**Reconstruction, 1865-1877**

The situation at the end of the civil war

1. The North was victorious and in control
2. The South was defeated, cut off the union, economically devastated.
3. Black slaves were freed, but their future status uncertain.

**The Issue: What should the North do with its victory?**

\*Quickly and leniently bring the south back into “full partnership”?

\*Insist on full equality and dignity of blacks?

\*Both of the above?

**1**. President Johnson wanted to reconcile and restore the southern states quickly. He thought that the responsibility of reconstruction should lie with the executive branch of government.

**a**. Abraham Lincoln had favoured leniency toward the south and proposed a **“10% Plan”** as soon as 10% of the voters in a southern state took a loyalty oath they could elect a new state government.

**b**. In 1865 Johnson proposed easy terms, similar to Lincoln’s, for a quick restoration of the southern states. (But Johnson lacked sympathy towards the position of the blacks.)

**c**. Southern states responded to Johnson’s plan by quickly establishing new governments and electing new representatives. But many former confederate leaders were elected, and **“Black Codes”** were created to limit the rights of blacks.

**2**. Congress, led by Radical Republicans, strongly opposed Johnson’s policy, and refused to recognise the new southern state governments created under it. (Congress felt responsibility of reconstruction should lie with the legislative branch of government.)

**a**. Many Republican Congressmen were deeply concerned with the rights of blacks in the south. They feared that a south dominated by former confederates would deny these rights.

**b**. **Northern Republican Congressmen** also feared a quick return to national power by Southern Democrats and former confederates.

**c**. Congress passed a **“Civil Rights Act”** and created the **“Freed Men’s Bureau”** 1866 to give extra help to Southern Blacks.

**d**. **The Fourteenth Amendment** was proposed to give blacks the rights of citizenship, and to limit the representation of states denying blacks the right to vote.

**e**. **In 1867 Reconstruction rights** were passed which:

- abolished the new southern governments set up under **Johnson’s plan**.

- Demanded that white southerners wishing to vote take an **“Ironclad Oath”** of both future and past loyalty to the union.

- Provided for military supervision, guaranteeing black rights and voting.

- Demanded that new state governments be elected which would ratify the **14th Amendment.**

- The **Fifteenth Amendment** made it illegal to deny any men the right to vote because of his race.

**3**. Tension between **President Johnson** and Congress over reconstruction led to Johnson’s Impeachment by the House of Representatives, but he was acquitted by one vote in the Senate.

**4**. As the result of the **Reconstruction Acts**, the South entered a new political period in which blacks played a major role. (Black Republican Reconstruction)

**a**. Blacks voted and participated **in Radical Republican Governments**

**b**. A large number of whites also supported and participated in these new governments. Some were Northerners who went South **(Carpetbaggers**); others were Southerners willing to cooperate with blacks and republicans (**Scallywags**).

**c**. Though corruption and inefficiency did exist in these new governments, on the whole they did a decent job.

**d**. Grave economic problems in the south after the war hindered the work of reconstruction.

**5**. As time went on, white opposition to reconstruction increased.

**a**. Southern whites became increasingly hostile to blacks, **carpetbaggers** and **scallywags** often resorting to terrorism.

**b**. Northern whites grew indifferent to the condition of blacks, tired of resisting southern pressure against reconstruction.

**6**. The reconstruction period came to an end in the political deal between Republicans and Democrats known as the Compromise of 1877.

**a**. The results of 1876 Presidential election were disputed.

**b**. Southern Democrats agreed to support the Republican candidate, **Rutherford Hayes**, in return for a promise to withdraw the last Northern troops from the south.

**c**. North and South were now fully reunited, but the position of the blacks **was bleak**.

**7.** Neither the Civil War nor Reconstruction solved the real issues of inequality and bad feelings between blacks and whites. This has been a continuing problem in American society.

**Issues: Were the reasons behind white attitudes towards blacks valid?**

**For the period 1877-1914, which was the better strategy for improving the position of black people: Accommodation or Confrontation?**

**a.** Even before the emancipation there were many free blacks in America; but they’re usually put in the position of **“second class”** citizens.

**b**. White attitudes towards the blacks grew out of a combination of theoretical arguments and social economic forces.

**c**. After the end of the Civil War patterns of racial segregation developed, particularly in the south. Segregation existed, sometimes supported by laws, sometimes in spite of laws.

**d**. During the period from the end of reconstruction to the First World War (WWI 1877-1914) blacks increasingly lost their rights: the vote, equal opportunities, equal protection under the law.

**e**. Black leaders seeking to improve the conditions of their people had different ideas about the best strategy to follow.

**1**. **Broker T. Washington** advocated black improvement through **“Accommodation”** to white society.

**2**. **W.E.B Dubois** is a representative of black leaders who favoured **“Confrontation”** with unjust aspects of American society.