The author presents his subject with proper scholarly detachment based on thorough and comprehensive research. Yet his book lacks the forcefulness that selection of stronger quotations would have provided. Midwestern editors, politicians, and private individuals—as revealed in the sources consulted—were even more vehement and violent than Voegeli indicates. And the racist transformation in the Midwest was perhaps even less pronounced. Many accepted emancipation only because it was a *fait accompli*; given reactions to the Fifteenth Amendment a few years later and continuing legal and educational restrictions, many accepted any measure of equality not at all.

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Secession and Civil War produced strange new problems for the American people. The facts were perfectly clear; the consequences were not. Eleven southern states had declared themselves out of the Union, formed a new confederation, and created an army to defend it. A few northerners accepted their actions, but the majority, including President Abraham Lincoln, held that the Union was indivisible and secession impossible. The southern states were still in the Union. They would ultimately resume their old status.

Reconstruction, says Professor Belz, was thus a “problem of first magnitude” from the very beginning of the Civil War. It would “of necessity follow” in broad outline, “the principles of the preexisting constitutional system” (p. 2). So since there were no constitutional precedents of any kind to deal with secession, the constitutional history of the period has to do largely with a struggle between conflicting theories regarding war aims, the present status of the southern people and their states, and the responsibility for policies to be adopted.

The conflict of theories over war aims arose at once and ranged from a simple restoration of the Union as quickly as possible to complete military conquest and social reform. Demands varied with persons, parties, and regions and grew in severity as the war dragged on. The necessity for holding the border states, however, checked extremes; the recognition of the loyal Pierpoint government in Virginia and the acceptance of military rule in conquered areas represented compromise. Virginia was still in the Union; portions of the South were under the control of an army.

When Congress met in regular session in December, 1861, it was clear to all that the Union would not be quickly restored. Military reverses had intensified the bitterness against “rebels,” and the demand for punishment found expression in a series of bills and debates which brought forth a new
theory regarding the southern states. Belz calls it "Reconstruction as Territorialization." As developed by James M. Ashley, chairman of the House Committee on Territories, the theory maintained that the seceded states had "reverted to the status of territories and must be governed by Congress" (p. 40). Charles Sumner added his state suicide theory; Congressman John Gurley, his confiscation and antislavery ideas; and Senator Ira Harris, his more moderate bill for a genuine interim government which would maintain peace and order until the citizens of the rebellious states could "reorganize" loyal governments.

The point is that Congress was developing theories and policies for reconstruction at the very time that President Lincoln was himself organizing military governments in states where victory made it possible. What came out of it, as Belz shows, was a growing struggle between Congress and the executive, but with a drift towards the elimination of slavery on both sides.

The struggle between the two developed by stages and climaxed in Lincoln's determined effort to admit Louisiana with his low 10 per cent loyalty requirement and in the passage by Congress of the so-called Wade-Davis bill. Lincoln's death prevented a final showdown, but Belz believes that with Lincoln's growing effort to include abolition of slavery in his demands that a compromise would soon have been worked out. That, of course, lays the major responsibility for the final outcome squarely on the shoulders of Andrew Johnson.

This is a valuable and important book. It gives us for the first time a full account of the congressional side of Reconstruction to be placed against the well known Lincoln part in that phase of American history. The assumption that theory produced the policies in reconstruction, however, is open to question. It ignores, to a large degree the matter of personalities, the great new economic and political forces of an emerging new age, and the part which military victory and defeat played; which is only suggesting that developments sometimes shaped the theories as well as the policies adopted.

The University of Chicago, Chicago

Avery Craven

The University of Illinois, 1867-1894: An Intellectual and Cultural History.


In this book Winton U. Solberg, professor of history at the University of Illinois, has produced a penetrating analysis of a quarter of a century of the development of higher education in that state. The University of Illinois entered its formative stages in one of the most important eras of American higher education. This was the era when universities everywhere struggled to depart from the stultifying traditions of the past. The university had been founded and organized under the terms of the Morrill Land Grant Act; friends of the university acted no differently from those people who helped