The Impact of the Civil War upon Hoosier Society

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The morning of May 3, 1865, found the Republican Indianapolis Journal in a pensive mood as it looked back over the Civil War years which had so recently closed. "We wonder at what we have endured, we wonder at what we have achieved," it reflected. "We know as never before why we are blinded as to the future. Could we have... anticipated the great price we would have to pay for the maintenance of our integrity, we would have shrunk in dismay from the contest, or entered upon it with hearts unutterably heavy."

In sharp contrast was the gay holiday spirit which permeated Indiana in the spring of 1861 as the state bustled about the business of mobilizing for war. Amid the early martial enthusiasm there were few who anticipated the long and sanguinary struggle ahead. The eager volunteers who filled the three months' regiments—and the politicians who sanctified their cause—envisioned a war of short duration, a pleasant summer campaign, followed by the swift collapse of the Confederacy. With that accomplished, they expected a quick return to peace, to "the Union as it was," and to the suspended but still unsettled political issues. The war was being prosecuted only to preserve the Union, "with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired" ran the Crittenden resolution which was endorsed, in July, 1861, by every Indiana congressman.1 Thus, having little cognition of the social dynamics implicit in the war itself, the Hoosiers were hardly prepared for the profound changes that were soon to overtake Indiana and the nation.

As the months wore on, however, and the prospect of

1 Congressional Globe, 37 Cong., 1 Sess., 222-23.
peace and reunion appeared ever more remote, the citizens of Indiana ultimately perceived that the old order was changing—that “the Union as it was” would be no more. Denied a clear perspective by the distraction of clashing armies and angry politicians, few men grasped the full meaning of those momentous changes. It became increasingly clear that “henceforth the Americans will be a different people,” and that the country was entering upon “a new stage of being.” Thus, while the war experience was being woven into the fabric of state and national heritage, its impact was transforming every aspect of Hoosier society.

The local beneficiaries of change welcomed these revolutionary appurtenances of military strife and pronounced them good. The war too they blessed as a “refining ordeal” which would develop “the virtues of the American people.” Denying that it would have any ill effects upon popular institutions, they insisted that the nation would “from the crucible of war and the sacrifice of blood, present a more perfect civilization . . . than the world has ever seen.”

This happy picture of a regenerate people with souls cleansed by a bath of blood, however, was at best a distortion of the Indiana scene during those four long years of war. Instead the state presented a variegated mosaic of heroic, self-sacrificing patriotism and unblushing avarice, of warm idealism and calloused cynicism.

Noble indeed was the general devotion to the soldiers’ welfare portrayed by the untiring zeal of state sanitary workers, the sanitary fairs, the women’s auxiliary societies, the church organizations of every denomination, and the independent activity of young and old alike. Commendable too were the efforts stimulated by Governor Oliver P. Morton in behalf of the destitute families of the volunteers. For that purpose soldiers’ aid societies were formed, thousands of loaves of bread were distributed from the state bakery, theaters presented benefit performances, and farmers fre-

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2 Evansville, Indiana, Weekly Gazette, October 12, 1861.
3 Indianapolis Gazette, February 6, 1864.
6 Indianapolis Daily Journal, November 15, 1862; October 23, 1863; September 26, 1864.
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quently brought in generous contributions of food and fuel in long processions of heavily laden wagons. Such endeavors were the manifestations of a social consciousness and cooperative spirit which in that individualistic age prior to the war had been all but dormant.

In contrast there was, unfortunately, in this war-time society a grim and morbid motif which predominated throughout the conflict. It was revealed in the suffering and privation of broken families deprived of their means of support, and in the many tragic letters to the governor appealing for material aid. It appeared again in the terrible anxiety about the safety of loved ones after every battle, in the growing lists of native sons who were killed in action or died of disease, and in the desperate efforts of relatives to visit the sick and wounded in military hospitals. At home the original horror at the sight of mutilated men and of the coffins which so frequently lined the walls of the Indianapolis depot was gradually deadened as people became hardened and habituated to such incidences of war.

Moreover, the appeal to arms appeared to be at least as conducive to the development of vice as it was of virtue. In Indiana's bustling capital city the business of war preparations brought in its wake a decided slackening of moral standards. Gambling and heavy drinking were common; painted women plied their trade unmolested except for the occasional invasion of their premises by mobs of drunken soldiers who turned them into shambles. Crime grew apace. Newspapers were filled with accounts of street brawls, of the depredations of bands of lawless men, of murders and thefts.

Behind the lines, in Indiana as elsewhere, people witnessed the unhappy spectacle of men growing rich from their country's misfortunes, too often without scrupling about the means by which they amassed their wealth. When state bonds were sold to raise money for military purposes complaints

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7 Ibid., November 9, 1863; Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, November 2, 1861; Terrell, Report, I, 356-62.
10 See also John H. Holliday, "Indianapolis and the Civil War," Indiana Historical Society Publications, IV (Indianapolis, 1885), 574, 585-86.
were heard that local bankers and capitalists dealt too harshly with their government by demanding excessive discounts.\textsuperscript{11} The unsavory practices of men connected with the early business of the state commissary and quartermaster departments revealed a confusing mixture of inexperience, incompetence and actual peculation.\textsuperscript{12} Hoosier soldiers and civilians knew well the sordid story of shoddy contractors who made huge profits by swindling state and national governments in filling the much coveted war orders. Governor Morton's complaints about guns that could be shaken to pieces and about Austrian rifles that became worthless after a week's use sketched a shameful picture of the rankest knavery. To have sent men to the field with such weapons, he once protested, would have been "little better than murder."\textsuperscript{13} Small wonder then that some defined the conflict as a "contractor's war" and cried out against the patriots who had "enriched themselves out of the . . . very miseries of the country." But the Democratic Indianapolis Sentinel mourned that when one protested against fraud and corruption, such scoundrels "set upon him with the howl that he is 'disloyal,' that he 'sympathizes with the rebellion.'"\textsuperscript{14}

Meanwhile, heavy taxes and the inevitable war-time inflation brought distress to men with fixed salaries and to soldiers who had to support their families upon an income of thirteen dollars a month. Governor Morton described the situation succinctly in an appeal to Congress in November, 1862, which urged an increase in pay for the volunteers. He

\textsuperscript{11}Indianapolis Daily Journal, July 9, 1861.

\textsuperscript{12}Morton to W. S. Holman, January 9, 20, 1862; W. R. Holloway to Morton, January 25, 1862; Morton to J. H. Vajan, December 13, 1862, Morton Letter Books; Indianapolis Daily Journal, April 30, May 30, June 5, 6, October 3, 1861; January 22, December 17, 22, 1862; Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, May 27, June 8, December 20, 1861; December 15, 16, 18, 20, 1862; W. H. and Ariel Drapey (comps.), Brevier Legislative Reports of Indiana, 1858-1887 (22 vols. in 20, Indianapolis, 1858-1888), I, Special Session, 10, 17, 23, 30, 36, 41, 63, 72, 74, 112, 148-50, 176-78, 192, 199-200, referred to hereafter as Brevier Legislative Reports; Terrell, Report, I, 451-54; William D. Fouke, Life of Oliver P. Morton (Indianapolis, 1899), I, 151.


\textsuperscript{14}September 4, 1863; March 6, 1865.
noted that clothing prices had risen 120 per cent, while food prices had risen 60 per cent. Hence the war was a time of stringency for many Hoosier families who were often obliged to subsist upon food substitutes such as parched rye in place of coffee.

These destitute families made an unhappy contrast with the men who prospered and lived accordingly. Indeed, for some the war was a period of lavish living, elaborate entertainments and material abundance. The dissatisfied called it an era of "criminal extravagance . . . without a parallel" and asserted that the "resources of the nation are being wasted in riotous living." These were inauspicious beginnings for the nation's "new stage of being."

While it appeared thus doubtful that the war would produce a purified people, it was clear enough that vast economic changes were sweeping across Indiana and the nation. The ancient struggle between the dogmas of Democracy and Whiggery had not abated, but the former's concepts of political economy, so long predominant, were forced to yield before the onslaughts of triumphant Republicanism. Ruefully the Hoosier Jacksonians watched the bulwarks of their system crumble away as the hated principles of their foes emerged to rule the country.

In southern Indiana the devotees of the old order—the boat builders, the merchants and farmers whose prosperity had long hinged upon the river trade—complained bitterly against the obstruction of their river outlet, and occasionally they defiantly engaged in contraband trade with the South. They refused to abandon their abiding suspicion of railroad transportation and attributed all their adversities to grasping Eastern capitalists. During the legislative session of 1863 there were frequent protests against allegedly excessive freight rates accompanied by a demand for state railroad

15 Indianapolis Daily Journal, December 3, 1862.
17 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, May 4, 1864.
18 Morton to Governor Richard Yates, April 24, 1861; Morton to Salmon P. Chase, May 9, 1861, Morton Dispatch Books; Official Records, Ser. 3, Vol. 1, 188; Terrell, Report, I, 401-02; Indianapolis Daily Journal, April 20, 24, 30, May 5, 7, September 9, 1861; February 17, 1862; February 16, June 3, 1863; Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, May 6, 9, 1861; New Albany, Indiana, Weekly Ledger, June 19, 1861; February 11, April 15, August 26, September 16, 1863; Evansville, Indiana, Weekly Gazette, December 19, 1863.
regulation which foreshadowed a new field of political controversy and the post-war revolt of Western farmers.19

Yet the declining river interests could not ignore the fact that the paths of commerce were changing, that the demands of Europe and the East had diverted much of their trade, and that consolidating railroads were growing up to the needs of the country. Nor did they miss the fact that the war would strike a deadly blow at their Southern market, for they saw that the South would be impoverished and its old economy destroyed.20 The Indianapolis Journal mocked those who clung to the tradition of Western dependence upon the South. It pointed to the rapid growth of northern Indiana where there was no prejudice against the “Yankee,” and noted that the Eastern and Southern markets could not be compared “with the arithmetic of five years ago.”21 Manifestly, in the debate between river and railroad interests the former group appeared more and more to speak only from a sentimental attachment to a tradition that was fast losing its bearing upon fact.

Additional evidence of economic change appeared in the transformation of banking institutions during the war period. Secession had been a severe blow to Indiana’s free banks which had invested heavily in Southern state bonds.22 The state bank too had difficulties when the depreciation of legal tender notes caused a rapid rise in the value of gold and forced that institution, in the spring of 1862, to suspend specie payments.23 These blows to local banking and the issuance of large quantities of “greenbacks” grated upon the sensibilities of Jacksonian Democrats who were apprehensive about further departures from their cherished economic principles. They protested against the growth of a “political money power” whose financial policies were allegedly based upon “a foundation of sand,” and predicted the imminence of economic ruin and the collapse of government credit.24

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21 November 3, 1862.
22 Indianapolis Daily Journal, July 8, 9, 1861.
24 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, February 10, September 22, 25, November 23, 1863.
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The dismay of Indiana Democrats reached its climax early in 1863 with the establishment of a new system of national banking. To them it epitomized the abandonment of Democratic economic doctrines and the resurrection of the most detested of all Whig heresies. Other Hoosiers, however, including some wealthy Democrats, welcomed the new banking system. Beginning with the First National Bank of Indianapolis, directed by William H. English, a network of these institutions quickly covered the state. By 1864 Indiana possessed thirty-one national banks which had all but won the field from the state institutions. Indeed, most branches of the state bank ultimately obtained national bank charters. Nothing more clearly exemplified the role of “war necessity” as an instrument of social revolution than did these changes in the American banking system.

Meanwhile the foes of economic change nursed a bitter resentment against the revival of the protective tariff. The Morrill tariff of 1861—“a model of political thieving”—received censorious treatment in countless Democratic resolutions, and Western Republicans who accepted this and subsequent tariff increases were branded as apostates to their section. Thomas A. Hendricks and Daniel W. Voorhees repeatedly scourged the Eastern manufacturers who exploited the West with the protective tariff and sought to make its people “the ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’ for the capitalists of New England and Pennsylvania.”

Lumping together these portentous economic developments, the defenders of the old order pointed to the destruc-

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25 Indianapolis Daily Journal, June 6, 1863; January 4, June 29, 1864; March 8, 1865. Hugh McCulloch, former president of the state bank, became comptroller of the currency under the national banking system.

26 See especially Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, September 9, 11, 17, 19, 20, 21, 25, October 3, November 19, December 11, 24, 25, 27, 31, 1861; January 1, 3, 4, June 30, August 19, 1862; Corydon, Indiana, Democrat, quoted in ibid., February 17, 1862. To supplement the protective features of the tariff, a group of Indianapolis women joined “The Ladies’ National Covenant” to check imports and encourage the use of domestic products, especially textiles. While this action reflected the local interest in American industrial development, the Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel complained that its object was to “encourage New England manufactures at the expense of Western consumers. This they regarded as highly loyal and patriotic.” May 17, June 20, 1864.

27 Ibid., January 8, 9, 10, 1862; Indianapolis Daily Journal, January 9, 10, 1862; New Albany, Indiana, Weekly Ledger, January 15, 1862; Congressional Globe, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., 1150.
tion of their so-called “sound principles of political economy” as proof of the hypocrisy of Republican professions of wartime non-partisanship.28 "The spirit of our institutions have [sic] been changed since the war began," observed the Sentinel, "... and revolutions never go backward."29 Indeed, in the opinion of this newspaper, the Republicans prosecuted the war "solely with the hope that a new order of things ... will be its end."30 "A long war is their elysium," it added, for without it "all their fancy schemes for taxing, banking and plundering would pass away. . . ."31 Democrats predicted the growth of a Northern financial aristocracy as the end result of current Republican policies. "Mr. Chase says the aristocrats of the South lord it over black men," observed the Sentinel, "but what will the people gain if there is substituted in its place an aristocracy that will domineer over white men?"32

In spite of the dolorous Democratic predictions that the nation was heading toward economic collapse, the sponsors of the new order increased and prospered. With all its accompanying changes and dislocations, the war still brought an unprecedented degree of prosperity to Indiana. Widening markets meant high prices for the products of her farms, and agriculture flourished and expanded as never before. The recruiting of armies left a shortage of man power which improved the bargaining position of labor.33 Local railroads, like all other commercial enterprises, did a thriving business and made handsome profits. The closure of the rivers and the transportation of troops and military supplies enabled many lines to extinguish long-standing debts and to appreciate greatly the value of their stocks.34

The invigorating influence of the war was especially noticeable at Indianapolis. As the center of the state's war activities the capital city more than doubled in size, until, by the end of 1864, it boasted a population of 45,000. Old industries expanded rapidly, and new establishments sprang

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28 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, November 2, 1863.
29 June 25, 1861.
30 June 26, 1862.
31 January 24, 1862.
32 October 27, 1863.
34 Terrell, Report, I, 396.
up in mushroom fashion. The city's growing business section invaded older residential districts, new buildings shot up, and hundreds of houses were erected to meet the needs of the fast growing population. Indianapolis was indeed a roaring, booming, prosperous Western metropolis. In the midst of all this activity the Journal noted contentedly that "the nation wages war and prospers!"35

That Indiana was undergoing an economic transformation was thus apparent enough even to contemporaries; that the time-honored precepts of agrarian economy were being destroyed was clearly perceived by the friends of the old order. Jefferson's Democracy might still idealize rural virtues and envision Indiana's future in terms of prosperous farms and peaceful villages; but the dreams of others were woven with ribbons of steel, colored by the smoke of factories and filled with humming machines. Enterprising Hoosiers were not slow to catch the dynamic spirit of industrial capitalism, nor to transform the fabric of dreams into the tough web of fact. Sturdy farmers were feeling the mettle of their industrial rivals as Indiana marched with the nation toward a new economic era.37

With the conflict assuming the proportions of a protracted and gigantic struggle accompanied by significant modifications of American institutions, the original concept of a war based upon the Crittenden resolution appeared somewhat puerile. Hence, to counter their critics, the local protagonists of war and national change proceeded to formulate a greater moral justification for their cause. Gradually their propaganda organizations unfolded and described before Hoosier citizens a series of issues and objectives which placed the war upon a high level of moral grandeur. In-

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35 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, May 25, 1862; August 24, September 6, 1864; Indianapolis Daily Journal, July 12, 1862; April 28, 1863; November 9, 1864; Centerville, Indiana True Republican, December 25, 1862; Holliday, "Indianapolis and the Civil War," Indiana Historical Society Publications, IV, 560, 569, 583-84, 588.

36 February 9, 1864.

37 The Census of 1860 revealed that, even before the Civil War, Indiana's industrial interests had reached sizable proportions and included 5,110 establishments, a capital investment of $17,881,586, a product with an annual value of $41,840,434, and employed 20,755 workers. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manufactures, 133. See also Isaac Lippencott, A History of Manufactures in the Ohio Valley to the Year 1860 (Chicago, 1914), 157 et seq.
diana's sons fought and died thereafter for something far more sublime than the mere preservation of the Union.

President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation afforded the local war propagandists an opportunity to raise one grand moral issue. Despite their early conservatism upon the slavery question, by the summer of 1863 Indiana Republicans and their party press had passed from the argument of "military necessity" to a justification of the act on the principles of human liberty. They discovered in the slave system the basic cause of the war and began to speak in terms of an irrepressible conflict between slavery and freedom.

Governor Morton first took this higher ground in defense of emancipation in a speech at an Indianapolis meeting held to celebrate the fall of Vicksburg. The Indianapolis Journal marked its advance to the new position with the assertion that Lincoln's proclamation "made the present contest...a struggle in behalf of human liberty and against slavery." Moreover, it contended, "between the hostile principles of Freedom and Slavery...there can of necessity be no permanent peace."39

More than freedom was at stake, however, for it appeared that the nation fought also for self-preservation, for the very existence of its government and constitution.40 The war, too, supposedly involved the great issue "between the Democratic principle and the aristocratic principle."41 The South had gone to war, asserted Governor Morton in a Fourth of July oration, to subvert the very foundations of the Declaration of Independence and to destroy democratic institutions.42 Thus, summarized the Journal, the North fought "against one of the most cruel and profligate despotisms in the history of time—against a blasphemous

38 Indianapolis Daily Journal, July 10, 1863. Thus, declared the Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, Morton opposed the Union as it was, and, like the abolitionists, "he is for a new Union, a new Constitution, a new bible and a new God." July 9, 1863.
39 Indianapolis Daily Journal, April 16, 30, July 6, November 13, 18, 24, 1863; January 2, 1864. The radical Indianapolis Gazette took this advanced position at an earlier date. See, for example, the issue of February 5, 1863.
40 Indianapolis Daily Journal, April 2, 1863; Indianapolis Gazette, January 5, March 17, 1863.
41 See, for example, the speech of James Hughes on November 25, 1862, printed in the Indianapolis Daily Journal, November 26, 1862.
42 The speech was delivered at Centerville, Indiana, July 4, 1863, and printed in ibid., July 9, 1863.
attempt to rear an empire on the cornerstone of human slavery. We are fighting for national existence, for good government, for law and order, for liberty and civilization."

With such a complete monopoly of human virtue, who could doubt where God's sympathies lay? In noting certain facts worthy "the gratitude of every Christian," the Journal observed that "the unanimity of the pulpit . . . in prosecution of this war . . . is itself an assurance of the justice of the war." Surely it revealed "the presence of God's own spirit." General Carrington, in a public letter to the Legion of Johnson county, also insisted that "God is with us," and that the South fought against Him as well as against the North. "If one with God be a majority," he exulted, "how are we fortified by the belief that God has brought this war upon us to purify the nation . . . ." Indeed, cried Morton, "we are now fighting in the holiest cause that ever engaged the attention of the world."

Yet, despite the contemporary justification of the conflict in terms of great moral issues, the Civil War had a strange and appalling effect upon the minds of Hoosiers. The bitter dispute between the champions and opponents of social and economic change, the inevitable physical and mental distress experienced by a nation at war, and the effectiveness of Union propaganda transformed many people into blind and intransigent fanatics. The war itself unleashed the forces which too often overcame the powers of rational thought. Behind the lines men ceased to think and only hated, for the virus of war psychosis poisoned the minds of leaders and people alike.

The first effect of Northern propaganda was to give to Southerners the shape of human monsters, and to raise among loyal patriots a burning desire for national revenge. After a few short months of war the usually mild mannered Senator Henry S. Lane harangued an Indianapolis audience with a venomous attack upon the South. "Blood must be shed," he ranted, "and rebel blood profusely shed, for we read that there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood."

43 April 30, 1863.
44 February 9, 1864.
45 October 3, 1863, Carrington Papers.
46 This speech was delivered in Washington, December 7, 1861, and printed in the Indianapolis Daily Journal, December 12, 1861.
47 Ibid., September 18, 1861.
Overcome by the miasma of war, Republican speakers and newspapers unfolded, after each battle, a familiar and repetitious pattern of atrocity stories. They began with the first battle of Bull Run where the “rebel barbarians” were alleged to have robbed the Union dead, fired upon hospitals “with their freight of groaning wounded,” and “pierced . . . with their bayonets” the wounded on the field. The loyal press described the execution of this diabolical work as so systematic as to leave no doubt that it was done by the orders of rebel commanders whose purpose was extermination. After numerous rehearsals of such accounts, the Indianapolis Gazette concluded that no people in history “ever exhibited that fiendish malignity, that savage cruelty, and that utter want of honor and respect for the laws and customs of war, that have characterized the people of the South . . . .” Southerners “are only about semi-civilized,” raged the Journal, “and do not therefore understand that war is not necessarily barbarous.”

The effects of such outpourings upon an agitated people were shown in the numerous printed letters of angry patriots who found release for their malevolence in demands for punitive measures of retaliation, perhaps “a little more shooting, and not quite so much capturing.” When, early in 1862, Confederate prisoners were brought to Camp Morton, complaints were heard that the rebels were being treated too well. Such bitter feelings were deepened by Union officers who returned from Confederate prisons to lecture upon their inhuman treatment during their confinement in the South. These were the sinews which strengthened the will to fight.

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52 Ibid., March 12, 1862. There is no evidence that the Confederate prisoners were pampered. At Camp Morton they were housed in barracks constructed from lumber used for cattle sheds, provided only with inferior clothing, and fed with the “utmost economy.” Morton to M. C. Meigs, February 23, 1862, Morton Letter Books; Official Records, Ser. 2, Vol. III, 355-36. The prisoners sent to Lafayette were confined in a pork house and lived in wretched conditions. Ibid., Ser. 2, Vol. III, 355, 360, 366-67.
53 For current descriptions of Libby Prison at Richmond, Virginia, see Indianapolis Daily Journal, May 15, 1863; March 24, 1864. For a description of Andersonville Prison in Georgia, see Ibid., September 9, 1864.
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War psychosis was not only manifested in the Hoosiers' attitude toward the South, but also in a morbid suspicion of those at home whose opinions did not coincide with their own. Men whose political ends were served by inoculating the community with tales of domestic treason often succumbed ultimately to the infection of their own puissant drug. Loyal citizens lived in panicky fear of their own neighbors, and lumped all dissenters in the single category of traitors. Intellectual tolerance was not the order of the day.

With the assurance that peace could come only "through the red gates of war," the Journal informed its readers that unless a man gave unqualified support to the war and was "openly, heartily, and intensely loyal, he is suspected of secession proclivities. . . ." Upon that premise Union party advocates repeatedly indicted the Democracy with disloyalty. The evidence advanced by excited partisans was that Democrats divided northern councils and thus prevented the suppression of the rebellion, that they supposedly made no contribution to the sanitary commission, that they cried out for free speech only to enable them to spread their treason, that all Knights of the Golden Circle were Democrats, that all rebels were Democrats—indeed, that it was a Democratic rebellion.

The columns of the Indianapolis Journal were filled with accounts of the military drills and traitorous plots of secret Democratic societies to illustrate "that the State is, as Governor Morton strikingly expressed it, 'perfectly cavernous' with disloyal organizations." The Republican press printed every rumor and wild report sent in by frenzied patriots of conspiracies being hatched among their neighbors, of secret aid to the rebels, and of the shameful persecution of Union men. The authors of these letters expressed horror at men who boldly wore copperhead emblems, and who were so depraved as to "glory in being butternuts." There were numerous demands that all such traitors be arrested and

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54 Ibid., March 16, 1863.
55 February 27, 1864.
56 Indianapolis Daily Journal, March 17, 24, 25, April 1, 22, 30, September 8, October 13, 1863; Indianapolis Gazette, January 2, 5, 1863; Terrell, Report, I, 233-35.
57 February 2, 21, March 12, 21, 23, April 1, 3, 14, June 18, August 5, 20, 1863. The same kind of material filled the columns of the Indianapolis Gazette.
tried for treason, or that they be "cleaned out" through the action of Vigilance Committees. In stumping the state for the Sanitary Commission the ebullient Chaplain Lozier vowed that "wherever I find a 'copperhead' I shall, in the name of God and the Hoosier soldiers, 'bruise the serpent's head.'"

Additional alarming letters poured in upon the governor from every quarter of the state. They described the activities of Democrats who cursed Union men and cheered for "Jeff" Davis, and reported the drills and meetings of treasonable societies in adjoining townships and counties. Some professed to possess large stores of information with which they hoped to aid the governor in the exposure of the Knights of the Golden Circle. It was characteristic of these letters, filled as they were with rumors in the absence of facts, to reflect numerous local feuds and the agitation and illiteracy of their authors rather than the treason they pretended to expose. The general war hysteria was equally well portrayed in the correspondence of Republican secret societies whose members appeared to regard themselves as the last bulwark against domestic revolution.

Public leaders were at least as great alarmists as were their constituents. In the summer of 1862 Governor Morton wrote a panicky letter to Secretary of War Stanton which described a secret treasonable society in Indiana with 10,000 members organized to "circulate and foster newspapers of extremely doubtful loyalty." The Indianapolis Sentinel, he declared, was "as thoroughly opposed to our Government as the Charleston Mercury or Richmond Enquirer." In March, 1863, Morton informed his private secretary that domestic conditions were such that no additional troops could be spared

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58 See especially Indianapolis Daily Journal, September 2, 25, 1861; March 18, 1863.
59 Ibid., February 21, 1863.
60 Many such letters are in the Morton MSS. and Letter Books. Several of them are printed in Harvey Wish (ed.), "Civil War Letters and Dispatches," Indiana Magazine of History, XXXIII (1937), 62-74.
61 See, for example, Corresponding Secretary, Indiana Union Club, to J. K. English, July 2, 1862 [?], H. K. English Collection, Indiana State Library.
from the state, and that the Legion was to be prepared for any emergency.63

Similarly, military officials in Indiana often succumbed to the general excitement and conducted themselves as though they resided in the heart of the Confederacy. Conrad Baker, assistant provost marshal general for Indiana, reported to his chief that the “disloyal element under the name ‘Democracy’” was having great success in its efforts to arm and drill its friends.64 General Carrington, who also received a full quota of communications regarding domestic treason,65 reported to the president and secretary of war, early in 1863, that the local Knights of the Golden Circle were organized “to break up the army.” He sent them an elaborate description of that society’s secrets and objectives which embodied most of the current newspaper reports. It was his belief that the local Knights had a membership of 92,000, and that Vallandigham could have raised 20,000 armed traitors in the state without trouble.66

From this welter of rumors concerning domestic disloyalty there emerged nothing more substantial than isolated instances of local disorder, and these—the Republican press notwithstanding—were the fruits of the general hysteria, of lawless bands associated with neither party, of refractory soldiers and personal feuds, rather than of any widespread treasonable conspiracy.67 Whatever significance was attached to the Dodd conspiracy of 1864 by Union party politicians, the fact still remained that no insurrection ever materialized and that the subsequent “treason trials” failed to reveal the evidence of an overt act.68 Secret Democratic societies there were, but they were equally popular among Republicans, and each group claimed to have organized for defense against the other. To a large extent these mystic conclaves, with

63 Morton to W. R. Holloway, March 26, 1863, ibid.
65 A number of these communications are in the Carrington Papers. See also Carrington to Morton, March 25, 1863, ibid.
67 For general accounts of this local violence see Terrell, Report, I, 278-82; Mayo Fesler, “Secret Political Societies in the North during the Civil War,” Indiana Magazine of History, XIV (1918), 183-286, see 208-10.
68 Benn Pitman (ed.), The Trials for Treason at Indianapolis . . . (Cincinnati, 1865), passim; Felix G. Stidger, Treason History of the Order of Sons of Liberty . . . (Chicago, 1908), passim.
all their ridiculous rituals, were the mere products of their age, and took their places among the Sons of Malta and defunct Know Nothings. In Indiana, then, the everlasting cry of treason had meaning only in terms of war psychosis and of political strategy. It was hardly the manifestation of a people purified by war.

In all these unfortunate incidences of a war-time society Indiana fared no better than other states. The hardening of men by their close association with suffering and death, the lowering of moral standards, the intensity of partisanship in a period of swift social change, and the evidences of war psychosis were as grim as the war itself. If any elements of "a more perfect civilization" were mixed in the "crucible of war," they were bought at a staggering price.