

The Race Issue in Indiana Politics during the Civil War

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In recent years the Tallmadges—father and son—have won elections in Georgia by campaigning on the issue of “white supremacy.” This type of appeal has not been limited to Georgia. The race question has also played a part in other states with heavy colored populations, but such campaigns are confined to the South today. However this has not always been the case. In the middle of the nineteenth century the race question was a very live political issue in Indiana.

The census of 1860 showed Indiana as having a population of 11,428 Negroes as compared with a total of 1,338,710 whites. In other words the Negroes constituted less than one per cent of the total. Figures of successive censuses from 1800 to 1860 showed that the number of Negroes in Indiana relative to the white population had steadily declined.¹ Nevertheless the race issue had a conspicuous place in Indiana politics until after the Civil War.

It is well known that there had been an influential pro-slavery group in Indiana Territory and that the territorial legislature had passed an indenture law which amounted to a thinly disguised slavery.² With the achievement of statehood the party opposed to slavery was in the ascendancy, but the state legislature continued to manifest a strong bias against the free Negroes already in the state and took measures to prevent an increase in their numbers. Not only were Negroes and Mulattoes denied the vote and the privilege of serving in the militia, they were also prevented by law from testifying in court in a case in which a white man was a party.³

On the subject of marriage between members of the white and colored races Indiana's legislators enacted more

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¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population, 1790-1915* (Washington, 1915), 44-45.

² Francis S. Philbrick (ed.), *The Laws of Indiana Territory, 1801-1809* (Springfield, Illinois, 1930), 136-139. This is volume XXI in the Illinois State Historical Library *Collections* (Springfield, 1903-).

³ *Laws of Indiana, 1817-1818*, p. 39; *ibid.*, 1853, p. 60.

drastic measures than those of any other northern state. Successive laws were passed which provided severe penalties for persons entering into such unions and for persons aiding or abetting them. For example, the act of 1840, which was entitled "An Act to Prohibit the Amalgamation of Whites and Blacks," provided fines of from one to five thousand dollars and confinement in the state prison for terms of from ten to twenty years for persons marrying in violation of this act. A minister performing such a marriage was subject to a fine of from one to ten thousand dollars.⁴

A question which appeared to alarm the lawmakers even more than the status of the colored population already in the state was the possibility of an influx of free Negroes and fugitive slaves from the South. In 1831 the Indiana General Assembly followed the example of Ohio and Illinois and passed a law which required any black or mulatto person coming into the state to post bond as a guarantee of good behavior and as security against becoming a public charge.⁵ The convention which drew up the second state constitution sought to put an even more effective guarantee of white supremacy into the document. The notorious Article Thirteen provided that no Negro or Mulatto should come into the state after the adoption of the constitution and provided that fines collected for violation of the article should be appropriated to pay for the colonization of such Negroes. This article was submitted to the voters separately and was ratified by even larger majorities than the main body of the constitution.⁶

It is not surprising that a state which had enacted such measures should show little enthusiasm for the antislavery movement, nor that the Liberty and Free Soil parties encountered much hostility within its borders. In no other part of the country was feeling in favor of the finality of the Compromise of 1850 more marked, and the Republican party got off to a slow start. The coalition which developed in Indiana in the fifties in opposition to the dominant Democratic party was held together by other forces, such as temperance and Know-Nothingism, as much as by opposition to the ex-

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1839-1840, pp. 32-33. See also *ibid.*, 1817-1818, 94; and *Indiana Revised Statutes of 1852*, I, 361-363.

⁵ *Revised Laws of Indiana, 1830-1831*, pp. 375-376.

⁶ Charles Kettleborough, *Constitution Making in Indiana* (3 vols., Indianapolis, 1916, 1930), I, xcii, 360-363. These are volumes I, II, XVII in the *Indiana Historical Collections* (Indianapolis, 1916-).

tension of slavery. The name "Republican" was not adopted in Indiana as early as in other states.

The rise of the Republican party in the field of national politics and the coming of the Civil War gave new emphasis to the race question. It is true that little that was new was added to the arguments. Most of them were already threadbare and few of them were rational. Appeals to race prejudice were the stock in trade of many a politician. Even some of the most distinguished, such as Stephen A. Douglas, had shown a willingness in the past to resort to such tactics. But the appeals took on a new intensity because for the first time there appeared to be a real possibility of a drastic change in the status of the Negro population in the South. Democrats made much of the possible threat to white supremacy in the campaign of 1860.

In order to elect a president in 1860 it was necessary for the Republicans to carry Indiana and Pennsylvania, states which they had failed to carry in 1856. To assure victory in these states the voters must be convinced that the party was not as "radical" as its opponents alleged. It was imperative to refute the charges of "abolitionism" and to nominate a candidate who would be reassuring to the cautious. Even Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* was quoted as declaring "The Republican party is not an abolition party. It has never proposed to use the power of the Federal Government to abolish slavery. . . . It does not contemplate any national scheme of emancipation of the African race." Indiana Republicans were active in promoting the nomination of Abraham Lincoln, who was considered a safer candidate, one less tainted with "ultra-ism" than the better known William H. Seward.

Democrats regarded the efforts of their opponents to represent their party and candidate as "conservative" as sheer hypocrisy and charged Lincoln with being an advocate of Negro equality. Stephen A. Douglas declared: "The rights of the negro; the equality of the negro with the white man, universal suffrage, extending to negroes as well as to white men, is the grand central theme of the Republican organization." Lesser Democrats followed his lead and enlarged upon the theme. They warned that Republican policies would lead to an influx of Negroes into Indiana from the South and that

⁷ Quoted in *Indianapolis Daily State Sentinel*, February 18, 1860.

the white laborer would suffer from competition with the black man. Worse than this—the Republicans were planning to give the vote to the Negro, and the fact that Massachusetts and Maine, two Republican strongholds, had Negro suffrage was cited as irrefutable evidence of this intention. Worst of all—amalgamation of the races would be the inevitable result of a Republican victory.⁸

Republicans sought to answer these charges by reiterating that they had no intention of interfering with slavery in states where it was already established. In fact, rather than leading to an increase in the number of Negroes in the North, their policies would prevent an increase. For was not a basic principle of the party the exclusion of slaves (i.e. Negroes) from the territories? They scoffed at the suggestion that they favored racial amalgamation and pointed out with considerable glee that the only part of the country in which miscegenation was practiced on a wide scale was in the slave states where presumably most masters were members of the Democratic party.⁹

Indeed, it was abundantly clear that many Republicans had little or no humanitarian interest in the welfare of the Negro. They were almost frantic in their efforts to disclaim any intention of elevating his condition. The following excerpt from a letter to the Indianapolis *Daily Journal* illustrates the attitude of conservative Indiana Republicans: "When we reflect that an illustrious Democrat, Dick Johnson, furnishes the only instance of an American statesman marrying a negro wife. . . . When we know that in those States where Democratic principles and practices flourish in perfection, that the amalgamation of the white and black races is a permanent institution, and when it is proclaimed by the Democrats that the niggers and white people have a free fight for the occupancy of the territories, while the Republicans propose to allow the white man have the territories and exclude the negro therefrom . . . [there can be no doubt as to which is the white man's party]. Let the people choose between the nigger Democracy and the white man's party."¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.*, May 5, 19, 31, October 2, 10, 30, January 13, 17, March 16, 27, April 27, June 21, August 17, September 1, 1860.

⁹ *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, March 8, September 6, 15, 27, October 1, 6, 16, May 19, June 22, September 29, 1860.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1860.

Apparently these protestations reassured the voters, for the Republicans carried Indiana in 1860. Two years later there would be a different result.

Almost as soon as the election returns were known the country was faced with the secession crisis. After an initial period of floundering and indecision during which the *Indianapolis Journal* called for a policy of compromise, Indiana Republicans united under the resolute leadership of Governor Oliver P. Morton in support of a policy of preserving the Union by force, if necessary.¹¹ Indiana Democrats were loudly demanding compromise and were opposed to the use of coercion. With the outbreak of a shooting war most members of the party came loyally to the support of the military effort, but they continued to insist that the war could have been avoided by the adoption of the Crittenden Compromise and they never ceased to charge the Republican party with responsibility for the country's woes.

As the nation plunged deeper and deeper into the conflict, the question inevitably arose—what was the relationship of slavery to the war which was being waged to preserve the Union? This was, of course, one of the most important and complex questions facing the Lincoln administration. It was to become a major political issue in Indiana and one which gave rise to great bitterness.

From the beginning radical Republicans branded slavery with being the cause of the war and saw in the war an opportunity to destroy the hated institution. The *Indiana True Republican* (mouthpiece of George W. Julian) declared: "There can be no *final settlement* of our troubles, no *permanent peace* to the country except through the *extirpation* of its grand *cause*, throughout the length and breadth of the Union, and *now* is the accepted time for effecting the good work."¹²

More conservative Republican opinion, as represented by the *Indianapolis Journal*, urged caution. Any hasty action with regard to slavery might alienate the loyal slave states and would create the problem of the status of the freedmen.¹³

¹¹ *Ibid.*, November 10, 19, December 21, 1860. The *Journal* was sharply rebuked by the *Centreville Indiana True Republican*, December 6, 1860; January 31, February 7, 1861. Kenneth M. Stampp, *Indiana Politics during the Civil War* (Indianapolis, 1949), 59-61. This is volume XXXI in the *Indiana Historical Collections*.

¹² *Centreville Indiana True Republican*, May 16, 23, 30, 1861.

¹³ *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, November 26, December 10, 1861.

The Democrats continued to blame the war on the abolitionist element in the Republican party, and they were constantly on the alert to detect any signs that the administration was attempting to turn the struggle into an antislavery crusade. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* warned: "There are two facts, supreme and everlasting, which will dominate and shape the civil strife which now distracts the nation. The first is, that the Union must and will be preserved; the second, that it can never be preserved by an anti-slavery policy. Secession and abolition must go down together. . . ." "An abolitionist in Indiana is as much an enemy of the Government as a secessionist in South Carolina." Public opinion was opposed to turning the purpose of the war into the extermination of slavery, it was asserted, and "the best blood of the North will never be shed in so disgraceful a cause as that of negro emancipation."¹⁴

On the whole throughout 1861 the attitude of Lincoln on the explosive slavery issue received the approbation of the *Sentinel*. In fact he was congratulated for succeeding in holding in check the abolitionists in his party and for giving the country "proofs that he is making battle for the Union and not for the negro."¹⁵

This confidence in the President's conservatism was to be rudely shattered during the next months, and he was to become the object of bitter attack for his alleged betrayal of earlier pledges. The first indication of developments to come was a tentative proposal in the President's message to Congress in December, 1861, in which he suggested federal financial assistance for any state which would undertake a program of gradual emancipation.¹⁶ Intense opposition was immediately manifested by Indiana Democrats. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* cried: "The people of Indiana do not want to be taxed to buy negroes." The New Albany *Ledger* opined: "Were this question made an issue in the election of members of Congress, but few in favor of taxing the people to buy up

¹⁴ Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, July 19, 23, October 15, 1861 (italics inserted).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, October, 23, 1861. The *Marion County Clarion* declared: "The present Administration is trying to do right, but is so hampered by the Abolitionists that it can hardly move." Quoted in *ibid.*, November 21, 1861.

¹⁶ James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897* (10 vols., Washington, 1896-1899), VI (1897), 68.

the Negroes of the South would be chosen." An address of the Democratic State Committee which appeared during the following summer branded the proposal a measure of "transcendant injustice and oppression to the white race in the free States."¹⁷

This response indicated the way in which Democrats were to react to later steps in the direction of emancipation and also foreshadowed the type of political campaign which they intended to wage in 1862. Most Indiana Democrats refused to accept the invitation of the Republicans to join with them in forming a Union party. They stuck to their own organization and hoped to regain control in the fall elections by stressing the dangers of emancipation and the related question of the status of the free Negro.

At the Democratic State Convention which assembled on January 8, 1862, Thomas A. Hendricks, who was to be the party's choice for United States Senator, declared in the opening address: "With the negro slave and his condition, we have nothing to do, nothing whatever, either as a purpose, incident or consequence of the war." Resolutions adopted at the convention condemned the "twin heresies, Northern sectionalism and Southern secession," and pledged the party to support a war for preserving the Constitution and the Union, but warned: "We are opposed to a war for the emancipation of the Negroes," and branded proposals "to liberate and arm the negro slaves" as "unconstitutional, insulting to loyal citizens, a disgrace to the age."¹⁸

There is considerable evidence that the party leaders had rightly gauged the reactions of the voters of Indiana. If the actions of county conventions are in any way reliable criteria of the opinions of the voters at the "grass roots" level, the mass of Democrats were genuinely alarmed over emancipation and its possible consequences. Democratic county conventions held in the closing weeks of 1861, before the state convention, had been almost unanimous in warning against turning the war into an abolitionist crusade and in condemning proposals to use Negro troops. The following resolutions

¹⁷ Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, March 8, 12, August 11, 1862. See also an editorial quoted from the Louisville *Democrat*: "The conservative men and Democrats will revolt at the idea of paying out of the earnings of white men thousands of millions [of dollars] for the idle, worthless negro." *Ibid.*, March 13, 1862.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, January 9, 1862.

are typical: "Whereas, an effort is now being made in Congress to add to our other calamities the additional one of the abolition of slavery. . . .

"Resolved, that it is the duty of all conservative men, and all true lovers of the Union, to set their faces like flint against the wicked abolitionist heresy." Democratic County Convention at Muncie.

"Resolved that we hold that this Government was made on the white basis, by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and that whenever the white man and the negro come in contact in this country the normal condition of the latter is in a state of inferiority and servitude." Democratic County Convention of Rush County.

"We denounce the attempt now being made by the Abolitionists to convert the present unnatural civil war into a war for the emancipation of the slaves." Fountain County Democratic Convention.

"The proposition to arm the slaves of the South is an insult to every American citizen. . . . That the adoption of a course so barbarous would be an acknowledgement to the world that the white men of the loyal states do not possess strength and patriotism sufficient to enable them to preserve the institutions handed down to us." Elkhart Democratic County Convention.

"None but cowards or assassins in or out of Congress, would desire that slaves be armed by the Government to assist in putting down this rebellion." Howard County Democratic Convention.¹⁹

A district convention while denying that there was any "irrepressible Conflict" between the free states and slave states, asserted: "There is an irrepressible conflict between the labor of free white men and free negroes." The defeat of Schuyler Colfax was urged because "he has by his votes shown a greater regard for the negro than the white man."²⁰

These examples could be multiplied many times. It will be noted that none of the quotations above are from conventions in counties in the extreme south and that some of them are from counties in the northern part of the state. This would seem to indicate that the anti-Negro bias was not confined to the southern part of the state.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, January 1, 6, 1862; December 24, 30, 31, 1861.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, July 25, August 16, 1862.

In spite of the warnings of the Democrats, the exigencies of the military situation plus the increasing efforts of the more radical Republicans were converting the President and many moderates to measures which would mean the weakening of slavery.

Very early in the war Union men realized that the South possessed a military advantage in the labor of its slaves and had begun to urge steps to deprive the enemy of this advantage. The Logansport *Journal* demanded: "Are such active, fatal instruments [slaves] to be allowed to take part in the war and be regarded as too sacred for capture, confiscation, or removal? . . . As property when captured, they should be used for the benefit of the government, to the best advantage—just like ships, horses and cattle are employed after capture."²¹

As the war progressed this line of reasoning came to be generally accepted among Republicans and by many Democrats as well. Indiana's Republican representatives in Congress supported the Confiscation Act which Congress finally adopted in July, 1862. Senator Joseph Wright, a "War Democrat" appointed by Governor Morton to fill the unexpired term of Jesse Bright, also supported the Confiscation Act in its final form. However, Wright did not go along with the more radical Republicans in other measures which were under consideration by Congress. For example, he opposed immediate emancipation of the slaves in the District of Columbia. He also voted against the measure abolishing slavery in the territories although his colleague, Henry S. Lane, and the Republican delegation in the House voted for it.²²

Meanwhile, Indiana Democrats were viewing with alarm and condemning every sign that the Administration or Congress might be veering in the direction of an emancipation program. Representative Daniel Voorhees, loudest critic of the Republicans among Indiana Democrats, devoted his maiden speech in the House to a denunciation of any and all schemes of emancipation. Any such proposal, he declared, was a betrayal of promises made by the Republicans at the beginning of the war. The soldiers from Indiana were fighting to pre-

²¹ Logansport, Indiana, *Journal*, August 3, 1861.

²² *Congressional Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 Sess., 3276, 1518, 2618, 2769. Wright's conservatism was scathingly denounced by some Republicans. See, for example, Centreville *Indiana True Republican*, April 10, 24, 1862.

serve the Union and Constitution as they were established by the founders. "They want no four million slaves set free. They have no money with which to purchase territories for vast schemes of colonization. . . . Let them [the Administration] announce . . . that the *condition of every human being in the South shall remain unchanged, whether the revolution shall succeed or fail.*"²³

The Democrats were also alarmed over signs that the Republicans in Congress were seeking to bring about the much dreaded "negro equality." For example, bills were introduced to repeal the laws which prohibited Negroes from testifying in the courts of the District of Columbia and which prevented them from carrying United States mail. When Senator Charles Sumner made the latter proposal the Indianapolis *Sentinel* charged: "Sumner sees nothing, thinks of nothing, and talks of nothing but his ebony brethren." The same paper warned: "There are other measures of a similar kind, but [they] have not been fully matured and laid before Congress. By the time that body gives them a full discussion it will have little leisure to consider the interests of white men."²⁴

Establishment of diplomatic relations with the Negro republics of Hayti and Liberia was the occasion for one of the tirades of Voorhees. Congress, he asserted, had "taken advantage of this war to corrupt the foreign policy of the government, and to recognize the only two negro governments on the face of the earth as our national equals. . . . The people are taxed to send ministers to these dusky barbarians, in order to show the world that negro equality is at last one of the institutions of this country." The Indianapolis *Sentinel* remarked: "The legislation of this Republican Congress is devoted to the negro. It is negro first, negro last, and negro all the time."²⁵

Much stress was laid upon the extravagance of the government in Washington in caring for runaway slaves while the wives and children of white soldiers were in want. The following excerpt is typical: "White soldiers, sick and wounded, wives and children of those soldiers . . . may suffer agony . . . and no humanitarian doctrines are preached for

²³ Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, February 28, 1862.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, March 20, 22, 1862.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, March 13, 1863, April 26, 1862.

them by these nigger-charmed saints of Republicanism—no Government disbursements for their support. But for twenty-five thousand fat, shiny, greasy, fragrant niggers, the Government is giving a perenial entertainment. . . . The constitutional Government of the United States is keeping a grand national 'nigger dance house'. . . . And every grain of wheat, every kernel of corn, every potato raised in the great Northwest must be taxed to help pay for this philo-niggerous [*sic*] experiment of the Abolitionists of New England."²⁶

There were also warnings that the "contrabands" around the nation's capital were threatening a social revolution. Already they were beginning to attend lectures at the Smithsonian Institution and were seeking admission to the gallery of the House of Representatives. Where would this end?²⁷

The suggestion that Negro troops might be used to suppress the rebellion aroused even greater hysteria. In an editorial which was violent even for its columns the Indianapolis *Sentinel* charged that the Abolitionists were proposing to "arm the whole race and instruct them to shoot the men, ravish the women and strangle the children of the South indiscriminately." Thomas A. Hendricks warned that the "proud men of Indiana" would refuse to fight beside colored troops.²⁸

Much of the alarm expressed by the Democrats was no doubt manufactured for political purposes. Yet underneath it all lay a deep and widespread conviction that no policy must be adopted which would lead to a fundamental change in the status of the Negro population.

Many strong Union men, including conservative Republicans, continued to uphold Indiana's laws for the exclusion of Negroes and to advocate a policy of colonizing free Negroes outside the United States. On the floor of the Senate Joseph Wright spoke in favor of both policies and warned the radicals: "In your zeal for emancipation you must ingraft colonization upon your measure." He also sought to assure the voters of Indiana that the Confiscation Act would not mean

²⁶ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1862. The above quotation is from the column of the Washington correspondent of the *Chicago Times* whose venomous articles appeared almost daily in the *Sentinel*. An editorial from the *Detroit Free Press* entitled "The Poor Whites" cried: "For God's sake let somebody do something for white men!" Quoted in *ibid.*, April 24, 1862.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, March 27, 1862.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, December 21, 1861, January 9, 1862.

Negro immigration into Indiana. He insisted that "slaves who are taken from rebels . . . will be colonized out of the proceeds of the rebels' property."²⁹

Andrew Porter, the Republican member of the House from the Indianapolis district, also advocated using the money derived from confiscation of rebel property to colonize members of a race which "from the prejudices of caste and aversions of color, must always be an alien and degraded one." Republican Senator Henry S. Lane also favored colonization, though insisting that it should be voluntary.³⁰

Actually Indiana's colonization legislation, which all of these gentlemen praised, was a dead letter, not one Negro having been sent to Liberia from Indiana for over three years. It is also doubtful that there was much effort to enforce the exclusion law, or, indeed, that it was capable of being enforced. Nevertheless, Democrats continued to pose as upholders of the exclusion measures and to excoriate the Republican administration for failure to enforce them. In consequence of this laxity, they warned, the state was in danger of being overrun by Negroes. As the election of 1862 drew nearer items concerning the influx of Negroes appeared frequently in the Democratic press, and in the campaign great stress was placed on the threat to white labor. On the eve of the October elections the Indianapolis *Sentinel* warned: "If Abolitionism triumphs at the polls to-morrow our State will be flooded with negroes, devouring our substance like the locusts of Egypt."³¹

Of course there were other issues in the campaign. The Democrats also leveled their attacks on the high tariff, the growing national debt, and the invasion of civil liberties by the Lincoln administration, especially the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* and the draft. They also blamed the party in power for the dreary succession of military failures.

²⁹ *Congressional Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 Sess., 1468; Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, August 7, 1862.

³⁰ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, June 28, 1862; *Congressional Globe*, 37 Cong. 2 Sess., 1730-1731.

³¹ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, January 22, 1861. See an exchange between George W. Julian and William Holman over this question. Julian called the exclusion law "notoriously a dead letter." Holman challenged this but admitted that the colonization law had accomplished nothing. *Congressional Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 Sess., 2503. See also Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, April 19, 22, 29, May 5, October 13, 1862.

But so heavily did they rely on appeals to race prejudice that even the conservative Senator Wright gibbed at them.³²

On the whole Republican-Union party supporters ignored emancipation and the race question as much as possible. They were fighting frantically to stay in power, for the local elections in the spring had shown that the tide was running in favor of the Democrats. The Democrats attributed this to the abolitionist leanings of the Republicans. In their desperation Republicans concentrated their efforts on "exposing" the alleged "disloyalty" of the Democrats. They denounced secret societies and talked much of the Indiana "traitors" who belonged to them. They charged Hendricks and Voorhees with plotting the formation of a Northwest confederacy and accused the Indianapolis *Sentinel* of defending the right of secession. The Indianapolis *Journal* sought to convince the voters that the defeat of the Union party would mean success for the rebel cause.³³

In the meantime, more and more pressure was being brought upon the Lincoln administration to proclaim a policy of general emancipation. For example, in July, Robert Dale Owen, a life-long Democrat and formerly an advocate of compromise if necessary to save the Union, addressed a letter to the Secretary of War in which he announced his conversion to the necessity of emancipation as the only means of ending the war and insuring a lasting peace.³⁴

Owen's plea, even though he advocated compensation for loyal slaveholders, was as yet too advanced for Indiana's leading Republican newspaper. While admitting that more and more people were coming to share Owen's views, the Indianapolis *Journal* warned that "except as a last resort, . . . we cannot see that Mr. Owen's policy will not produce as many difficulties as it will remove."³⁵

Horace Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions" in which he besought Lincoln to proclaim emancipation also called forth a remonstrance from the *Journal*: "Twenty millions of peo-

³² Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, August 7, 1862.

³³ *Ibid.*, July 16, 18, 29, 31, August 4, October 14, 1862; Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, April 11, May 12, 1862. A letter to the editor of the *Sentinel* predicted: "the Democracy of Indiana will, this fall at the ballot box, testify their opposition to Abolitionism, free negro equality and amalgamation." *Ibid.*, May 24, 1862. Madison, Indiana, *Daily Courier*, September 27, 1862.

³⁴ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, August 11, 1862.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

ple would like quite as well as Mr. Greeley to see this rebellion put down in a month, but . . . they do not feel at all sure that Mr. Greeley's mode . . . is in every respect wiser or more likely to succeed than the other. A good many of them are quite sure that his mode would weaken the union, . . . and strengthen rebellion."³⁶

The pleadings and warning of the conservatives were in vain. The President finally succumbed to other pressures and issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, on the very eve of the October elections in Indiana. The Indiana radicals were pleased. Their only regret was that the proclamation would not go into effect at once.³⁷

The Indianapolis *Journal* was strangely silent. It made no comment whatsoever until twitted by the *Sentinel* and then finally published an editorial in which the proclamation was upheld as a means of weakening the rebellion.³⁸ In a speech in Washington, D.C., Governor Morton spoke of the proclamation as a "stratagem of war." However, it was apparent that both the *Journal* and the governor were on the defensive and that neither displayed any real enthusiasm. They were painfully aware that an election was imminent.

To the Democrats the proclamation was a betrayal of all the past pledges of the President. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* saw in it only a confession of weakness and an invitation to disaster. "The die is cast. The issue of abolition is now fairly made. The people of Indiana must decide at the ballot box whether they are for or against it."

The October elections were a distinct triumph for the Indiana Democrats. They won seven of Indiana's eleven seats in the House of Representatives as compared with four seats in 1860. Even in such strongholds as the districts of George W. Julian and Schuyler Colfax, Republican majorities were sharply reduced. The Democrats gained control over the General Assembly.

Headlines in the Indianapolis *Sentinel* announcing the glorious news proclaimed: ABOLITIONISM SLAUGHTERED! The outcome was seen as a victory for constitu-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1862.

³⁷ Centreville *Indiana True Republican*, September 25, 1862. The Logansport, Indiana, *Journal*, September 27, 1862, called the proclamation the greatest document since the Declaration of Independence.

³⁸ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, September 27, 1862.

tional liberty and a denunciation of emancipation. A second editorial interpreted the result as a "voice against the frauds, the corruption and imbecility of the party in power—against the emancipation schemes and proclamations of the Administration—against taxing the people to buy negroes, and a rebuke to the Republican Party for repudiating the Crittenden Compromise . . . which would have prevented civil war." A few days later it was asserted that the Republicans lost because the soldiers of Indiana did not want to compete with Negro labor when they came home. The *Sentinel* counseled: "The defeated politicians of Indiana must abandon this emancipation policy which strikes at the honor and remuneration of labor, before they can repair their fortunes by an appeal to Indiana's working men or Indiana's soldiery."³⁹

The Republicans naturally put a very different interpretation upon the outcome. They attributed their defeat not to the opposition of the Indiana soldiers to Lincoln's policies but rather to the fact that soldiers could not vote. It was asserted that the absence of seventy thousand voters who were in the army was the major reason for the Democratic victory.⁴⁰

Whatever the explanation the Lincoln administration had suffered a startling setback. Republican reverses were not limited to Indiana. The Democrats also carried New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois.

Following the Emancipation Proclamation and the Republican defeats there was a marked change in the treatment accorded the President by the Democratic press. Heretofore there had usually been more restraint in the language used about Lincoln than in that used to describe the more radical members of his party. He had been, on the whole, free from charges of abolitionism and had sometimes been praised for his courage in resisting the "nigger lovers." Henceforth, however, he was accused of encouraging Negro equality, servile insurrection, and even amalgamation of the races.

In his message to Congress in December, 1862, Lincoln sought to answer some of the criticism of his emancipation program. He reiterated his desire for a program of colonization but also insisted that most of the alarm expressed by his detractors over the dangers from a free Negro popula-

³⁹ Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, October 16, 21, 1862.

⁴⁰ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, October 17, 1862.

tion within the borders of the United States was "largely imaginary, if not sometimes malicious." He sought to show that emancipation would not decrease the need for free white labor and that free Negroes would have less reason to go north than slaves who fled to gain freedom. "And in any event," he asked, "can not the North decide for itself whether to receive them?"⁴¹ This last appeared almost an invitation to the northern states to pass exclusion laws.

In the light of later developments Lincoln's position was certainly conservative, but the Indianapolis *Sentinel* condemned his "fanaticism" and "the sickly sentimentality which induces Mr. Lincoln to refer to the negro as a 'free American of African descent. . . .' It will be noticed that Mr. Lincoln expends his whole sympathy and thought and care upon the negro. The condition of the white Americans . . . have [*sic*] no consideration with our very philanthropic President."⁴²

The final proclamation of emancipation on January 1, 1863, brought forth some of the most scathing comments in which the *Sentinel* had as yet indulged. It repeatedly declared that it was an invitation to servile war—"the butchery of white men not in arms, of helpless white women and children by a race of semi-barbarians." Denunciation of the President's policy was also expressed in letters which purported to be from soldiers in the field. A letter from the Army of the Potomac declared that the army was not ready to fight for Negro freedom and equality. "We want this war ended. . . . We don't want the North flooded with free niggers. We want Indiana exclusively for intelligent, free, white men."⁴³

Bitter opposition to the Lincoln administration, especially emancipation measures, was manifested by the Democratic majority in the general assembly which convened in Indianapolis in January, 1863. Resolution after resolution condemning the "hellish scheme of emancipation" was introduced. The senate committee on federal relations incorporated the substance of most of these into a report which was adopted by a vote of 26 to 17.⁴⁴ The following excerpts il-

⁴¹ Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, VI, 136-142.

⁴² Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, December 5, 1862.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, January 1, 3, 22, March 4, 5, 1863.

⁴⁴ The main story of the session is outside the scope of this article. It should be noted that it was marked by an intense partisanship here-

lustrate the nature of the protest: "The doctrine advocated by the enemies of constitutional liberty that the existence of war invests Congress, or the President, with despotic powers . . . is to be utterly condemned. . . .

"We regard the proclamation of President Lincoln to abolish slavery in the Southern States as unconstitutional, unwise, and calculated to do the cause of the Union incalculable injury, by dividing its friends and uniting its enemies. . . .

"The interest of the white race, as well as the black, demands that the condition and locality of the latter in the Southern States should not be interfered with by the National Government. . . .

"We are uncompromisingly opposed to all schemes the tendency of which is calculated to overrun the State of Indiana with a worthless and degraded negro population. . . .

"No Union can be maintained in this country until fanaticism on the negro question, North and South, is eradicated, and the sovereignty of the States over their domestic institutions is again acknowledged. . . . The people of the North must banish the heresy of Abolitionism, or else yield up the blessings of the Union. . . . A war for Abolitionism is a war against the Union; a war for the Union is a war against Abolitionism."⁴⁵

While thus excoriating Lincoln and abolitionism the framers of the resolutions declared themselves "yet more hostile to the Southern rebellion," and condemned the rebels as "traitors."

There was also an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Democrats in the Senate to pass a much more drastic Negro exclusion law than the one already on the statute books.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, Republicans, repudiated at the polls, were

tofore unequaled even in Indiana. The Republican members of the lower house finally resorted to the expedient of running away so as to break a quorum and thus prevent the enactment of certain measures sponsored by the Democratic majority. As a result no appropriation bill could be passed and the state faced a period of two years without funds—until Governor Morton resorted to various extra-legal devices to raise the necessary money. Stampp, *Indiana Politics during the Civil War*, 176-179. *Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana*, 1863, p. 713.

⁴⁵ *Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana*, 1863, pp. 696-700.

⁴⁶ Senate Bill Number 140, Indiana Original Senate Bills, 1863 Session (Nos. 140-181), MS copy, Archives Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

holding Union meetings throughout the state during the early part of 1863 in an effort to whip up popular support for the administration policies and for a vigorous prosecution of the war. These meetings usually adopted resolutions supporting the Emancipation Proclamation as a necessary war measure and urging the use of the emancipated slaves as laborers or regular soldiers in defeating rebellion. At a meeting in Indianapolis where he was the principal speaker Andrew Johnson was hailed with enthusiasm. While admitting that he had owned ten slaves Johnson supported emancipation as a military measure. "If, as the car of State moves along, the negroes get in the way let them be crushed. If they keep out of the way let them remain where they are. I am for the Government and all measures necessary to maintain it. Is not this Government . . . worth more than the institution of slavery?"⁴⁷

As the months passed even the more conservative Republicans became convinced of the necessity of complete abolition as a condition of a lasting peace. They also gave up, however reluctantly, their insistence upon colonization as an accompaniment of emancipation. A more humanitarian attitude toward the Negro also was apparent in their utterances. The change on the part of the Indianapolis *Journal* was significant. It hailed with joy the steps being taken in the loyal slave states for complete emancipation. "The good time is coming. . . . Slavery is dying, and the day of its death will be the day of the world's greatest jubilee." A few days later it declared: "To believe that a nation condemning to perpetual slavery four millions of human beings, . . . can continue to enjoy uninterrupted peace and unabated prosperity, is to deny that a just God rules in the affairs of men."⁴⁸ In a notable editorial colonization, heretofore the pet scheme of conservatives, was declared to be impracticable, unwise, and a denial of the constitutional rights of the Negro race.

"If it was possible to colonize a whole race, the wisdom of any people who would at an enormous expense carry off

⁴⁷ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, February 27, 1863. General Samuel F. Carey of Ohio, speaking at the same meeting, declared: "He cared not what instruments were used to kill off rebels. He would take mules and put upon their feet steel heels and toes and train them to kick rebels to death. He would arm negroes for the same reasons."

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, November 2, 24, 1863.

4,000,000 of valuable laborers would be without a parallel in the history of civilized nations. Labor is the wealth of a nation. It has been and should be our policy to invite emigration to this country rather than to deport our laborers. Besides, what right have we to carry off these men unless they go voluntarily? Under the Constitution their right to life, and liberty, and property, are [*sic*] as sacred as those of any other class of *citizens*. . . . There is no legal power to banish or colonize them under the Constitution. . . .

"Voluntary colonization, so far as it is conducted with wisdom, must meet with approval and encouragement. Involuntary deportation of the African is not only impracticable, but most injurious to us and cruel to them. We must look elsewhere than to colonization for the solution of the question as to the fate of the African in this country."⁴⁹

Toward the end of 1862 the President had been authorized to direct the enrollment of colored troops into the Union army—a step characterized by Senator Hendricks as "gross insult to every man in whose veins flows the blood of our race."⁵⁰ The question of employment and treatment of such troops continued to be a matter of bitter political controversy until the end of war. Democrats never ceased to insist that colored soldiers were cowardly and worthless and a source of demoralization to white troops. The Republican press, on the other hand, carried story after story of their heroism.

Most colored soldiers were recruited in the South, and at first there was no provision for their enrollment under the flag of Indiana. However, in December, 1863, when Indiana was having difficulty filling its quota without a resort to the draft, this policy was changed. The following appeal was issued:

TO THE COLORED MEN OF INDIANA

"The state of Indiana calls upon you to bear a part in the glorious work of putting down the slaveholders' rebellion and saving the Union. . . . Will you not march to the rescue of your suffering brethern, and give to them in fact the freedom which is now declared to be their right? . . . It has been said of you that you do not possess the manly qualities that fit a people to enjoy and preserve their liberty.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, December 7, 1863 (*italics inserted*).

⁵⁰ Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, February 9, 1863.

You can now show your detractors and the world the falsehood of the assertion, and place yourself in such a position that you may ask and obtain from a grateful people a full recognition of your worth and rights as men."⁵¹

The Democrats injected the question of the use of Negro troops into the campaign of 1864. An address of the Democratic members of the Thirty-eighth Congress, after denouncing the use of such troops, added: "It ought to be manifest to every reasonable man that negroes in service should be paid less than white troops. . . . The market value of their labor is known to be less than that of citizens, and it is equally clear that their services are much less valuable in the army." The Republicans insisted on equal pay and pointed out with relish that individual Democrats were eager to avail themselves of colored men as substitutes in order to escape military service.⁵²

Lincoln had promised that Negroes who enlisted would be treated as prisoners of war if they were captured. The national platform of the Union party also declared: "The government owes to all men employed in its armies, without regard to distinction of color, the full protection of the laws of war, and any violation of these laws . . . should be made the subject of full and prompt redress."⁵³

However, the Confederates refused to treat captured Negroes as prisoners of war and refused to exchange them. Since the Lincoln administration was adamant on this subject, the exchange of prisoners was delayed. This caused further denunciation of the President by the Democratic press. Headlines in the Indianapolis *Sentinel* screamed: WHY FEDERAL PRISONERS SUFFER AND DIE—ABRAHAM LINCOLN RESPONSIBLE. The suffering of the white prisoners at Andersonville was charged to Lincoln's love for the Negro since his stand made exchange impossible.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, December 12, 1863. On January 21, 1865, the same paper carried the following advertisement: "COLORED MEN, ATTENTION: \$375 EACH will be paid for twenty good men to go as Volunteers, to be credited to the city of Indianapolis."

⁵² Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, July 26, 1864; Centreville *Indiana True Republican*, April 14, May 12, 19, 1864; Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, July 13, 27, 1864. See also speech of John P. Usher *ibid.*, September 16, 1864.

⁵³ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, June 10, 1864.

⁵⁴ Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, September 23, 1864. "Because the rebels refused to give up one or two hundred negro soldiers [Lincoln] has prolonged the captivity of fifty thousand of our brave boys. . . .

Opposition to the Lincoln administration reached its height in the fall elections of 1862 and the first part of 1863. Thereafter the inexorable, though slow, force of Union victories gradually strengthened the party in power and carried it to victory in 1864. But the critics were not silenced. In fact many of them became more shrill. They realized that the end of the war would mean more than the mere suppression of rebellion. The Union which would be restored would be a different Union from the one of 1860, but they were powerless to halt the changes. In their desperation and frustration they made wilder and wilder charges. In Indiana, moreover, the position of the Democrats was made more difficult by the fact that they were accused of disloyalty. Certain members of the party were, in fact, brought to trial before military tribunals in the fall of 1864 and convicted of treason. It is not within the scope of this article to assess the Copperhead menace in Indiana nor to determine the guilt or innocence of those charged with disloyalty. It is sufficient here to note that the charges of Copperheadism and the treason trials furnished political capital for the Republican Union party.⁵⁵ The Democrats sought to draw attention from these embarrassments by charges against the administration which sometimes bordered on the hysterical. The same appeals to race prejudice which had been used in 1860 and 1862 were revived in 1864.

There was much talk of the menace of "Negro equality" and especially of "amalgamation." It was reported that young women at Democratic rallies carried banners with inscriptions beseeching:

Oh, Fathers
Oh, Brothers
Save us from Negro
Equality and Despotism!⁵⁶

The Democratic papers carried stories of elopements of white daughters with Negro servants and of favors shown by white women to Negro soldiers. It was charged that all radical Republicans were advocates of racial amalgamation,

His attempt to convert the war for the Union into a negro crusade is the cause for this calamity." *Ibid.*, October 12, 1864.

⁵⁵ Kenneth M. Stampp, "The Milligan Case and the Election of 1864 in Indiana," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1914-), XXXI (1944-1945), 41-58.

⁵⁶ Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, September 19, 1864, September 5, 1863.

and it was insisted that anyone who opposed the administration's Negro policy was accused of being a Copperhead.

If a body don't believe
That the nigger's white,
Must a body just for that
Be put in front to fight?

If a lady does not choose
To accept "Sambo's" attentions,
Must she, for that, be accused
Of treasonable intentions?⁵⁷

Even the President was accused of advocating miscegenation. One newspaper declared that the "beastly doctrine of the intermarriage of black men with white women" was now "openly and publicly avowed and indorsed and encouraged by the President of the United States."⁵⁸

The following parody on a catechism illustrates the nature of the attacks made on Lincoln and shows how widely the judgment of some of Lincoln's contemporaries differed from that of the present day:

A CAPITAL HIT—THE LINCOLN CATHECISM—
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the Constitution?

A compact with hell—now obsolete.

By whom has the Constitution been made obsolete?

By Abraham Africanus the First.

To what end?

That his days may be long in office, and that he may make himself and his people the equal of the negroes.

What is a President?

A general agent for negroes.

What is Congress?

A body organized for the purpose of taxing the people to buy negroes, and to make laws to protect the President from being punished for his crimes.

What is the army?

A Provost Guard, to arrest white men and set negroes free.

.....

What is the meaning of the President's oath, that he "will to the best of his ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States?"

That he will do all in his power to subvert and destroy it.

Have the Loyal Leaguers a prayer?

They have.

Repeat it.

⁵⁷ *Indianapolis Daily State Sentinel*, May 6, 1864.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, March 30, 1864.

Father Abram, who art in Washington, of glorious memory—since the date of the proclamation to free the negroes. Thy kingdom come, and overthrow the republic; thy will be done, and the laws perish. Give us this day our daily supply of greenbacks. Forgive us our plunders, but destroy the Copperheads. Lead us into fat pastures, but deliver us from the eye of the detectives; and make us the equal of the negro, for such shall be our kingdom and the glory of the administration.⁵⁹

Democratic county and district conventions adopted resolutions condemning emancipation and accusing the President of deliberately prolonging the war in order to free the black race. There were also the usual attempts to play upon the white laborer's fear of competition with the Negro. The Democratic state platform called for a more stringent Negro exclusion law, and during the campaign Governor Morton was accused of subverting the state constitution and laws by conniving at the illegal entry of Negroes into the state.⁶⁰

While the Republican Union party men insisted that the Democrats were using the race issue to detract attention from other questions they also felt compelled to expend considerable campaign oratory and editorial writing in refuting their opponents' charges. They sought especially to show that the Republican party was the friend of the white working man. Ex-Governor and ex-Senator Joseph Wright in a speech in Indianapolis admitted that "the appeals to the prejudices and fears of the working classes in the North in regard to the results of the emancipation of the slaves in the South," had done more, in his opinion, "to divide the sentiment of our people and weaken them in their support of the Government than almost any other one thing." He hastened to assure the workingmen that their fears were groundless. There was no danger of a great migration of Negroes since their labor would be needed in the South. Moreover, as the condition of the Negro population improved under a system of wage labor, there would be a better market for goods produced by white workers.⁶¹

The political contest was begun in an atmosphere unfavorable to the cause of the Union party. War weariness and discouragement over military prospects appeared to be playing into the hands of the Democrats. The appeal which

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, April 1, 1864.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1864; *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, July 13, 1864.

⁶¹ *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, September 6, 1864. In a speech from the same rostrum ten days later John P. Usher, Hoosier member of Lincoln's Cabinet, sought to assure the white laboring men that their fears of competition from Negro workers were groundless. *Ibid.*, September 16, 1864.

the latter sought to make is well summarized in the caption below, which appeared daily in the Indianapolis *Sentinel*.⁶²

The Argument in a Nut Shell

Look at this Picture	Then on This
Elect LINCOLN	Elect McCLELLAN
and the BLACK REPUBLICAN TICKET	and the whole DEMOCRATIC TICKET
You will bring on <i>Negro Equality</i> , more <i>Debt</i> , <i>Harder Times</i> , another	You will defeat <i>Negro Equality</i> , re- store <i>Prosperity</i> , re-establish the
DRAFT!	UNION!
Universal Anarchy and Ultimate RUIN!	In an Honorable, Permanent, Happy PEACE!

However, the hopes of the Democracy were dimmed by two developments in the closing weeks of the campaign. The first of these was a marked improvement in the military situation, particularly as the result of the fall of Atlanta to Sherman and Sheridan's victories in the Shenandoah. The second was the trial and conviction of certain Democrats before military tribunals. The trials coincided nicely with the height of the political campaign and were used by the Republicans to advantage. The result was a sweeping victory for the Union ticket at both the state and federal levels.

The end of the long war was in sight. The military victory of the Union armies and the political victory of the Republicans meant the end of slavery and a new era in the realm of race relations. Democrats recognized that slavery was doomed and that their efforts to resist the new order were in vain. They, therefore, offered only mild resistance to the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment. But they also recognized that the question of the status of the free Negro remained to be settled. Most of them were not happy over the prospects for the future. An editorial in the Indianapolis *Sentinel* entitled "Negro Agitation Not Ended" gloomily predicted that the radicals would continue in their crusade to elevate the Negro. "The next step is the practical recognition of the doctrine of 'the equality of all men before the law,' which means . . . negro suffrage, nothing less, something more when this shall have been secured."⁶³

⁶² Indianapolis *Daily State Sentinel*, October 3, 1864, and thereafter until election.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, December 9, 1864.