agreements, and to resolve any conflicts between whites and blacks in Freedmen Bureau

a justification of bureaucracy could be formed from the laissez-faire approach, then the justification already answered its most likely critics. However, for most rational people, such a procedure to justify a bureaucratic remedy would not be necessary. Simply put, the most obvious way to stop two groups from fighting is to impose a third force between them, to let one side dominate or destroy the other, or to separate them physically. These are the ways most conflicts in human life are handled.

8. Lincoln speech at Ottawa, August 21, 1858, in *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Letters*, ed. Peter Parish (London: J. M. Dent, 1993), 102.

Courts. In cases of local monopolies and other market imperfections, the Freedmen's Bureau agents will use their knowledge of the market to break the monopolies by bringing in outside competition.

5. The Freedmen's Bureau will set up legislative assemblies in the freedmen communities, where rules will be decided by majority voting.⁹
6. The federal government will maintain a presence of 5,000 troops in the old CSA states until 1895 to ensure that the rules of the Freedmen's Bureau are observed.

Congressional Rules for the White South

1. Southern whites will have control over their state governments and pass laws governing their own societies, affecting only those blacks who have been released from their wardship status.
2. Southern state governments will not legislate any laws concerning the black community, including that of taxation.
3. The federal government will subsidize the cost of state government for twenty-five years (until 1895) in the amount that the state governments expended in 1870.

FINANCES AND SIZE OF THE ALTERNATIVE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

Gen. O. O. Howard told Congress in 1868 that the bureau employed 553 agents and 348 clerks. By looking at the Register of Officers and Agents in 1867, the (eyeballed) average for bureau agents was about \$1,800 per year and for clerks about \$1,200. Breaking down Howard's report of 1870, he figured the expenses of the bureau between 1865 until the start of 1870 to have been \$11,990,058.81. By playing with Howard's numbers, I estimate the expenses of the personnel (salaries) to have been \$2 million; office expenses, \$661,487; emergency aid in clothing and food, \$3,061,228; medical, \$987,614; schools and asylums, \$1,869,845; and transportation, \$327,627.¹⁰

9. I am thinking here of the procedures that John Eaton put in place at the Davis Bend Experiment. See Steven Joseph Ross, "Freed Soil, Freed Labor, Freed Men: John Eaton and the Davis Bend Experiment," *Journal of Southern History* 44 (May 1978): 213–32.

10. Using Howard's report, I figured out these categories: Office (stationery and printing, quarters and fuel, telegraph and postage, internal revenue, agricultural bureau, collections) for a total of \$661,457; Aid, Clothing and Food (clothing for distribution, commissary stores,

Under the system I propose here, I argue for three bureau agents per former confederate county. There were approximately 1,100 Southern counties, so that would mean 3,300 bureau agents. As the number of clerks seemed to have been about two-thirds of the number of agents, the number of clerks would have been about 2,200. At a rough annual salary of \$1,800 for agents and \$1,200 for clerks, the total annual cost of salaries under the proposed system for agents and clerks would have been \$5,940,000 and \$2,640,000, respectively, a total of \$8,580,000.

From Howard's statements, I guess offices and supplies ran about one-third the amount paid to agents and clerks; transportation costs, about one-sixth. Using these proportions, my proposal would yield \$5.72 million for offices and \$1.43 million for transportation. I assume the cost of running the Freedmen's Courts would be equivalent to the amount expended in Howard's report for emergency aid for food and rations, about \$3 million. Thus, under my proposal, the operation of the Freedmen's Bureau would have totaled about \$18.73 million per year.

To house 5,000 troops in the South between 1865 and 1895 would run, as an estimate, about one-seventh of the cost of the army appropriation during the Gilded Age. Between 1871 and 1880, the number of troops in the army was about 35,000 soldiers; so 5,000 soldiers for the South would represent one-seventh of the total that had actually been on duty. One-seventh of the actual expenditures for the army during those years (averaging approximately \$50 million per year) would have been \$7 million.

Finally, there is the subsidy to the confederate governments to pay their state government expenses over these thirty years. The Census of 1870 listed the state taxes collected. The total for fourteen Southern states was \$16 million.

Adding together the totals necessary to pay for the program I have constructed, we have \$18.73 million for the Freedmen's Bureau, \$7 million for the cost of the army, and \$16 million for subsidies to Southern state governments, totaling about \$41.73 million per year. This amount is surprisingly within the range of federal government finances *so long as the Congress allowed money that was surplus to be used for Reconstruction* (see Tables 1 and 2). Given the amount of surplus revenue the United States racked up over the Gilded Age, it is surprising that so few congressional Republicans seized the opportunity to offer financial aid in reconstructing the South.

forage Southern relief), \$3,061,228; Medical (\$987,614); Schools and Asylums (\$1,869,845); Transportation (\$327,627); Agent Salaries (\$928,158) and Clerks (\$1,012,520). House Executive Doc. No. 142, 41st Cong., 2d sess. (1870), 1, 15, 28–30.

Table 1. Southern State and Local Government and City Taxes, 1870

State	State Taxes (Millions \$)	Local/City Taxes (Millions \$)
Alabama	1.456	2.982
Florida	.083	.048
Georgia	.945	2.627
Louisiana	2.671	7.000
Mississippi	.511	2.648
South Carolina	1.321	2.767
Texas	.589	
Arkansas	.950	
Kentucky	.809	
Missouri	1.309	3.376
North Carolina	1.200	2.352
Tennessee	1.056	3.381
Virginia	2.847	4.613
Totals	\$15.570 million	\$31.79 million

Source: *Ninth Census* (1870): vol. 3: *Statistics of the Wealth and Industry of the United States . . . 1870* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1872), 11.

I have no way of calculating the effect of my proposal on the long-term economics and politics of the South between 1865 and 1895. My general surmise is that because African Americans were so subject to violence and political disability, their economic performance had to suffer severely. Through violence freedpeople would learn that initiative, experimentation, and ambition brought racist retribution. Therefore, the “one kind of freedom” that blacks learned was a stunted freedom with explicit boundaries. After all, it makes absolutely no sense for whites to establish a white supremacy regime and ideology and then allow blacks to outcompete them economically. The political liabilities from redemption and then from Jim Crow segregation made black property rights precarious. Finally, a racist society by definition can only have a grotesque sense of community. By denying African Americans participation in politics, whites created a community full of hostile members nearly at war with one another because of the deprivations imposed by law.

The system I propose here had the possibility of making “free labor” actually operate by removing the coercion imposed by ex-Confederates and the regimes of Redeemers and Jim Crowers. The program had the possibility of mitigating white violence not only through a more substantial Freedmen’s Bureau and military presence, but also by momentarily removing from the mix the political problem of white resistance to black voting and by offering some

Table 2. Government Expenditures, Selected Items, 1865–95

Year	Federal Outlay (millions \$)	War Dept. Outlay (millions \$)	Payment on Debt (millions \$)	Surplus/ Deficit (millions \$)	Army Personnel (000s Troops)
1865	1,297	1,031	77	-963	1,062
1866	521	284	133	37	77
1867	358	95	144	133	75
1868	377	123	140	28	66
1869	322	78	131	48	52
1870	310	58	129	101	50
1871	292	36	126	91	42
1872	277	35	117	96	42
1873	290	46	105	43	43
1874	302	42	107	2	43
1875	275	41	103	13	38
1876	265	38	100	29	41
1877	241	37	97	40	34
1878	236	32	103	21	36
1879	267	40	105	7	38
1880	267	38	96	66	38
1881	261	40	82	100	(continues in range of 38–42)
1882	258	44	71	145	
1883	265	49	59	133	
1884	244	39	55	104	
1885	260	43	51	63	
1886	242	34	51	94	
1887	268	39	48	103	
1888	268	39	45	111	
1889	299	44	41	88	
1890	318	45	36	85	
1891	365	49	38	27	
1892	345	47	23	10	
1893	383	50	27	2	
1894	368	55	28	-61	
1895	356	52	31	-31	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), 1114, 1104, 1142.

financial aid to ease the burden of the South's return to peacetime prosperity. It was the tax situation in the Reconstruction South that fueled additional violent outbursts against black voting and black economic independence.¹¹

11. On tax revolts, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, 415–16; Michael Perman, *The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869–1879* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1984), chap. 11;

My governing assumption is guided by historical logic: patterns of behavior repeated over long stretches of time that do not yield great deprivations but do show some positive results will become accepted and even justified by the population at large—a rationality learned by experience over time rather than by instant calculation of a felicity index or consideration of existing preference functions. This is not to say that some resistance and violence might have occurred over time and even after 1895; such responses, however, would have been statistically minor.

So I would conjecture (wildly, I might add) that by planting a thirty-year bureaucracy in the South to govern white-black economic relationships, the reduction of violence would permit a healthier economy and then a movement toward full voter participation, which would have caused less reaction than was the case in 1867–76. I would expect that sharecropping would appear under any circumstance, but by having an active bureaucracy in place it would not have resembled peonage, and thus returns to labor would have increased. I would also postulate a more diversified economy because blacks would have moved from agricultural to manufacturing jobs in Southern cities. While the effects of the Civil War would probably have hung over the South for three or more decades, I would think that by 1900 the per capita income of the South might possibly have approached 80 percent of the national average rather than the 50 percent that actually occurred. Finally, I would hope that the bout with Jim Crow racism would have been so blunted by this pattern that it would not have been effective and that voting rights for blacks would have been allowed without hindrance. In this rosy scenario—letting free labor operate the way it was supposed to—I would hypothesize that one-half of the African American population would have risen above poverty. But, suffering no illusions about the nature of a free-market society with laissez-faire government, I would expect a poverty rate for African Americans to have been no less than 30 percent.

John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction after the Civil War* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), 142–45. For a view of violence and economic development, see Gerald David Jaynes, *Branches Without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862–1882* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), 301–6; J. Mills Thornton III, “Fiscal Policy and the Failure of Radical Reconstruction in the Lower South,” in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), 349–94.

CRITICISMS OF THE COUNTERFACTUAL FREEDMAN'S BUREAU

Having thus offered an alternative to what happened and to assert its feasibility, I will now offer a few explanations for why it never occurred and what its inherent problems are because of historical context.

First, the assumption that the Freedmen's Bureau would have operated beneficially is highly questionable. The studies that now exist on the bureau call that assumption into question. Moreover, the other case of a bureaucracy that was established to take care of a subject people does not inspire great confidence: the Bureau of Indian Affairs.¹²

Second, the possibility that Congress would have condoned a program that permitted such a bureaucracy to exist has to be weighed carefully. Because such a bureaucracy was created for the Indians, it is not out of the realm of possibility that it might have been created for ex-slaves. Perhaps the clash between Congress and President Andrew Johnson soured Republicans on relying on a bureaucracy because it could be so easily manipulated by executive orders.¹³ But in the larger scheme of things, the basic problem was the state of economic knowledge and the legacy of the American Revolution. Everything nineteenth-century Republicans knew about the economy told

12. The literature on the Freedmen's Bureau usually indicates that the bureau operated to the advantage of the planters rather than the freedpeople; however, there were variations. Recent literature does tend to paint the Freedmen's Bureau in a more positive light. The negative views of the Freedmen's Bureau may be found in William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather; General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968); George R. Bentley, *A History of the Freedmen's Bureau* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1955); Russell Duncan, *Freedom's Shore: Tunis Campbell and the Georgia Freedmen* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986); Robert Francis Engs, *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861–1890* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1979); Howard A. White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970); Nancy Cohen-Lack, "A Struggle for Sovereignty: National Consolidation, Emancipation, and Free Labor in Texas, 1865," *Journal of Southern History* 58 (Feb. 1992): 57–98; William Cohen, "Black Immobility and Free Labor: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Relocation of Black Labor, 1865–1868," *Civil War History* 30 (Sept. 1984): 221–34; Jaynes, *Branches Without Roots*, chap. 4. For some modern reassessments, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, 143–69; Paul A. Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Reconstruction of Georgia* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1997); and Randy Findley, *From Slavery to Uncertain Freedom: The Freedmen's Bureau in Arkansas, 1865–1869* (Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 1996). For a comparison of federal bureaucracy to the Indians, see Terry L. Anderson, *Sovereign Nations or Reservations? An Economic History of American Indians* (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1995). For a more balanced approach, see Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1984).

13. See Herman Belz, *A New Birth of Freedom: The Republican Party and Freedmen's Rights, 1861 to 1866* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), chaps. 5, 6.

them that bureaucracy was the path to despotism, that the vote was the only means of self-defense, that a large government invariably endangered liberty. The general public psychology was generally opposed to the kind of bureaucratic remedy I have in mind.

Third, the idea that Republicans would have given money to the defeated South in a fit of generosity troubles the historical imagination. Northern Republicans did not vote funds for Southern improvements in rivers and harbors, Southern railroads, or flood control; they did nothing to ease the plight of Southern Republicans who required such victories to gain credibility with Southern white voters.¹⁴ So the idea that Republicans would agree to pay the expenses of Southern state governments to enable the economy to right itself and remove economic troubles from the racist cauldron requires a leap of faith. Although historians do not like to admit it, Northerners in the 1860s wanted some measure of revenge—and impoverishment probably qualified as an appropriate form of revenge for rebellion. (All this vengeance was couched, of course, in Christian terms.) However, one feature deserves a special comment. Northerners were in an unholy haste to pay off the debt incurred by the Civil War. As a lesson to be learned—to descend to simple didacticism—let me point out that the purpose of models and rules of behavior is to amplify the potentials of human life—such rules are to serve the goals of civilization. All human rules have their defects and limitations, and the time to recognize those defects and limitations is when following the rules imposes unusual and inhumane hardships. It would have done no great damage to the economy of the United States and to its future growth to have slowed down the rate of debt repayment and to have used some of the money to assist the devastated South.

My scenario also does not include the social cataclysms that were destined to arise in the fields of international agriculture and labor relations. How they may have affected a thirty-year Freedmen's Bureau is almost beyond reckoning. Given the labor crisis in the United States that had emerged at least by 1886, and perhaps was visible by 1874, it becomes questionable whether any program for Southern blacks might have viable.

Last, let me add one massive assumption that has guided this entire exercise: that Southern white supremacy could have been contained by a bureaucracy imposed by Congress, such bureaucracy being of a reasonable size and cost. The more intransigent the Southern white supremacy, the higher

14. See especially Terry L. Seip, *The South Returns to Congress: Men, Economic Measures, and Intersectional Relationships, 1868–1879* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1983).

the numbers of bureau agents and army troops needed to combat it. If white supremacist views were deeply enough engrained, the cost of Reconstruction could easily have dwarfed the federal budget. At that point, Northerners then would have realized, even if they all had been racial egalitarians (which of course they absolutely were not), that attempts to counter white supremacy in the South would have cost them their prosperity as well as their liberties. This is another way of saying that if the racist urge were sufficiently strong, then no Northern program for the South could have worked successfully.

Under this last consideration—that Southern white supremacist convictions could have been overcome only at the cost of Northern prosperity and self-government by the imposition of a military dictatorship—then my analysis leads me to only one other conclusion. If the bureaucratic solution could not have worked, the only answer was separation. The North should have created a black republic out of the states of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and possibly Mississippi, removed the whites living in those states to the West, and have completely segregated the races. And of all the possible programs of Reconstruction that one might conjecture, the one with absolutely the least possibility of being used is the one that supposes that the federal government would have ever removed whites from those states to have created a separate black republic.