

## But There Was No Peace: the Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction

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*But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*, by George C. Rable. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984. xiii, 257 pp. \$23.50 cloth, \$10.00 paper.

*But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* is a well-written and equally well-researched book by George C. Rable, an assistant professor of history and director of American studies at Anderson College in Indiana. It is a significant exploration, and, at the same time, a controversial interpretation of the politics of Reconstruction. It is an important addition to earlier examinations of violence in the South, such as Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*; John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South, 1800-1861*; John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Otis A. Singletary, *Negro Militia and Reconstruction*; Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*; and Michael Perman, *Reunion Without Compromise*. The last three books deal with the period which Rable's account covers; the first three with southern violence before, during, and after Reconstruction. They all are analytical treatments. Rable attempts to synthesize these interpretations, along with others, in order to show how the latent southern propensity for violence transformed from isolated incidents of brutal behavior into an organized conspiracy to drive the Radical Republicans from power. Although his effort will not convince many modern historians who stress the moderate nature of radical reconstruction, it will force them to take a harder look at their interpretations.

The major thrust of the book is to show that the "counterrevolutionary" tide which swept the South in the early 1870s was most important in returning state after state to the control of Bourbon Democrats. Playing upon factional disputes and fears within the Republican party, internal weaknesses and shortcomings in the state governments, and an inconsistent policy of support by the federal government, the Redeemers, or Reactionaries, eventually succeeded, following earlier failures, in driving the "Jacobins" or Radicals from power. The "counterrevolution" was triumphant by 1877 with the withdrawal of the last federal troops from Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida. To Rable, it was the use of fear, violence, and intimidation, that contributed most to the collapse of the Radical Republicans.

In the evolution of his thesis, Rable follows the pattern of interpretation of universal revolutionary development as pioneered by Crane Brinton in his work, *The Anatomy of Revolution*. After an introduction which analyzes violence in America, the author discusses the short period (1865-1866) of moderate control under the aegis of President Andrew Johnson, and how the reactionaries could not accept

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even limited power on the part of blacks and unionists, as exemplified by the Memphis and New Orleans race riots, which form two of the better chapters in Rable's book. These events ushered in the radical phase marked by Congressional or Military Reconstruction which represented "the triumph of Jacobinism" in the aftermath of Johnson's crushing defeat in the congressional elections of 1866. In the remainder of the work Rable analyzes the strategy of the redeemer counter-revolution that led finally to victory for the reactionaries.

One might question Rable's employment of such terms as "Jacobinism" and "Counterrevolutionary" as applied to events in American history, from a historian-observer perspective. To the traditional Southerners who were the actor-participants in the tragic drama, however, the Republicans were indeed radicals intent on destroying the last vestiges of the "Southern way of life." Conversely, to the Radicals, the intransigent Southerners were intent on turning back the clock to antebellum days. There will be those historians who challenge Rable's bold view of Reconstruction, which is at odds for a number of reasons with the Dunning, revisionist, and post-revisionist interpretations of Reconstruction. The Dunningites will object to Rable's castigating the Bourbon Democrats as reactionaries while the revisionists and post-revisionists will take umbrage at his suggestion that the reconstructionists, whom they regard as conservative, were actually radical reformers. Nevertheless, the book deserves the careful attention of all scholars concerned both with Reconstruction and the subject of violence in America, past and present.

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*Chicago Divided: The Making of a Black Mayor*, by Paul Kleppner. Dekalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1985. xviii, 313 pp. Notes, illustrations, tables, index. \$26.00 cloth, \$9.50 paper.

Professional historians tend to be skeptical of instant history. Chronicles of very recent events are usually journalistic in nature, relying more on anecdotes than analysis, and frequently written under the pressure of deadlines. Most historians would rather let the dust settle, wait for archives to open, and allow for that decent interval that is supposed to give us perspective. *Chicago Divided* is not the usual kind of instant history, however. Its author, Paul Kleppner, is an experienced political historian, well-versed in quantitative methodology, and particularly interested in the relationship between politics and culture. This account of the election of the late Harold Washington as Chicago's first black mayor in 1983 is a serious analytical study that began as a

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