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A Compromise of Principle: Congressional Republicans and Reconstruction, 1863-1869. By Michael Les Benedict. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974. 493p.; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$18.95.)

The debate over the motivation behind Radical Reconstruction has centered on genuine racial liberalism versus political expediency. Professor Benedict, of Ohio State University, emphasizes the different factions which divided the Republican party. He demonstrates that radicals were genuinely committed to black equality, even when it was politically damaging, while the moderates and conservatives were ready to compromise with the racist policies of President Andrew Johnson. Because of Johnson's tactlessness in vetoing moderate measures, conservatives were forced to turn to more radical ideas, but Benedict emphasizes that the radicals never were in control of Reconstruction. The radicals emerge as nationalists who realized that the Constitution did not give directions on how to handle the emergency of civil war, but whose centralizing tendencies were opposed by constitutionally-conservative Republicans who wanted to preserve federalism and state rights.

Consequently, Benedict concludes, the Reconstruction program that resulted was a half-hearted patchwork that was doomed to failure. By ignoring radical appeals for land redistribution, education, and permanent disenfranchisement of rebels, Reconstruction failed to provide lasting economic and political security for the freed slaves and white unionists in the South. This book coincides with other recent studies which show that the result of this failure was continuing sectional hatred and grinding poverty for the Southern masses.

Benedict's study demonstrates that Ohio played a prominent role in Reconstruction. Ohio Congressmen participated in each faction, with consistent radicals represented by Benjamin Wade, James Ashley and Robert Schenck; consistent centrists by John Sherman, Reader Clarke. Benjamin Eggleston, and Martin Welker; and consistent conservatives by John Bingham and Ralph Buckland. As in most states, the centrists and conservatives outnumbered the radicals. A Democratic victory in the Ohio state election of 1867 had national significance not only because a provision for black voting was defeated in a racist scare campaign, but because Republican defeat weakened radical Senator Benjamin Wade's chances for the presidential nomination.

As he pointed out in his earlier book, *The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson*, Benedict emphasizes that a major reason why Johnson was not re

moved from office was that he would have been replaced by the president pro tempore of the Senate, Benjamin Wade. Not only was Wade a radical, but his high-tariff and inflationary financial views alienated many Republicans. The picture was complicated by intra-party factional infighting within Ohio politics.

While Benedict's book is in many ways a synthesis, it also makes original contributions. By extensive quantitative analysis of Congressional voting patterns, it provides the best listing of the shifting alliances of the era. At last we can know who the radicals were, so that collective biographical studies can be done. The bibliography is also quite good. While the book is well written, at times its detailing of intricate parliamentary maneuvers, combined with a mass of politicians' names, becomes confusing. The fact that footnotes are not placed at the bottom of each page is distracting. Some of the lists are unclear, because at times only last names are given, and an examination of *The Biographical Directory of the American Congress* reveals a few discrepancies. Nevertheless, Benedict has written a well-researched and important study that will add much to Congressional and Reconstruction historiography.

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