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Article Title: Marxian Interpretation of the Civil War

Full Citation: George O Virtue, "Marxian Interpretation of the Civil War," *Nebraska History* 30 (1949): 19-49

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1949CivilWar.pdf>

Date: 12/22/2016

Article Summary: Virtue asserts that Charles and Mary Beard's traditional interpretation of the Civil War as a revolution is inaccurate. He characterizes the war between the states as a rebellion that had relatively little effect on the economy.

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Cataloging Information:

Names: Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson

Historians Cited: Charles A Beard, Mary R Beard, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Louis M Hacker, Charles F Dunbar, Richard Hofstadter, F W Taussig, Andrew McFarland Davis, James S Allen

Keywords: Communist Manifesto, slavery, International Workingmen's Association, Radicals, free soil, Morrill tariff bill, banks, Pacific railroad, Homestead Act, immigration, steel

Marxian Interpretation of the Civil War

By George O. Virtue

AMERICAN historians, in the main, have written the history of their country quite unconscious of any influence the theory of the class struggle may have had upon them. Such attempts as have been made to fit the events of our history into that formula have met with but indifferent success. Our liberal school has perhaps done more to formulate Marxian interpretation of our history than the Marxists themselves—Professor Charles A. Beard, for example, in his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, which turns out to be a searching inquiry into the economic interests of the men who framed the constitution, engineered its adoption, and, in the First Congress, implemented it. The study was no doubt made in the interest of historical realism and a bit of wholesome debunking of the Fathers; but its conclusions, quite in line with Marxian philosophy, finding their way into the textbooks have exercised a wide-spread influence on immature minds and have proven good spade work for the Marxists as they came along.

The same may be said of the interpretation of the Civil War as the "Second American Revolution."¹ To the authors of *The Rise of American Civilization* the war appears "a social war, ending in the unquestioned establishment of a new power in the government, making vast changes in the arrangement of classes, in the accumulation and distribution of wealth, in the course of industrial development, and in the Constitution inherited from the Fathers."

If, say the authors, "the series of acts by which the

¹Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), II, Chapter XVIII.

bourgeois and peasants of France overthrew the King, nobility, and clergy is to be called the French Revolution, then accuracy compels us to characterize by the same term the social cataclysm in which the capitalists, laborers, and farmers of the North and West drove from power in the national government the planting aristocracy of the South. Viewed in the light of universal history, the fighting was a fleeting incident; the social revolution was the essential portentous outcome."

We are left in no doubt as to just what the revolution consisted in: "Viewed in the large, the supreme outcome of the civil strife was the destruction of the planting aristocracy which, with the aid of Northern farmers and mechanics, had practically ruled the United States for a generation. A corollary to that result was the undisputed triumph of a new combination of power: Northern capitalists and free farmers who emerged from the conflict richer and more numerous than ever. It was these irreducible facts, as already noted, that made the Civil War a social revolution."²

Marxian writers have been quick to accept the questionable idea that the war was a "Second American Revolution;"³ but they have too clear a concept of an orthodox social revolution as the triumph of an oppressed class over its oppressors, to regard the shift of power from the farmers, capitalists, and working men of the South to precisely the same groups in different proportions in the North, as anything more than an opportunity or promise of such an event.

If the "new power" established had gone to a class different from that which lost power; if the downfall of

²*Ibid.*, II, pp. 53-54, 99.

³Mr. Richard Enmale, for example, commends liberal bourgeois historians, and especially "Charles A. Beard, leading exponent of the school" for their recognition of the revolution released by the Civil War, "yet, they see only one side of the revolutionary picture. Failing to appreciate fully the class dynamics of historical development, they do not distinguish clearly between the various class forces at work".—Editor's Foreword, James S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy (1856-1876)* (New York: International Publishers, 1937).

the planting aristocracy had resulted from the rising of the slaves; if their lands had been seized and held by the freedmen; if their temporary loss of civil rights had become permanent and the political domination of the ex-slaves had continued—such an outcome might well be called a social revolution. But none of these things happened. The “capitalists, laborers, and farmers of the North and West” were exactly paralleled by the laborers, farmers, and commercial, financial, and agricultural capitalists of the South. Confiscations, aside from the destruction of a vast property in slaves, were socially insignificant. The part played by the negroes in gaining their freedom was inconsiderable—their might, indeed, during the war going mainly into producing for armies opposing their liberation, and the vote “thrust into their hands” was soon practically lost; while already within eight months after Lee’s surrender the “planting aristocracy” was back in Washington, under the Lincoln-Johnson plan of restoring the Union, in the persons of former Confederate generals, former Confederate cabinet members and other leading citizens, including the former Vice President of the Confederacy, seeking seats in the Federal Congress. For the time this was denied them. To the men who lived through the disorders of the period, the disrupted personal relations, the subjection of civil authority to military force, the changes wrought by the war may well have appeared to be a “social cataclysm,” a revolution. But, after a while, the conquered province theory was abandoned, the planters, though impoverished, their prestige based on political leadership and wealth impaired, their ante-bellum splendor gone, were again in the seats of power in their respective states and were enjoying the rights and privileges in the federal government they surrendered in 1861. Calmly viewed, the disorders of the time were, like the armed conflict, a “transitory phase” of the great struggle.

The chief concern here, however, is not with the soundness of the Beards’ interpretation, but rather with the use made of it by those writing in the Marxian vernacular. A fitting preface to the views of these writers after the event, is found in the pronouncements of Marx

and Engels while the war was in progress. These are conveniently found in the correspondence between the two during the war period.⁴ Preoccupied as these men were with the proletarian revolution which, since the publication of the Communist Manifesto a dozen years before, they had regarded as imminent, it is not strange that they looked to the American scene for a fulfillment of their expectations. At first their hopes centered in "the movement of the slaves started by the death of John Brown." An inconsequential slave disturbance in Missouri was taken as a sign that the movement was on: "The signal has now been given," wrote Marx to Engels, in January, 1860. This hope soon faded. As the war got under way, it took on for them the appearance of a "world upheaval," and they were alert for signs of a popular uprising. They were intensely concerned for the success of Union arms, not because they cared for the fate of the "bourgeois Republic," but because it would result in freeing the slaves. And this they wished, not out of regard for the slaves, so far as can be discerned, but for the effect it would have on white labor and the world movement they were promoting. They were, as Richard Enmale has pointed out, "essentially interested in the revolutionary implications of the Civil War . . . It was evident to Marx that the eventual emancipation of the American working class depended upon the preliminary destruction of negro slavery."⁵ He hoped, therefore, for the destruction of slavery in America as a step toward that united movement of "workingmen of all countries" to whom the Communist Manifesto had been addressed in 1848.

While the long-run effect of destroying slavery on the emancipation of the working class was uppermost in the

⁴Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, Richard Enmale, Editor (New York: International Publishers, 1937). The volume contains Marx's articles printed in the *New York Daily Tribune* and in the *Vienna Presse* during the period and the addresses of the International Workingmen's Association to Presidents Lincoln and Johnson. See also *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Correspondence 1846-1895* (New York: International Publishers, 1936).

⁵Marx and Engels, *Civil War in the United States*, p. xiv.

mind of both Marx and Engels, there are indications that, as they eagerly scanned the news from America, they were looking for signs that the "masses," here were playing the role mapped out for them in the Manifesto. But nothing much that happened during 1861 was to their liking except "the reconquest of Missouri by the Germans of St. Louis;" and during 1862 their disgust with the "total lack of talent" in the conduct of the war grew.

"One general," wrote Engels, "more stupid than another. Not one that would be capable of the least initiative or of independent decision. For three months the initiative once more was wholly with the adversary. Then, one financial measure more lunatic than the other. Helplessness and cowardice everywhere, save among the common soldiers. The politicians in like case—just as absurd and devoid of counsel. And the populus is more helpless than if it had lingered three thousand years under the Austrian scepter;" and what with the "cowardice in government and Congress," with "this slackness, this collapse like a punctured pig's bladder," . . . with "this total absence of any elasticity in the whole mass of the people—this proves to me that it is all up."⁶

Marx, however, never lost confidence in the final success of the North. "I do not think that all is up," he wrote (August 7, 1862). "In the end the North will make war seriously, adopt revolutionary methods and throw over the domination of the border slave statesmen . . . The long and short of the business seems to me to be that a war of this kind must be conducted along revolutionary lines." The only revolutionary measures he suggests were freeing the slaves and arming them. "A single negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves." It would, moreover, after the European analogy, give the movement a proletarian aspect, one may suppose. But Engels was impatient that no sign of a proletarian movement appeared anywhere in the North. "Where," he asks, "is there revolutionary energy anywhere among the

⁶Engels to Marx, July 30, 1862.

people?" Where throughout the North is there even a single symptom that people are in earnest about anything?" On the eve of the November elections, both he and Marx were alarmed at the prospect of Democratic success. "If there were only some proof or some indications," Engels wrote (November 5), "that the masses in the North were beginning to rise as they did in France in 1792 and 1793, then all would be very fine. But the only revolution to be expected seems rather to be a Democratic counter-revolution and a rotten peace, including the partition of the border states."

A few days after the election, but before complete reports had reached him, he wrote: "If the Democrats triumph in New York then I no longer know what I am to think of the Yankees. That a people placed in a great historical dilemma, which is at the same time a matter of its own existence, can after eighteen months' struggle become reactionary in its mass and vote for climbing down is a bit beyond my understanding. Good as it is from one aspect that even in America the bourgeois republic expresses itself in thoroughgoing fashion, so that in future it can never again be preached on its own merits, but solely as a means and a form of transition to the social revolution, still it is mortifying that a lousy oligarchy with only half the number of inhabitants proves itself as strong as the unwieldy, great, helpless democracy."⁷

Thus the year closes with revolutionary hopes deferred. Nothing in the American scene seemed to please. When the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was issued it brought forth no more generous comment than that: "All Lincoln's acts appear like the mean pettifogging conditions which one lawyer puts to his opposing lawyer. But this does not alter their historic content . . . Of course, like other people, I see the repulsive side of the form the movement takes with the Yankees; but I find the explanation of it in the nature of the bourgeois democracy!" (October 20, 1862).

⁷Engels to Marx, November 15, 1862.

The correspondence makes no mention of the proclamation of January 1. Apparently it did not appear so revolutionary after the fact as in prospect. Likewise the correspondence discloses no interest in the arming of the negroes as it proceeded without a ripple in the course of events. The letters thin out during 1863-4, and deal mainly with the military situation as it developed. They were alive, however, to the election crisis of 1864 and its revolutionary possibilities. As the election approached Marx wrote Engels that "the election of an opposition candidate would probably lead to a real *revolution* . . . This is absolutely the most critical point since the beginning of the war. If this is shifted old Lincoln can then blunder on to his heart's content. For the rest the old man can not 'make' generals . . . If Lincoln gets through this time—as is very probable—it will be on a much more radical platform and under wholly changed circumstances. In conformity with his legal manner, the old man will find more radical methods compatible with his conscience."⁸

The re-election of Mr. Lincoln was followed by no significant change of policy; but it afforded Marx the opportunity to publicize his views of the historical significance of the war. This was done through an Address to the President from the recently formed International Workingmen's Association. Marx wrote the Address. Though directed to the President it congratulated the American people upon his re-election, which it pronounced "the triumphant war cry . . . of Death to Slavery." But the real object of the Address appears to have been to inform the President and the world as to the relation between the Civil War and the revolutionary movement "against the existing social and political order of things." It was necessary, therefore, to play up the working-class support of the war:

From the commencement of the titanic American strife, the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the Star-

⁸Marx to Engels, September 7, 1864, *Civil War in the United States*, p. 272.

spangled Banner carried the destiny of their class . . . and, from most parts of Europe, contributed their quota of blood to the good cause.

While the Workingmen, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master, they were unable to attain true freedom, or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation; but this barrier has been swept away by the red sea of Civil War.

The workingmen of Europe feel sure that, as the American War for Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working-class, to lead the country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world.⁹

A similar opportunity came when Mr. Johnson became president. From the new president our observers expected a stronger policy than Lincoln's. "Johnson is stern, inflexible, revengeful," wrote Marx, "and as a former poor white has a deadly hatred of the oligarchy. He will stand less on ceremony with the fellows, and, through the assassination, he finds the temper of the North adequate to his intentions." Again the International sent an Address, written by Marx, calculated to fortify the President's "deadly hatred," and to give his mission its proper place in the historic process of social regeneration: "A profound sense of your great mission," it said, "will save you from any compromise with stern duties. You will never forget that to initiate the new era of the emancipation of labor, the American people devolved the responsibility of leadership upon two men of labor—the one Abraham Lincoln, the other Andrew Johnson."

But as the rapidly shifting scene unfolded in Washington, both Marx and Engels were outraged by what they regarded as the President's weak, vacillating policy which promised "landing the old villains of secession . . . in Congress." A year later, however, as the reconstruction measures of the radicals in Congress began to take form,

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 280-81.

hopes for a revolution were revived. "After the Civil War phase," wrote Marx (April 23, 1866), "the United States are only now entering on the revolutionary phase, and the European wiseacres who believe in the omnipotence of Mr. Johnson will soon be disillusioned." And so ends, on this cheerful, reassuring note, the available war correspondence of these two long-range observers. It is to be regretted that it closes at this juncture; though we can pretty safely surmise their reaction to each phase of the struggle during the unhappy years that followed.

Fortunately, however, we have an interpretation of the period by a disciple of Marx,¹⁰ who, like the Beards, has had the advantage of the perspective of half a century. He accepts the theory of a revolution, but not the kind found by the Beards.

To understand Mr. Allen's argument and his disposition of forces, one must have in mind his concept of social revolution. It is much clearer-cut than that of the Beards. To the Marxist it means, when completed, the destruction of the capitalist system, the end of wage-slavery, the creation of something new in the world—a classless society. He finds the "Second American Revolution" beginning with "the battle between the farmers and slaveholders for the possession of Kansas and the birth of the Republican party . . . the slave aristocracy recognized the first, although feeble expression of the revolutionary upheaval . . . and set out to subdue the revolution," thus inaugurating the counter-revolution. Not the secessionists who sought to divide the Union, but the territorial restrictionists formed the party of revolution. The logic of this assignment of roles is clear if we keep in mind the goal of "the revolution"—the triumph of the working classes. Whatever contributed to this end was revolutionary; whatever blocked or retarded this outcome was counter-revolutionary.

To give the movement a class character, there should have been the popular uprisings Marx and Engels looked for; but the nearest approach to that was the draft riots,

¹⁰Allen, *op. cit.*

and these were "counter-revolutionary" in effect. Mr. Allen, however, finds some faint appearance of "class dynamics" at work: the men of whole trade-unions enlisted in a body; the resurgence of trade-unionism in the closing years of the war; and "many socialist leaders and German emigres of the revolution of 1848, among them Joseph Weydemeyer, who was a close friend of Karl Marx, served as officers in the Union army." Mr. Allen does not pretend that these incidents stamped the conflict as proletarian. To be sure, the slaves gained "bourgeois freedom;" but how little that, in itself, amounted to was pointed out by Marx in the Address to President Lincoln: change from chattel slavery to wage slavery. The real victor in the first phase of the struggle was the bourgeoisie of the North. For Mr. Allen has been led to believe that the "further expansion of bourgeois industry required the annihilation of the slave power," that it needed to dominate the whole country, to achieve national unity in order to be assured of its home market, and that this prime economic force was "expressed in the battle cry of 'Save the Union' with which the North took the field."¹¹

Whether the revolution was to end with the triumph of an industrial oligarchy over a slaveholding oligarchy and bourgeois freedom for the slaves was, for a year after the surrender, in doubt. "The North returned from victorious war," says Mr. Allen, "only to find a traitor in the most exalted post in the Union." President Johnson, instead of taking up the "stern duties" of his mission of social regeneration imposed upon him, as Marx reminded him, by his class ties, pursued a plan of restoring the Union based upon the restoration of land and political rights to the ex-slaveholders. Only when the left wing Radicals in Congress broke with the President and mapped out their own plan of reconstruction did the second phase of the conflict begin to unfold as a people's movement with promise of a social revolution. This was sensed by Marx (April, 1866) with his usual prescience.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 19.

Mr. Allen's main contribution is to show how high the tide of revolution rose and why it failed. The conditions were not wholly favorable. In spite of the efforts of the First International to edge into the labor movement in the North, wage earners seemed, for the time being, immune to European influence and devoted their energies to bourgeois efforts to improve working conditions. Mr. Allen recognizes that the working class in the South was insignificant. But there were the small landed proprietors and tenants who "had suffered under the slave oligarchy. . . . hungry for land and for democratic rights;" these could form part of the popular base. But the Negro masses must play a pivotal role if there was to be a people's revolution; they must be the chief bearers of democracy; and their demands must be met as a condition to becoming an active ally in the new phase of the conflict. Emancipation, says Mr. Allen, was not enough. That "was merely a springboard from which the revolution in the South could leap far ahead . . . The issues were clearly projected: confiscation of the landed estates for the benefit of the landless; disfranchisement of the land barons, and Negro suffrage. . . . If Freedom meant anything it meant land and the vote,"—the one necessary to make the other secure. And, as in every revolutionary epoch, the security of the new class in power required a dictatorship as a weapon to be "wielded against the former ruling class and against every attempt at restoration."¹²

Each of these prerequisites to the social revolution was in some measure provided, but, as Mr. Allen contends, with fatal delays and with too little revolutionary vigor. Only the Negroes showed a truly militant spirit.¹³ The real

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 67, 80.

¹³The position of the Negroes as "allies," not mere followers, is insisted upon and their militancy stressed in order, apparently, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. "A political revolution," says Karl Kautsky, "can only become a social revolution when it proceeds from a hitherto socially oppressed class. Such a class is compelled to complete its political emancipation by its social emancipation because its previous condition is in irreconcilable antagonism to its political domination. A split in the ranks of the ruling classes, no matter if it should take on the violent form of Civil War, is not a social revolution." Karl Kautsky, *Social Revolution* (Chicago: C. H. Kerr and Company, 1916), p. 9.

promise of a social revolution was in the South, the necessary steps clearly marked out. But the freedmen lacked an independent leadership of their own and the Radicals in Congress, versed in constitutional law but not in the law of revolution, instead of acting at once, while the vanquished "were submissive," procrastinated: "the revolutionary potency of the bourgeoisie" was sapped by capitalistic development; the ex-slaveowners received back the political rights they had forfeited; hope for the division of land faded, and the Negroes found themselves forced into a share-cropping system—"the transitory stage between chattel-slavery and free wage-labor."

And so the "battle for democracy" was lost; the revolution remained a bourgeois triumph. But like the good advocate he is, Mr. Allen refuses to believe that the cause for which he appears, is lost; it only sleeps:

The issues of that revolutionary epoch still persist—land, suffrage, civil rights—casting their shadow upon the whole country. They strike fire again in a new setting and on a higher plane of development. When the bourgeois democracy betrayed democracy in the South, it chalked up on the scoreboard of history a whole series of obligations which only the new revolutionary forces of our epoch can fulfill.¹⁴

Mr. Louis M. Hacker, in the language of revolution more subdued than that of Mr. Allen and more precise and less ornate than that of the Beards, also accepts with due acknowledgements the theory of the "Second American Revolution." He does not, however, call it a "social revolution." He would probably agree with Kautsky that: "A split in the ranks of the ruling classes, no matter even if it should take on the violent form of civil war, is not a social revolution." His emphasis on certain features of the event differs from that of the Beards. While they regard the destruction of the planting aristocracy as the "supreme outcome of the civil strife," he regards their (the Beards') corollary result—"the undisputed triumph of a new combination of power" as the significant per-

¹⁴Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

manent outcome of the war; or, more simply, the "striking achievement" of the war was "the triumph of industrial capitalism."

Hacker is more specific than the Beards as to the operation of "class dynamics in historical development." He follows their analysis of the conflicting economic interests between the planting and the commercial states and points it up with the more precise terminology of revolution. What these familiar conflicts were, real and supposed, need not be recounted here. It is to be noted by the way, however, that the emphasis placed on the conflicting industrial interests of two systems of production tends to obscure the fact that slavery, as Lincoln said, "was somehow, the cause of the War." If we are looking for the disturbing factor which appeared in the middle of the century, it can more certainly be found in slavery than in the new industrial system. Slavery was approaching a double crisis in nowise related to the new rising industry: the rising tide of humanitarian sentiment against the system and both the political and the economic need of expanding its area.

The planters understood that their property was such as to demand "the kind of protection which flows from the possession of power;" and they understood, too, that the "natural increase" of slaves so much depended upon by the planter to keep their accounts balanced¹⁵ was working out its long-run results. The warning given by Professor George Tucker¹⁶ in 1843 concerning the adverse land-population ratio was being considered, and the most obvious escape from an impending danger which hunting, grazing, and agricultural peoples in all ages have had to face, was the extension of slave territory. It was about this question that controversy raged from the time the Wilmot Proviso was brought into Congress. It was upon this issue that the new Republican party was formed, tak-

¹⁵John Calvin Reed, *The Brothers' War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1905), Chap. xiii.

¹⁶George Tucker, *Progress of the United States* (New York, 1843).

ing over the "free soil" principle of an older party but not its declaration for "free men." On its essentially one-plank platform it failed in 1856; four years later, on a full-fledged economic program and still opposing the extension of slave territory, it won. Mr. Hacker explains how this came about.

Enter here a new aspirant for power and privilege—industrial capitalism. Business enterprise also was having its difficulties, especially after 1857. Mercantile capitalism, which had "its rise and decay" during our Middle Period, had by the late fifties, says Mr. Hacker, exhausted its possibilities in land speculation, means of communication, and mercantile-capitalist manufacturing; its "twilight" was setting in. It was then "that the leaders of northern capital seized upon the free soil cause . . . as the most likely cudgel with which to belabor the slave system. They made it their own, not, however, for the purpose of freeing the blacks, but for capturing the central government from the hands of the planter capitalists."¹⁷

And why the compulsion to do this? Because at a time when the historical requirement of the epoch was the conversion of mercantile capitalism into industrial capitalism, it was realized that "with its control over the instrumentalities of government in the decade before the war, the South was able to frustrate every hope of the industrial capitalists of the North and block¹⁸ up their every avenue of possible expansion."¹⁹ Until the middle 1850's the commercial and industrial capitalists had re-

¹⁷Louis M. Hacker, *Triumph of the American Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), p. 204.

¹⁸Blocked, as explained by Southern opposition to the home-stead act, protective tariffs, national banks and internal improvements, including a Pacific railway.—*Harper's Magazine*, CLXX, 439. Mr. Hacker in his *Triumph of American Capitalism*, p. 339, tones down somewhat the picture he has here drawn: "Because the Southern planter capitalists were in control of the instrumentalities of the national state and, as a result, thwarting the (too slowly) growing industrial capitalism, their claims to power had to be challenged."

¹⁹Louis M. Hacker, "Revolutionary America," *Harper's Magazine*, CLXX (March, 1935), 439.

garded the anti-slavery crusade which drew its strength from "sections of the country shot through with egalitarianism," with hostility. But now, when the time was ripe for the expansion of industrial capitalism, with the slave masters using "every agency at their command—legislative, executive, and judicial" to maintain their own interests and "to prevent the growth to power and maturity of the rising industrialism"—at this juncture the industrialists "seized upon the anti-slavery agitation as a standard about which to rally the hosts against the slave aristocracy," and joined the Republican party.

Taking advantage of the split in the Democratic party, the Republicans succeeded in electing a "minority president." Then followed in rapid succession withdrawal from Congress, secession, and war, leaving the new party in complete control. "And once installed in office, while it presumably was bending every effort to win the war, the victorious party did not permit itself to lose sight of its class program,"²⁰ a program so often recited by Mr. Hacker that the dullest reader will not fail to be impressed with its enormities: protective tariffs, a public aided Pacific railway, the homestead act, a national banking system, the admission of immigrant contract labor, river and harbor legislation. The program had been submitted to the voters, it is only fair to note, by the way, and Congress might fairly hold that it had a mandate from the people to give it legislative effect. But Mr. Hacker warns

²⁰The Beards take a similar view of capitalist strategy: "While the planting class was being trampled in the dust—stripped of its wealth and political power—the capitalist class was marching onward in seven league boots . . . To measurable accumulations (from war contracts and rising prices) were added legal gains of high economic value. All that two generations of Federalists and Whigs had tried to get was won within four short years, and more besides." Beard and Beard, *op. cit.*, II, 105. Morison and Commager note that "Charles and Mary Beard have gone so far as to assert that industrialization was the conscious purpose of the Republican party or of those who supplied the brains and the funds of the Republican party during the period of War and Reconstruction. We can find no evidence of this nigger in the woodpile." Samuel E. Morison and Henry S. Commager, *Growth of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), II, 124-5.

us that we must remember how political power in the government "had been seized by a coup d'état, in effect," and that the program of industrial capitalism was written by a minority party "operating in a series of rump Congresses." This gives the whole proceeding a pleasant revolutionary flavor, and at the same time, as will presently appear, it gives a clue to the reconstruction policy of the industrial capitalists.

Here, then, we have the party of revolution. Now, "like all revolutionary hosts, the Republican party had a Radical and a Conservative wing." Seward was leader of the Conservatives, Mr. Lincoln as President, their spokesman. They wanted to end the war without disarranging the essential *political* and *social* pattern of the nation. They were neither abolitionists nor egalitarians; the unequal status of negroes and poor Southern whites was of no interest to them. But as spokesmen of industrial capitalism, the war furnished them the opportunity to round out the economic program of the class they represented." The Radicals, all of them "revolutionists," fall into two groups: the old Radicals like Stephens and Sumner, who on moral and humanitarian grounds were bent, during the war, on freeing and arming the slaves, and, after the war, on protecting their rights as freedmen; the new Radicals, a younger group, such as Blaine, Sherman, Garfield, and Conkling, who "believed in the rising star of industrialism." The latter had not been through the anti-slavery crusade; for them "Negro emancipation was not a burning faith, but a weapon." During the war, they followed the lead of the old Radicals; but "when it was over they took over the control of the Republican party."

All the Radicals were in agreement on the determination to keep their party in power, and, to that end, to keep the South in a state of vassalage. The old group felt bound to protect the civil rights of the freedmen and therefore to guard against an early return of the planters to power; and they expected the vote of the Negroes to "assure the permanent victory of Republicanism in the South and therefore in the nation." The new Radicals were also bent

on the policy of subjection, but for another reason. Remembering how their economic program had been written by a series of "rump Congresses," they feared that if the South were restored at once, Southern agrarians and Western farmers would unite to overthrow the great charter of industrial capitalism—"the striking achievement" of the Civil War. The South must be kept in vassalage till allies could be found for the support of the industrial capitalists' program in the West. This they succeeded in doing by admitting new states, giving protection to western wool growers, making land-grants to western railroads, by river and harbor appropriations, and by turning capitalists loose on the timber and mineral resources of the nation. By 1876, their design had been achieved; enough of the West was "won away from its old agrarian allegiances;" and "when the Southern Congressmen and Senators were finally permitted to return to Washington, the hope of an effective agrarian bloc had been shattered forever." Thus did industrial capitalism, after winning the war, win also the peace; and, still shod in seven-league boots, march on triumphantly to the completion of the "Second American Revolution," reached, says Mr. Hacker, at the moment in 1901 when the United States Steel Corporation was formed.²¹

There is, quite naturally, a note of disappointment in any Marxian account of a revolution in which the working class plays an inconspicuous part. Mr. Hacker observes this imperfection in the revolution he is describing. "Why", he asks, "did not the American workers participate—as workers—in the Civil War?" The most obvious answer is that they regarded themselves first of all as citizens, and, in their country's need, responded as citizens. That answer, of course, must appear naive to a school whose founder taught that "the workingmen have no country;" which regards patriotism as a "virus," and as a stumbling block to proletarian internationalism. A class solution of

²¹Hacker, "Revolutionary America," *loc. cit.*, p. 442; Hacker, *Triumph of American Capitalism*, pp. 376-377.

the problem is required. Workers, during the years preceding the war had failed, says Mr. Hacker, to appreciate their "inferior class position," and had been prone to listen to "those whose programs were philosophic, libertarian, and utopian" and to accept the "ministration of employer welfare devices." And so they found themselves involved in the war "incapable of appreciating the important historical role it was in their power to assume [by] diverting the revolution into truly radical channels . . . under their own revolutionary banners." They were lukewarm in their support of the war and "rejected its idealistic purposes." As if to make doubly clear the non-proletarian character of the "revolution," he describes with indiscriminate asperity the part played by the "workers of America." "They fought conscription; they refused to re-enlist; they would not buy war loans; they deserted in large numbers; And in 1863 they engaged in savage riots against the war in many American cities because of war weariness, wage exploitation, and their hatred of Negro strike-breakers." In a word, "the workers were not yet proletarianized sufficiently to realize that a revolutionary situation presents opportunities for the advance of *every* underprivileged class."

Thus it seems that the war was nothing more than a "bourgeois revolution" as Mr. Allen calls it, by which the industrial capitalists seized control of the government, removed the planter barrier to their progress, and by law and constitutional amendment laid the foundation for their triumphant march to "maturity."

The American Civil War turned out to be a revolution indeed. But its striking achievement was the triumph of industrial capitalism. The Industrial Capitalists, through their political spokesmen, the Republicans, had succeeded in capturing the state and using it as an instrument to strengthen their economic position. It was no accident, therefore, that while the war was waged in the field and through negro emancipation, in Congress' halls the victory was made secure by the passage of tariff, banking, public land, railroad, and contract labor legislation.²²

What, now, shall we say of this interpretation of the Civil War? The Beards' characterization of the war one

²²Hacker, *Triumph of American Capitalism*, p. 373.

might pass by with a shrug, as exuberant rhetorical exaggeration; but when pointed up by Mr. Hacker, guided especially by the philosophy of class dynamics in historical development, one cannot pass over it so lightly. The Beards have a "new combination of power emerging from the conflict—northern capitalists, farmers, and laborers who drove from power the planting aristocracy." The new combination of power is too cumbersome for Mr. Hacker. He assigns farmers, laborers, and the petty bourgeoisie, to a position of political obscurity. The industrial capitalists are left in control. It is this new ruling class who seize power, destroy the planting capitalists, and convert the government into one of, by, and for industrial capitalism. It is they who separate Northern farmers from their natural allies by maintaining the ten years bondage of the planters, until such time as, by sops to the West, the farmers of that region had been won as allies to their cause.

The assumption of a ruling class dominated by only one purpose, simplifies the task of the historian. He has no need, in describing what happened, to set forth the state of the nation and its requirements—the immediate, often pressing needs, which gave rise to specific acts of legislation. There is no need to weigh the motives of multitudes, or even of individuals—the mixed motives of men springing from economic, political, regional, emotional, and moral considerations. All that is needed is to settle upon the purpose of the ruling class, assume that all those who act with it are its tools or "bemused" dupes and he can weave a narrative of events the pattern of which is pretty well determined beforehand. If anything is done obviously to the disadvantage of the class, it can by skillful arrangement be placed where it will least mar the harmony of the pattern. It is only when we examine the threads woven into such a fabric that we realize what a tangled web it is.

Mr. Hacker's whole argument rests on a supposed industrial impasse in the 1850s, to be broken only by the destruction of the slave power. There was no such impasse. The decade preceding the war was one of notable expansion and predominant prosperity. Widespread and severe, indeed, were the losses following the panic of 1857 in every

field of economic life. But there was no dismay. Thorp in his *Business Annals* characterizes 1858 as a "depression" year, 1859 as a year of "revival," and 1860 as a year of "prosperity," with business activity slackening late in the year. Professor Dunbar has pointed out that the disasters of the panic were quickly surmounted: "Three years had not passed, therefore, before the pursuit of wealth was as eager and confident as ever and the prosperity of the country apparently as great as ever."²³ Looking back on their recent achievements, the industrial capitalists had every reason for confidence as to future expansion. They had built a great merchant marine, short of England's by only a quarter million tons. During the last decade, with the strangle hold of the planters tightening upon them, they built 3.7 million tons of shipping, much of it sold abroad, but enough kept at home to bring our shipping to the highest point in our history. They increased the railroad mileage from 9,000 to 1850 to 30,000 in 1860; they were opening mines and cutting down forests; and they almost doubled the value of their manufactures. The last ten years of the old regime were precisely the years of their greatest achievement and there was nothing in the situation in 1860 to dim the prospect of future expansion. The industrial capitalists knew this and so did the planters.

Turning now to the details of "the striking achievement" of the war—the enactment into law of the Republican platform of 1860—consider first the long standing controversy between those who believed a diversified industry of enough national importance to warrant giving encouragement to its growth, and those who did not. The issue of protective tariffs had been before the country since the founding of the Republic. In nullification days the controversy over it took on an alarming form. But for many years before the war, the tariff issue had been a minor one and could scarcely be called a sectional one. Indeed, if the industrialists had a tariff grievance it might as well have been charged to their neighbors in the North as to the planters. Of the 114 votes in the House

²³Charles F. Dunbar, *Economic Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1904), p. 293.

for the free trade act of 1846, 58 were from the South and Southwest, 56 from the North and Northwest. Of the 118 votes for the act of 1857, 60 were from the South and Southwest, and 58 from the North and Northwest. This act of 1857 was passed to reduce a redundant revenue. There was general acquiescence in its lower rates from the industrial states. Every vote in the Senate from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut was for the bill. The New York vote was split. In the House every vote but one in the New England states mentioned was for the bill; in New York the vote was 16 to 11 for it. Pennsylvania voted solidly against the bill in both houses. As Mr. Richard Hofstadter, in a painstaking study,²⁴ has shown, the real tariff controversies of this period were not between the North and South, manufacturers and planters, but between Northern farmers and Northern manufacturers. The manufacturers were ready to accept lower rates if those on wool and other raw materials were abolished or reduced; and it was so arranged. Taussig's conclusion that the "country accepted the tariff acts of 1846 and 1857, and was satisfied," seems well founded.

But it was the crisis of 1857, says Mr. Hacker, that disclosed to industrial capitalism how precarious was its position and led it in 1859 to "concentrate all its energies in an attack on the Southern tariff system." There is no evidence of a general attack on the existing tariff system which, by the votes, was scarcely more Southern than Northern. There was, however, skirmishing on a narrow front. Within a month after the Congressional election of 1858, with its premonitory results, on the opening day of the short session, a member from Pennsylvania asked support for a resolution instructing the Ways and Means Committee to report a bill for increasing the duties on coal, iron, and wool. The resolution failed. It is chiefly significant for its probable effect in stiffening Southern opposition to every proposal during the session for increasing tariff taxes. If the panic gave a shock to business, so it did to the Treasury. The customs, the only source of

²⁴Richard Hofstadter, "The Tariff Issue on the Eve of the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, XLIV (October, 1938), 50-55.

tax-revenue, fell off from \$63 million for the fiscal year 1857 to \$42 million in 1858, creating a deficit which was to become chronic. An elaborate tariff bill was introduced near the close of the session by another Pennsylvania member, providing for a general increase of duties, some of them designed to protect particular industries. It was summarily blocked, as might have been expected, but so, too were such mild proposals as to substitute the rates of the act of 1846 for those in force, or even a part of them, for a limited period. The active opposition to change came from the South, and was based primarily on the peculiar construction of the constitution so tenaciously held in that region because of the protection it afforded its peculiar institution—just as today it is held as a defense against such interference in matters stemming from that institution.

It was under these conditions and in this atmosphere, tense over far greater issues, that the Morrill tariff bill took form. Owing to a deadlock over the speakership in the first session of the new Congress, 1859-60, it was mid-March before it reached the House. It was understood and expected that the higher revenue rates it imposed would give incidental protection, but the measure went further, openly and above board fixing some rates for the purpose of aiding certain producers, especially those of iron and wool, and less openly further protection was given by converting *ad valorem*, into something more than equivalent, specific duties. The bill was clearly a shift from recent tariff policy back to an earlier one. But it is pure dramatics to represent it as the product of the concentrated efforts of alarmed industrialists seeking escape from an economic impasse. It did, however, have a bearing on the approaching presidential election and the "seizure of power" which followed. The bill was pressed through the House to a well-timed vote a few days before the Republican nominating convention. It is a commonplace that the bill and the tariff plank of the party were designed to meet the wishes of the congenital protectionists of Pennsylvania. That state was believed to be, as the event proved, the keystone state in the November election. But Mr.

Hofstadter's study makes it quite clear that the attitude of Pennsylvania industrialists did not represent the general attitude of the class. This view is supported by the remarks of responsible spokesmen in the debate on the bill. Rice of Massachusetts said: "The manufacturer asks no additional protection. He has learned, among other things, that the greatest evil, next to ruinous competition from foreign sources, is an excessive protection, which stimulates a like ruinous and irresponsible competition at home."²⁵ Sherman was no less explicit: "When Mr. Stanton says the manufacturers are urging and pressing this bill, he says what he must know is not correct. The manufacturers have asked over and over again to be let alone." Mr. Morrill's opinion a few years later agrees with these views when he said his bill "was not asked for, and but coldly welcomed by manufacturers who always and justly fear instability."

These estimates of the industrialist interests back of the Morrill tariff, taken with the moderate protection given by it, seem altogether more reasonable than to view the measure as the fruit of the concentrated energies of a class which should, according to scripture, have been united, but was not. And so, of the upward pushes of the tariff rates during the next three years of war, the protection given by these increases, we are given to understand, was a surreptitious gain—"The defenses always the same;" the need of revenue and compensation for the excises levied in 1862; as though the defenses were not valid! The need of revenue was obvious, but the internal revenue taxes in the first year of their operation yielded more than the customs. How much net protection was afforded by the tax legislation during the period, no one can tell. It certainly cannot be measured by the rising average of duties on imports. But the great "step forward in placing the services of the State at the command of private enterprise" by way of the tariff, was taken in

²⁵The quotations are from F. W. Taussig's *Tariff History of the United States* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1892), p. 160.

1864. In the tariff act of that year, "all pretense was discarded: this was protectionism, undisguised and unashamed." If it was that, it was also something more; something which explains if it does not excuse its crudities, its excesses and abuses. It was one of a series of several revenue measures of unprecedented magnitude passed in the darkest hour of the war; passed as Professor Dunbar once said "in answer to the prayer of the people to be taxed" in order to save the public credit from utter collapse. In the haste to enact them, there was no attempt to make nice adjustments, to coordinate tariffs, pyramiding excises, gross receipts, license and income taxes. If the protectionists took advantage of the situation to embody their theory in the law, there is still no reason for regarding it, as the consummation of a design entered upon in 1858, when the industrialists joined the anti-slavery host. The "War Tariff" like the internal revenue law, is sufficiently explained by the conditions of the time.

No one thinks of defending the tax laws of 1864 as models of fiscal legislation. But since so much has been said, or implied, concerning the sinister influences surrounding their making, it may be noted that under them as modified from time to time, whether because of them or in spite of them, some things happened in the national interest which were "no part of the intention" of class beneficiaries of those laws: a vast, if disorderly development of every branch of industry; the reduction of the war debt in one generation to one-third of what it was in 1865; and, to take one example representative of a trend, the decline in the price of steel rails from \$166 in 1867 to less than \$20 before the end of the century.

Both Mr. Hacker and the Beards give high rank to the national bank system as an objective in the grand strategy of the capitalists. The facts seem to be that the capitalists, whether industrial or financial, had little or nothing to do with the inception or enactment of the law creating that system. The idea of a central control in some form over banking and currency was as old as the Republic, but it had been dormant as a political issue during

the years immediately preceding the war. It was not mentioned in the "full-fledged economic platform" of the Republicans in 1860. Secretary Chase's revival of the idea was due to his experience with existing bank currency in a western state, sharpened by the inconveniences he at once found in Treasury operations growing out of the diverse character of the bank note money in circulation. As he worked out his plan, he had suggestions from many sources—none of them industrialist, so far as can be made out. Andrew McFarland Davis, in his *Origin of the National Banking System*, has collected a mass of material on the subject and nowhere is there any indication of industrialist influence. The state banks, at first hostile to the plan, long remained reluctant to nationalize under it. Mr. Davis was at some pains to determine whether the main purpose of the law was to provide a safe and uniform currency or a market for government bonds. The matter is immaterial. The two purposes were joined in the law, and both were national. If industrial and financial groups were benefitted by the system, so, too, was every other group and every person who received and paid out money.

The Pacific railroad, a project "close to the hearts of industrial capitalism" was another item in the program mapped out by the Republican party in 1860. It was also an item in the platform of both wings of the Democratic party. The Republicans differed from their opponents by agreeing on which of several rival routes they would locate the road. There was no difference of opinion as to the national interest to be served. The need of it became acute after the acquisition of California; the war made it imperative. Two perils to that region were faced in the first year of the war: the danger of secession, prevented only by military occupation; and the danger of conquest by England, threatened by naval concentration at Vancouver during the crisis over the Trent affair. The commercial, industrial, and agricultural gains to be expected were of course never lost sight of. But it was primarily national necessity that induced Congress to pass the Act of 1862.

Industrial capitalists, as such, were not interested in the Pacific railway when the Republican party platform of 1860 was written, nor when the Charter Act was passed. Mr. Hacker offers no evidence that any kind of capitalist was interested in the enterprise. The act provided that when one-fiftieth of the authorized stock had been subscribed for and 10% paid thereon, the subscribers could form a company with power to accept the terms of the contract offered. Offices were opened in the chief financial centers, but it was not till 16 months later that barely enough shares had been subscribed for the formation of a company. From that time on, there was a Pacific railroad influence at work in Washington. It secured highly favorable modifications of the contract, both as to the land grants and the use of the public credit—changes probably necessary if construction was to go forward—so reluctant were capitalists to support the venture with ready cash. The fact is that very few looked upon the project as a sound transportation enterprise—not even those who organized the company had faith in it. The evidence is that they undertook it expecting to make construction, rather than transportation, profits. These they realized, in part by the energy and business ability with which construction was carried on and in part by the dark and devious ways known to the higher finance. But when all is said about the darker side of early Pacific railway history, the people who joined in the nationwide demonstration of May 1869 were celebrating a great engineering and business achievement and the completion of a great national undertaking which they had lavishly supported as their own project.

Other parts of the grand design may be passed over briefly. Mr. Hacker has fitted them into the industrial policy of his ruling class, designed always for its exclusive benefit. There was the Homestead Act. The history of the agitation for free homesteads, now in the interest of stable republican institutions, then for the relief of distressed workingmen, and again as part of a grand scheme of "land reform," cannot be traced here. It turns up in

Mr. Hacker's account as part of the "class program" of the industrial capitalists. The fairly obvious purpose of the liberal land policy of the 1860's made notable by large grants to settlers and to railroads was to put half a continent, mostly idle, to work in the national interest. But a class purpose must be found. Why did the industrial capitalists make the Homestead Act part of their class program? The answer Mr. Hacker finds to be in part political: "To hold the West in allegiance to the East," until that region had acquired the habit of voting Republican, thus making secure their program as a whole. But there was a deeper, specific, purpose: "homesteads would make possible the quick settlement of the public domain and thus develop the national market for manufactured ware. They would also build up a great home agricultural industry whose surpluses of cereals and meat products could be poured into the world market to right our very unstable international position;" or, as put five years earlier, the final victory of capitalism depended, among other things, on keeping "open the western lands so that they could produce those surpluses of foodstuffs with which American industrialists would be able to pay fixed charges on foreign borrowings."²⁶ The Homestead Act did contribute as a minor factor to this very end during the '70's and '80s; but to credit the industrialists with the foresight thus to plan for it, is to ascribe to them a wisdom which makes that of the serpent of proverb appear like rustic simplicity.

Consider the Republican immigration policy—the great design. All the Republican platform of 1860 stood for was the continuance of the traditional liberal policy as against the restrictive policy advocated by the American party. That of 1864 did declare that immigration "should be fostered and encouraged." Conditions had changed; there was a labor shortage. The President noted this in his message of December 1863, and that there were

²⁶Hacker, *Triumph of American Capitalism*, p. 368; Hacker, "Revolutionary America," *loc. cit.*, p. 440.

tens of thousands of persons "thronging our foreign consulates and offering to emigrate to the United States, if essential, but very cheap assistance can be afforded them." He recommended legislation to this end. The "Act to Encourage Immigration" followed, July 4, 1864. It legalized contracts made with emigrants for the repayment of advances made for them for passage and for reaching their destination. The contracts required the approval of the Bureau of Immigration, were to run not more than one year, and were enforceable in the courts. The Beards find that the law authorized "the importation of working people under terms of contract analogous to the indentured servitude of colonial times." The analogy is remote; about as remote as it would be if applied to the importation of Mexican labor in 1942-3. Mr. Hacker sees in the law the fulfillment of the Republican pledge of a liberal immigration policy designed to "encourage the steady inward flow of a cheap labor supply;"²⁷ and he quotes Professor Shannon with apparent approval that the "federal government openly encouraged the importation of foreign contract labor to break strikes."²⁸

In all this there is no recognition of "a great deficiency of labor" seen by the President; only the interest of the industrialists. The law was repealed in 1868, but labor could continue to come in under contract (as it could before 1864) till it was forbidden in 1885; encouragement by steamship companies and by state bureaus of immigration continued long after. How far the act encouraged immigration cannot be determined. Arrivals under it increased, but it was not till five years after its repeal that the number was as great as it had been in 1854. When we recall the numbers arriving up to the close of the century, the act of 1864, viewed as a part of the grand scheme of the industrial capitalists, seems like a petty item indeed.

A review of the events which Mr. Hacker has woven into a story of the way the industrial capitalists joined the

²⁸Hacker, *Triumph of American Capitalism*, p. 372.

²⁷Hacker, "Revolutionary America," *loc. cit.*, p. 440.

"revolutionary hosts" of the Republican party for the purpose of removing planter-maintained barriers to their further progress, how this party of revolutionists enacted a body of economic and financial legislation which enabled industrial capitalism to march on to triumphant maturity by the end of the century—a review of these events leads to the conclusion that all the major propositions on which the account rests must be rejected. The theory that the Civil War was nothing less than a conflict between two different systems of production brought on by the requirements of the newer system for special legislation cannot be accepted. None of the questions of economic and financial policy upon which the sections were, in a general way, divided assumed any threatening aspect during the fateful fifties when the two sections were drifting apart. Not one of them, nor all taken together, constituted a fighting matter for either side. The war spirit developed around the slavery question and that only. And on this question it was not the restrictionist policy of the Republicans but the expansionist policy of the Democratic party that was "revolutionary," if the term is to be used, as was so amply shown in Lincoln's Cooper Union speech, and by the events of the decade. There is no evidence of a quasi-conspiratorial movement among industrialists to join the Republican party in order to secure the enactment of an industrial program planned before-hand; no evidence, as Morison and Commager say, that "industrialization was the conscious purpose of the Republican party or of those who supplied the brains and the funds of the Republican party during the period of War and Reconstruction."²⁹ Still less can it be shown that the capitalists as a class or any significant number of them were ready to accept the arbitrament of war for such a program.³⁰ Both common sense

²⁹See Note 20 above.

³⁰Consider this cryptic paragraph: "In the same way, a young and lusty American capitalism, its energies hampered by an older class occupying the citadels of power and privilege, and a capitalism, incidentally, whose nerves were frayed by the losses of the depression of 1857-58, was not prepared to be squeamish when the South resorted to the arbitrament of war. For wars can be made into revolutions; and that is exactly what the Civil War became." Hacker, *Triumph of American Capitalism*, p. 251.

and the facts lead to the contrary conclusion. It is usually difficult, without the aid of "class dynamics" to assess the motives and purposes of masses of men; but it is a commonplace of American history that, down to the outbreak of hostilities, many prominent business men probably reflecting the general sentiment of the class and the community, were urging that differences be settled by compromise; and, this failing, that the seceding states be allowed to depart in peace—so eager were they to avoid war.

The whole interpretation of the Civil War as a revolution must be rejected. A revolution was attempted, but it failed and became only a rebellion. A revolutionary change occurred in the legal status of the slaves, important changes came in plantation organization, but Southern agriculture long remained substantially as it was before the War. Viewing the economy of the country as a whole, the effect of the war, immediate and remote, on the character, direction, and tempo of production was far less than has generally been supposed. The list of important industrial changes during the war decade is, indeed, impressive, but scarcely more so than those of the preceding decade, and less so than those of the decade which followed.

Perhaps the most significant economic event during the war years, measured by its influence on future development, was the birth of the steel industry. It came at the time of the war, but not because of it. During the the brief infancy of this industry, it was helped upon its feet by the war tariff; but even without protection it doubtless would have risen. Politically the war marks the close of a period, the beginning of a new one. But not so economically. That came a few years later, and it came as the result of cumulative changes over many years and of a unique combination of conditions which had been in the making for a generation and upon which the Civil War had but a minor influence. Starting about the same time, factory production of manufacturers, farm machinery, the railroad, and steam navigation, had each been passing through a period of experimentation and by 1870 had reached a high degree of efficiency, just as our second mass

movement of population to the westward was getting under way for a fresh attack on our great stores of untouched national wealth; just at the time, too, when steel production, so necessary to all industries, was getting into its stride: 20,000 tons in 1867, 70,000 in 1870, and half a million tons in 1876.

In this new situation is to be found the explanation of the industrial development which followed. During the years roughly corresponding to the Reconstruction period, the signs multiply of significant change, actual and impending, in the economy of the country; signs, not of a new "revolution," but of sufficient importance to mark a new phase of the Industrial Revolution long in progress. Here, and not in 1860 or earlier, came the close of the Middle Period, the "emergence of modern industry." How far the later performance of industry under the capitalist system was affected for good or ill, by war-time legislation cannot, of course, be measured; but this much it is safe to say: that the remarkable economic expansion after the war was but a projection of what was happening before the war under a low tariff, without national banks or contract labor laws; and that the vast disorderly growth of economic power which characterized the last third of the century was probably not greatly different from what it would have been had there been no war-time legislation. And it may be added, by way of further dissent, that "the supreme outcome," "the striking achievement" of the war was neither the "destruction of the slave aristocracy," nor the "triumph of capitalism," but just what the President declared to be his steadfast purpose in waging it — the preservation of the Union.