One Hundred Years of Reconstruction of the South

By A. B. Moore

The South has long been, and to some extent still is, in the throes of being reconstructed by forces operating from outside the region. Ramifications of this reconstruction process account in large degree for certain conditions in the South today and for its place in the nation. They explain how the South has acquired a colonial status, not only in the economic system but also in the psychology, sentiment, culture, and politics of the nation.

While this address is concerned primarily with the reconstruction of the South after the Civil War, it takes cognizance of the fact that the reconstruction of the South by the North has been going on more than one hundred years. Prior to the Civil War it took the form of a savage attack upon slavery and southern society, though it had other connotations. The Northeast with its western extensions, possessed of what one writer has called "egocentric sectionalism"—that is, the conviction that it was not a section but the whole United States and that, therefore, its pattern of life must prevail throughout the country—, undertook after 1830 to reconstruct the South into conformity and into a subordinate position. With furious denunciations and menacing gestures and actions it drove the South into secession and war, destroyed its power, and reconstructed it with a vengeance and violence remarkable in the history of human conflict. This is not to give the South a clear bill of health; but whatever the rights and wrongs of the controversy, the

1 This paper was prepared for presentation as the 1942 presidential address of the Southern Historical Association, but its delivery was prevented by the cancellation of the annual meeting.
Civil War, broadly speaking, was the tragic drama of a movement to reconstruct the South.

We have formed the habit of examining the phenomena of the reconstruction of the South after the Civil War—that is, the period 1865-1877—in a very objective, almost casual, way and with little regard to their essence and their significance in southern and national history. While avoiding the emotional approach one should not forget that it was, after all, a settlement imposed by the victors in war, and should be studied in all its effects, immediate and far reaching, on its victims. An investigation of the effects on the victors themselves would also be an interesting adventure. It is a chapter in the history of the punishment of the defeated in war. The observations of a competent historian from another country, coming upon the subject for the first time, taking nothing for granted and making a critical analysis of its severity compared with the punishment of losers in wars in general, would make interesting reading.

The war set the stage for a complete reconstruction of the South. Furious hatred, politics, economic considerations, and a curious conviction that God had joined a righteous North to use it as an instrument for the purging of the wicked South gave a keen edge to the old reconstruction urge. The victories of bullets and bayonets were followed by the equally victorious attack of tongues and pens. Ministers mounted their pulpits on Easter Sunday, the day following President Lincoln's tragic death, and assured their sad auditors that God's will had been done, that the President had been removed because his heart was too merciful to punish the South as God required. An eminent New York divine assured his audience that the vice-regent of Christ, the new president, Andrew Johnson, was mandated from on high "to hew the rebels in pieces before the Lord." "So let us say," with becoming piety and sweet submissiveness he enjoined, "God's will be done."² Whether the ministers thought, after they discovered that Johnson was opposed to a reign of terror, that the Lord had made a mistake is not a matter of record. As Professor Paul H. Buck has said, "It was in the churches

² Paul H. Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (Boston, 1937), 12.
that one found the utmost intolerance, bitterness, and unforgiveness during the sad months that followed Appomattox."3 Henry Ward Beecher, one of the more moderate northern preachers, thought the South was "rotten." "No timber," said he, "grown in its cursed soil is fit for the ribs of our ship of state or for our household homes." The newspapers spread abroad the preachers' gospel of righteous vindictiveness and expounded further the idea that drastic punishment of the South was essential for the security of the Union.

Many unfriendly writers invaded the South, found what they wanted, and wrote books, articles, and editorials that strengthened the conviction that the South must be torn to pieces and made anew. Books, journals, and newspapers stimulated the impulse to be vigilant and stern, to repress and purge. A juggernaut of propaganda, stemming from the various sources of public instruction, prepared the way for the crucifixion of the South. The South of slavery and treason, of continuous outrages against the Negroes and Northerners, of haughty spirit and stubborn conviction, and of superiority complex, must be humbled and made respectable or be annihilated, so that it could never become again a strong factor in national politics.

The South did little or nothing to neutralize Radical northern propaganda. To be sure, a few journalists, like A. T. Bledsoe, complained about "the cunningly devised fables, and the vile calumnies, with which a partisan press and a Puritanical pulpit have flooded the North,"4 but their vituperative responses to vituperative attacks did more harm than good. There was, in the very nature of things, little that the South could do to disabuse the Radical northern mind that was disposed to believe evil of it. There was simply no escape for Southerners from an awful scourge. Even more courage and fortitude than they had displayed on the battlefield would be required to endure what was in store for them.

As much as Reconstruction has been studied in this country it should not at this late hour be necessary to point out its severity, its permanent effects upon the South, and its influence upon various aspects of our

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3 Ibid., 22.
4 Quoted in ibid., 57.
national history. Yet few have examined critically the harshness of it and its persistent and manifold effects. While crucifying the South, the dominant Radical group of the North, thanks to the blindness of hatred, believed it was being lenient. Because no lives were taken—but there are some things more agonizing than death—for the "crimes of treason and rebellion," the North has prided itself on its magnanimity; and its historians have been strangely oblivious of property confiscations and mental tortures. It seemed to the late James Ford Rhodes "the mildest punishment ever inflicted after an unsuccessful Civil War." But this was no ordinary civil war, if, indeed, it should be classed as a civil war. The thesis of leniency has oddly persisted. When the Germans protested to high heaven against the severity of the Versailles Treaty they had sympathizers in this country who compared the generosity of the North in its treatment of the South with the harshness of the Versailles Treaty. But the late Professor Carl Russell Fish of the University of Wisconsin, in his article on "The German Indemnity and the South," discredited the theory of generosity on the part of the North. He showed that the South was punished more than Germany, though he touched upon only a few phases of the South's burdens.5

Professor Buck in his delightful and highly informative book, The Road to Reunion, recognized Reconstruction as "disorder worse than war and oppression unequalled in American annals," but made a serious error when he stated that "virtually no property" was confiscated.6 He overlooked the confiscation of large quantities of cotton—estimated in the minority report of the Ku Klux Klan Committee at two million bales—then selling for a very high price and most of which belonged to private citizens. The abolition of slavery wiped out about two billion dollars of capital and reduced the value of real estate by at least that amount. This was confiscation of property and the repudiation of Confederate currency, the Confederate bonded debt, and the war debts of the states, all amounting to no less than three billion dollars, was con-

5 See American Historical Review (New York, 1895- ), XXVI (1921), 489-90.
6 Buck, The Road to Reunion, 25.
fiscation of property rights. As inevitable as much of this was, it represented a frightful confiscation of property.

The freeing of the slaves not only cost the South two billion dollars but it also forced upon that section an economic and social revolution. It subverted a mode of life almost as old as the South itself. The repudiation of its debts impoverished the South and destroyed its financial relationships. While the South lost its debts, it had to pay its full share of the northern debts which amounted to about four-fifths of the total northern war expenses. The money for this debt was spent in the North for its upbuilding. It paid also its share of the $20,000,000 returned by the Federal treasury to the northern states for direct taxes collected from them during the war, and of extravagant pensions to Union soldiers. Professor James L. Sellers estimates that the South paid in these ways an indemnity of at least a billion dollars to the North.7

The South accepted the results of the war—the doom of slavery and the doctrine of secession—as inevitable and its leaders sought to restore their respective states as speedily as possible to their normal position in the Union. But despite its acceptance in good faith of the declared aims of the North, the South was forced through the gauntlet of two plans of Reconstruction. The people conformed in good faith to the requirements of President Johnson's plan, but Congress repudiated this plan and forced the South to begin de novo the process of Reconstruction. Pending its restoration, it was put under the heel of military authority, though there was no problem that exceeded the power of civil authority to handle. Objectively viewed, it is a singular fact that it took three years to restore the South to the Union. It is little short of amazing that for a dozen years after the war Federal troops were stationed in the South among an orderly people who had played a leading role in the building and guidance of the nation since colonial times, and who now sought nothing so much as peace and surcease from strife. For much of the period government was a hodgepodge of activities by the civil authorities, the army, and the Freedmen's Bureau, with the Presi-

7 James L. Sellers, "The Economic Incidence of the Civil War in the South," in Mississippi Valley Historical Review (Cedar Rapids, 1914-- ), XIV (1927), 190.
dent of the United States working through any or all of these agencies. Most of the serious problems of government were precipitated by outside influences and conspiracies.

The political enfranchisement of four million Negroes, from whose necks the yoke of slavery had just been lifted, is the most startling fact about Reconstruction, and a fact of tremendous impact in southern history. There is nothing in the history of democracy comparable to it. To give the Negroes the ballot and office—ranging from constable to governor—and the right to sit in state legislatures and in Congress, while depriving their former masters of their political rights and the South of its trained leadership, is one of the most astounding facts in the history of reconstruction after war. It was a stroke of fanatical vengeance and design. The basic purpose of this sort of political reconstruction was to vouchsafe for the North—while chastising the South—the future control of the nation through the Republican party. The South was never again to be allowed to regain the economic and political position which it had occupied in the nation prior to 1860.

Negro voting laid the basis for the Carpetbag regime. For eight years Radical northern leaders, backed by the Washington authorities and the army and aided by some native whites, pillaged and plundered and finished wrecking the South. Northern teachers who invaded the South to reconstruct its educational and social system, and northern preachers who came down to restore the unity of the churches by a reconstruction formula that required Southerners to bend the knee and confess their sins helped the politicians, the Freedmen's Bureau, and the Loyal League to undermine the Negroes' confidence in their white neighbors. The reconstruction policy of the churches did its part in stirring up both racial and sectional enmities. The Nation remarked, in 1879, the "Churches are doing their full share in causing permanent division."\(^8\) Reconstruction affected the religious life of the country for fifty years and more after the Radicals were overthrown. The character of the Carpetbag-Scalawag-Negro governments was well stated by the New York Herald which said the South is "to be governed by blacks

\(^8\) Nation (New York, 1865 ), XXVIII (1879), 398-99.
spurred on by worse than blacks. . . . This is the most abominable phase barbarism has assumed since the dawn of civilization. . . . It is not right to make slaves of white men even though they have been former masters of blacks. This is but a change in a system of bondage that is rendered the more odious and intolerable because it has been inaugurated in an enlightened instead of a dark and uncivilized age."*

It would be safe to say that the people of the North never understood how the South suffered during the Radical regime. The Radicals who controlled most of the organs of public opinion were in no attitude of mind to listen to southern complaints, and most people were too busy with the pursuit of alluring business opportunities that unfolded before them to think much of what was going on down South. In some respects conditions in the South at the end of the Radical regime remind one of the plight of the Germans at the end of the Thirty Years War.

The South staggered out of the Reconstruction, which ended officially in 1877, embittered, impoverished, encumbered with debt, and discredited by Radical propaganda. It had won after many frightful years the right to govern itself again, but there were still white men who could not vote and for many years there was danger of the federal regulation of elections and a resurgence of Negro power in politics.

The tax load had been devastating. The lands of thousands upon thousands had been sold for taxes. Huge state and local debts, much of which was fraudulent, had been piled up. So many bonds, legal and illegal, had been sold that public credit was destroyed. The people stood, like the servant of Holy Writ, ten thousand talents in debt with not one farthing to pay. They had to solve the paradoxical problem of scaling down public debts—a bewildering compound of legal and illegal and far too large to be borne—while restoring public credit. Northern hands had imposed the debts and northern hands held the repudiated bonds. Repudiation became another source of misunderstanding between the sections and another basis for charges of "Southern outrages."

Reconstruction profoundly and permanently affected the political life of the South. It gave the South the one party system. The white people rallied around the Democratic party standards to overthrow the Radical regime, and their continued co-operation was necessary to prevent the Negroes from acquiring again the balance of power in politics. The terrible record of the Republican party during the Radical regime was an insuperable obstacle to its future success in the South. Hostility toward this party promoted devotion to the Democratic party. The complete domination of the latter party not only invested southern politics with the disadvantages of the one party system, but proved to be costly to the South in national politics. The Democratic party has been out of power most of the time in national politics and the Republican party naturally has not felt under obligation to do much for the South when it has had control of the national government. Even when the Democratic party has been in power the South has not had its share of patronage and appropriations, or of consideration in the formulation of national policies. The inequitable distribution of federal relief funds between the states since 1930 is an illustration in point. Political expediency has been the controlling consideration and not gratitude for party loyalty, which calls to mind an old Virginian’s definition of political gratitude. Political gratitude, he said, is a lively appreciation of favors yet to be received.

Radical Reconstruction corrupted southern politics, and the prejudice aroused against Negro participation in politics led ultimately to the disfranchisement of most of the Negroes. Political habits formed in counteracting Carpetbag machinations and the presence of Negro voters continued to influence politics. Fraudulent methods were employed to control the Negro votes and when factions appeared among the whites they employed against each other the chicanery and frauds which they had used against the Radicals.

Reconstruction contributed to the proscription of the South in national politics and to provincialism in southern politics. Southerners so feared a recrudescence of Reconstruction in some form or other that for a generation they generally shrank from active participation in na-
tional affairs. Their attitude, generally speaking, was that if the North would leave them alone it could direct national affairs. This begat provincialism and made the continued proscription of the South easier. Such a situation was not good for either the South or the North.

Race friction and prejudice were engendered by Reconstruction, which was an unfortunate thing for both races and especially for the Negroes. It caused greater discriminations against the Negroes in politics and education, and in other ways. The Negroes had been so pampered and led as to arouse false notions and hopes among them and to make them for many years lame factors in the rebuilding of the South. The Negro after Reconstruction, and in large degree because of it, continued and continues to be a source of division between the North and South. The North either could not or would not understand the necessity of race segregation, and the idea that the Negro must have a definite place in the scheme of life was obnoxious. Disenfranchisement of the Negro, occasional race riots, and the sporadic mobbing of Negroes accused of heinous crimes gave rise to continued charges of “Southern outrages.” Criticisms from the North, generally based upon a lack of understanding of the problem, seemed more a matter of censure than of true interest in the Negro. Thus, those who expected to see sectional strife over the status of the Negro disappear with the emancipation of the slaves were disillusioned.

The Negro has been the cause of more misunderstanding and conflict between the sections than all things else. The North freed the Negro from slavery but by repressing and exploiting the South it has contributed much to conditions that have deprived him of some of the opportunities that a free man should have. If southern whites have suffered the pangs and restraints of poverty, the lot of the Negro has inevitably been worse. The shackles upon the Negro’s economic and cultural advancement have been formidable and deadening in their effects. Their inescapable lack of educational opportunities has been epitomized by the saying that the South has had the impossible task of educating two races out of the poverty of one.

In some respects the South has not pursued an enlightened policy
toward the Negro. In ways it has exploited him. In the struggle for existence the Negro too often has been overlooked. Prejudice, too, resulting to a large extent from Reconstruction experiences, has done its part. Southerners, determined that the political control of Negroes back in the old Reconstruction days shall not be repeated, and probably too apprehensive about the breaking down of social barriers between the two races, have been conservative and slow to see adjustments that need to be made and can be made for the good of both races. Northerners with little information, but sure of their superior understanding, have scolded and denounced after the fashion of the old abolitionists. They have protested and cast sweeping aspersions without making constructive suggestions or troubling themselves to procure information upon which such suggestions could be based. Occasional violence against Negroes by ignorant mobs and discriminations against the Negroes in the enforcement of laws have evoked brutal and indiscriminating attacks from the northern press that remind one of journalism in the old Reconstruction days. Needless to say, such criticisms have contributed nothing to the southern Negro's welfare or to national unity.

The growing political power of the Negro in the North is adding to the Negro problem in the South. Many northern politicians to gain the political support of the northern Negroes—and, eventually, those of the South—are now supporting radical Negro leaders in their demand for a sweeping change in the status of the Negro in the South. But efforts to subvert the social system of the South will lead to more friction between the North and South and to bitter racial antagonisms.

The impoverishment of the people by Reconstruction and the heavy debt load imposed by it were most serious impediments to progress. They hindered economic advancement and educational achievement. Vast hordes of children grew to maturity unable even to read and write. It is impossible to measure the cost to the South of illiteracy alone resulting from the War and Reconstruction. Conditions brought about by Reconstruction also caused a tremendous loss of manpower. They caused a large exodus of the white people of the South to divers parts, and
made the Negroes unfit to apply their productive powers. The loss of whites is well illustrated by Professor Walter L. Fleming's statement that Alabama lost more manpower in Reconstruction than it lost in the war.

The poverty attending Reconstruction laid the basis for the crop lien system and promoted sharecropping, and these more than all things else have hindered rural progress. Hundreds of thousands of both the landless and the landed had nothing with which to start life over and the only source of credit was cotton. Merchants, with the assistance of eastern creditors, advanced supplies to farmers upon condition that they would produce cotton in sufficient quantity to cover the advances made to them. The merchant charged whatever prices he chose to and protected himself by taking a lien upon the cotton produced. Under the system the great mass of farmers became essentially serfs. To throw off the shackles required more resources than most of them possessed.

Even at present a majority of southern tenant farmers depend for credit on their landlords, or on the "furnish merchants" for their supplies. The landlord, moreover, who stakes all on cotton or tobacco, is a bad credit risk. For this reason he pays interest rates as high as twenty per cent, and naturally his tenants pay more. It has been estimated that those who depend on the merchant for supplies pay as much as thirty per cent interest even on food and feed supplies. Credit unions and the Farm Security and Farm Credit Administrations have helped many of the farmers, but farm credit facilities are still sadly lacking in the South. Louis XIV's remark that "Credit supports agriculture, as the rope supports the hanged" has been abundantly verified in the South.

Thus, Reconstruction made a large contribution to the development of a slum-folk class in the rural South. The sharecropper-crop-lien farm economy of the South has produced a human erosion system more costly than soil erosion. In fact the two have gone hand in hand. These things always come to mind when in this day of national championships the South is referred to as the nation's "Economic Problem No. 1."

Reconstruction and its aftermath prevented the flow of population and money into the South. The 37,000,000 increase in population be-
between 1870 and 1900 was largely in the North. The South's increase, except in Florida and Texas, was principally native and, as has been observed, it lost part of this increment. Northerners who moved and the millions of Europeans who came in either flocked to the industrial centers of the North or settled down on expansive fertile lands between Ohio and Kansas, made available by the Homestead Act. Most of the nation's capital and credit resources were put into railroad building and industrial and business pursuits north of the Mason and Dixon line. By 1890 the railroad pattern was laid and most of the roads had been built to feed the North. In every phase of economic activity the South was a bad risk compared with the North. Not the least of the things that kept men and money out of the South were its debt load and the stigma of debt repudiation. Northern newspapers and journals lambasted the South for the sin of repudiation and warned investors and emigrants to shun the South. In addition to other risks, they would find, the Nation said, that in the South the "Sense of good faith is benumbed, if not dead," and if they had anything to do with the South they would make themselves a part "of a community of swindlers." Even Henry Clews, who had conspired with the Carpetbag racketeers to sell shoddy Reconstruction bonds to gullible buyers in the North and Europe, railed out against the spectacle of "Southern robbery." The notion of southern depravity was long-lived.

Between 1865 and 1900 a new republic of tremendous wealth and productive power was forged and concurrently there was a great educational development and a general advance in culture throughout the North. The South was a mere appendage to the new nation advancing through these epochal transformations; Reconstruction had assigned it a colonial status in all its relations with the North. J. M. Cross of New York City, for example, wrote to John Letcher of Virginia on March 8, 1867, that "Northern civilization must go all the way over the South, which is only a question of time." Some of those who had wanted to make the northern way of life the national way lived to see their wish a fait accompli. The patterns of national life were forming and henceforth were to be formed in the North and na-
tional unity was to be achieved by the conformity of the South to these patterns. Northerners have made little or no distinction between the North and the nation. The idea has become deeply imbedded throughout the country. For example, Professor Buck unconsciously expresses this attitude when he says, "The small farm worked in countless ways to bring Southern life into closer harmony with the major trends in national life"—that is, northern life. The same idea is carried in one of the chapter titles—"Nationalization of the South"—in Professor William B. Hesseltine's recent History of the South. When the South has failed to conform it has been stigmatized as backward, provincial, and sectional.

By 1900 the Old South was largely a thing of memory. Yearning for some of the good things of life, impulsive young men rejected ante-bellum traditions as inadequate to the needs of the new South which must be built. They sneered at "mummies," "mossbacks," and "Bourbons" who cherished the Old South. Others, just as avid about the future of business and industry, hoped to bring over into the New South of their dreams the best of the old and thus merge "two distinct civilizations" into a compound that some good day would surpass anything the North could show. They would leaven the lump of crass materialism with the leaven of graceful living. But to the older generation it seemed that those who were breaking loose from old moorings were bending "the knee to expediency" with little or no regard for principle.

By scraping together small savings the would-be industrialists proved the mineral wealth of the South and laid the foundations of mineral industries and of tobacco and cotton milling. Northern capitalists were given an urgent invitation to come down and exploit the bonanza of physical and human resources. Labor was docile and cheap and helpless. The shearing would be easy. Northern capital began to trickle down and ultimately it came in larger quantities after business men had plucked the tall grass of opportunity in other parts of the country. A union was formed between northern and southern men in the field of business that took the place of the former union in politics of the Car-

10 Buck, The Road to Reunion, 149.
petbaggers and Scalawags. The business Carpetbaggers were received with bands and banquets and eloquent addresses of welcome. They found men ready to serve them as overseers, legal retainers, and lobbyists. If, as one writer has said, "the worst carpetbagger stayed at home," perhaps some of their representatives in the South have been among the worst Scalawags.

The urge became strong to acquire the attributes of the bounding North. Southerners lost faith in their own standards. To achieve high rating in the South, men must first win recognition in the North. Budding and bulging towns sought to become like the cities of the North with their smokestacks, skyscrapers, parks, and boulevards. The imitation of Yankee ways became the vogue. The inferiority complex of Southerners since Reconstruction, and to a great extent because of Reconstruction, is a cruel and potent fact in the history of the South. Not a few regretted that the grandeur of old southern life was being sacrificed but more, in the spirit of Scarlet O'Hara of "Gone with the Wind" fame, resolved that they would not longer deny themselves. Come what might, they would accumulate for themselves and make the South great by the northern formula. Some of the ablest and most ambitious could not wait for the New South to arrive; they pulled up stakes and moved North as near as possible to the springs of wealth and power. Thus an "all-out" reconstruction of southern life was under way. The North was the nation and the South strove hopefully for a while to become a potent part of it.

But the prophets of a new day and of a new and better way for the South were extravagant. They did not see that the South was not free to integrate itself, with a chance to use all its natural advantages, into the national economic system. They thought only of nature's lavish gifts to the South in raw materials and natural resources. Southerners had but to resolve and plan and work to achieve a prosperity that would make the old plantation economy seem flabby by comparison and ultimately give the South primacy among the sections of the country. But they were victims of teasing illusions. They did not understand that its new economy would be a catch-as-catch-can economy. They did not
know—though more perspicacity might well have raised questions—that the powerful and entrenched interests of the North would give the South about the same place in the national economic system that the Negro occupied in the South. In their wishful thinking they overlooked the privilege cornucopia that pended over the North and was certain to hold the South in economic bondage.

Special privileges at the hands of the national government have conferred blessings and billions on the North at the expense of other sections. Tariffs have protected it on coast and frontier and freight rate discriminations have shielded it from the competition of southern manufactures.

Tariff alone has added billions of dollars to northern coffers at the expense of the South and West. One shrewd New Englander remarked that the tariff of 1828 would "keep the South and West in debt to New England the next hundred years." Evidently he understood the significance of protection for industry, but he did not foresee the enormous tribute that even higher tariffs of more recent times would extract from the other sections for the North. High tariffs have not only taken a heavy money toll from the South for northern industries, but by curtailing imports they have hindered the sale of southern cotton, tobacco, and other farm products in foreign markets. Trade restraints have hurt the farm-staple producing South more than any other region of the country.

Pensions for war veterans between 1862 and 1936 turned loose nearly seven billion dollars more in the North, while the South and West received together only about one billion dollars of pension money. Southerners helped to pay Civil War pensions to all those who had helped, or said they had helped, to save the Union; but in the very nature of things few Southerners could qualify for this particular government subsidy. Union veterans were also allowed to count the time of their service toward the five-year period required for "proving up" on a homestead. War pensions not only released a vast deal of purchasing power in the North, but they helped small manufacturing establishments to make a start. One historian has remarked that there were
"pensions in the industrial woodpiles of the North in the period between 1865 and 1890."

The patent subsidy has been another source of great wealth to the North. It has been estimated that at least ninety per cent of "the effective money-producing patents are owned in the North." Professor Walter P. Webb has shrewdly remarked that "the government has conferred upon the North a subsidy for business, an annual bonus for patriotism, and a monopoly for ingenuity."12 The privilege triumvirate of tariff, pensions, and patents—all gifts by a northern controlled government—have added enormous wealth and power to the North at the expense of the South and West. The loss of political power by the South, resulting from the Civil War and Reconstruction, has made possible this momentous fact in intersectional relations. While the South in many ways has suffered most, the political and economic hegemony of the North has also been very costly to the West.

The scarcity of capital and credit resources has forced the South to look to the North to finance practically all of its large industries and many of its small ones. The result of this is not far to seek. The institutions that supply capital for southern industries have been first concerned with protecting their larger investments in northern railroads and industries. They have used their power to preserve the established economic relations between the North and South.

There have been many other differentials against the South which can be traced back to Reconstruction. One of the most serious impediments to the development of southern industry has been freight-rate discriminations against the South. Instead of a unified national freight-rate structure we have five regional freight-rate structures that have grown up in a topsy-turvy manner. The region east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio and Potomac rivers has had the advantages of relatively low freight rates on manufactured and processed articles. In

11 Walter P. Webb, Divided We Stand; the Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy (New York, 1937), 22.
12 Ibid., 23.
freight-rate literature this area is designated as "Official Territory," and in all other respects it is the hub of the United States.

First-class freight rates from Southern to Official Territory are considerably higher—much higher in some cases—mile for mile, than intraterritorial rates of the Official Territory. It has been estimated that the southern manufacturer shipping goods into this area is at a relative disadvantage of about thirty-nine per cent in freight charges. On the other hand, a shipper in Official Territory can move his goods down into Southern Territory at a cheaper rate than that paid by Southerners for shipping similar goods wholly within their own territory. Thus, while freight-rate differentials largely close to southern manufacturers and processors the markets of the greatest consuming territory of the country (about fifty-one per cent of the total population resides in the Official Territory region) they open southern markets to northern producers. In other words, they give northern manufacturers the advantages of a protective tariff against southern-made goods and deprive southern manufacturers to a great extent of their natural advantages of assembly and production costs in their own markets. Manufactured products and processed goods, and some raw materials, can be shipped from eastern Canada into Official Territory at a lower rate than that "available to shippers in Southern, Southwestern, and Western Trunk-line Territories."13 The Pittsburgh Plus system, superseded since 1924 by the multiple basing point system, has been a serious obstacle to the southern steel industry.

Another differential against the development of the South has been the superior opportunities in the North for capable and ambitious young men. Of the southern-born men listed in the 1932-1933 edition of *Who's Who in America, 37.1 per cent were at that time located in other sections. Thus the South has lost much of its finest business and professional talent. In recent years many able and finely trained young men have located in the South, but the inflow of Northerners has been small compared with the South's contribution of manpower to the North.

As a result of these special privileges and differentials in favor of the North, most of which have been the fruits of Civil War and Reconstruction, it is probable that the South is relatively worse off today than it was forty years ago. The North owns approximately ninety per cent of the country's wealth and probably ninety-five per cent of its money. Only nine of the two hundred largest corporations in the country are located in the South and probably not more than five per cent of their stock is owned in the South. The public utilities in the South, the major railroad systems, the great electric company holding systems, insurance, the distribution of natural gas, oil, and gasoline, and the manufacturing industries are largely owned and controlled by outside interests. Much of its mineral wealth is shipped away in raw or semi-finished form and the higher wages paid for the conversion of this natural wealth into finished product are not available to southern wage earners. Likewise the large profits from the manufacture of such materials go to northern business concerns. When a Southerner buys the finished product he pays for all the wasteful cross-hauling involved in the system, as the cycle of zinc from the southern mine to the southern home well illustrates. The ore and the finished product "are separated by a long Northern detour, because absentee ownership and discriminatory freight rates make it cheaper to ship raw materials north for processing than to manufacture them at home." 14

The present war will not alter appreciably the relative wealth of the two sections. It has contributed new industries to the South, but most of the large government contracts have been let to northern corporations. This has resulted from northern control of the government and because of the vastly superior production facilities of the North. The nation at war must use its resources wherever they may be. This is another example of the North succeeding because of previous advantages gained. "For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. . . ." Northern manufacturers and builders have followed war industries into the South and with their superior

resources have snatched opportunities out of the hands of southern producers and builders.

The North also dominates the publishing business and other agencies of public instruction. This not only constitutes another differential against the South in the matter of accumulating wealth, but of more importance is the fact that it gives the North a tremendous advantage in the shaping of public opinion. Most of the books we buy and the national magazines and newspapers we read are published in the North, especially the Northeast. The news-gathering agencies and the national radio systems are centered there. Worse still, many of the large dailies of the South are owned by northern men and the syndicated columns of southern newspapers are written by northern columnists. The radio commentators on the national radio systems live in the North. The fact that some of the columnists and commentators are southern born does not alter the situation appreciably. Naturally they tend to "slant" their presentations to the northern public that supports them. Southern radios and southern newspapers carry the northern voice. Men who have little or no knowledge or sympathetic understanding of the South are attempting to interpret the South and to instruct it on national questions from the northern viewpoint. Even southern speech is being "reconstructed" by them. The situation "does not tend, as some think," says Peter Molyneaux, "to curb local provincialism. On the contrary, it tends to make Eastern provincialism national."

The manufacturers and distributors of the North and various adjunct agencies are bleeding the South white. The same thing may be said of a very large part of southern industries, owned as has been observed, in the North and operated by local overseers. To a great extent the region is controlled by the absentee owners through their overseers and retainer agents. These agents are the symbols of success in the South and the paragons of social life. Their mansions stand on a thousand hills. It is good to wine and dine with these genial, if patronizing viceroys. The absentee overlords retain the best legal talent to help them with their battles in the courts and the legislatures. Other types of influential persons, good public relations men and lobbyists, are also
retained. Some of their retainers are always members of the legislatures. By selling some stock locally they raise up other friends and defenders. Small wonder, then, that the corporations have exercised a large influence over law-making in the southern states. Too often they have been able to defeat measures objectionable to them—especially tax measures—and to promote those favorable to them. Too often they have not been willing to pay their fair part of the cost of public services or a fair wage to their employees. Such industries are of questionable value to a community. The South has advertised its cheap labor and industrialists from the North have tried to keep it so. There are other differentials against the South, already noted, that have also been a factor in the lower wage scales of southern industry.

The absentee masters of southern industry and the chain store magnates are interested in profits and not in the welfare of the South. This is natural, but it illustrates a fundamental weakness in an industrial system based on outside capital. It would seem that those who gather their wealth from the South might reasonably be expected to give some of their educational benefactions to higher education in the South. But their gifts have generally gone to northern institutions that are already rich compared with those in the South. Their contributions to cultural development, whether in the form of gifts or taxes, go largely to the North.

The North has not only held the South in colonial bondage, but it has been very critical of the South, even for conditions that inhere in such an economic status. This has led Jonathan Daniels to say that after the Romans destroyed Carthage "Cato did not ride through Carthage on the train and blame its condition on the Carthaginians." It is doubtful if the British ever had a more superior and intolerant attitude toward the American colonists. The "Southern outrages" complex, fomented by Radical politicians in the old Reconstruction days, has persisted. Incidents that have escaped editorial eyes if they happened in the North have been denounced as outrages if they occurred in the South. A public lynching in a well known western state a few years ago did not evoke nearly as much condemnation as does the lynching of a
Negro by a clandestine mob in the South. The people of the North are not denounced as being crude and barbarous because of the persistent activities of murderous bands of racketeers in large northern cities.

Strange notions have developed about the South. It is taken for granted that Southerners are a slow and lazy people. The Abolitionists and Radical Reconstructionists conveyed the impression—and fiction has augmented it—that plantation whites lived in idleness and ease while black hands did labor and chores for them. The white women of the South are still thought to be lazy, pampered, helpless, spoiled creatures. All this comes out in fiction, shows, movies, and in street corner and parlor conversations. A conventionalized Southerner has evolved. He is tall, lanky, lazy, slow—except with the trigger finger—speaks with a drawl, says “you all” even to one person, and possesses a sort of insolent dignity.

The South is regarded as a backward, ignorant, hot-tempered, and violent section, especially in its dealing with Negroes. Extravagant fictional treatments of the extremes of southern life are quite generally accepted as accurate cross-section views of the South. In one of the most violent scenes of “Tobacco Road,” being played in a New York theater, an intelligent looking woman remarked to her companion: “That’s just like the South.” Asked what part of the South she was from, she squirmed in her seat and soon left the theater. Mud on the Stars, a lurid and patently preposterous story about life in Alabama, was well received by New York critics. One reviewer said that it is from such men as the author of this filthy story, who incidentally is a self-confessed rake, that we must look for information about the real South. When Stars Fell on Alabama, a grotesque portrayal of life in Alabama, appeared, it was widely acclaimed in the North, but when the same author wrote a similar book—Genesee Fever—about a certain community in New York State the reviewers and commentators of New York were quick to point out that it represented a purely local and extreme situation in the state, and that it contained extravagant overtones and distortions for the purpose of literary effect.
The South has been called the Prohibition Belt, the Bible Belt (meaning a place with a fanatical zeal for fundamentalism to be expected of an ignorant and superstitious people), the Hot Biscuit Belt, the Sahara of the Bozart, and any other smart appellations that may have occurred to its sharp-shooting critics. Southerners are not inclined to apologize for their religion or their hot biscuits, but they realize that an effort has been made to slur their spirituality and their diet. Paradoxically, the South has been publicized for both its prohibition proclivities and its exquisite mint juleps and raw, hair-raising corn liquor. In this situation there should be a warning to all critics of the South. It is not a simple, uniform whole in any sense. Its life is quite as variegated and contradictory as human life and society elsewhere.

Southern politics has been the subject of trenchant criticism by Republican newspapermen and journalists of the North. The "solid South" has been held up to ridicule and scorn, though many northern states until very recently have just as regularly supported the Republican ticket in national elections—some in state elections—as has the South the Democratic ticket. Southerners are supposed to have a preference for demagogues and to enjoy political ranting. They have not had, however, a monopoly of ranting in politics, though they have had much to rant about. For the past fifty years the South has had more than its share of demagogues of a kind. And there are several kinds of demagogues. The South's demagogues have frequently been the "rabble-rousing" kind. It may well be doubted, however, whether this type of demagogue has done more harm than the refined, suave, cunning, respectable kind who has been a tool of entrenched privilege and greed. Poverty and oppression have made the masses in the South susceptible to demagogic appeals. It has taken betimes a little of what Mrs. Mary E. Lease of Populist days called hell-raising to dislodge the Bourbons who generally have represented their own class interests and the interests of business (the "new mastery"). From this irresponsible coalition the people have turned occasionally for relief to the so-called demagogues. It may be that some day the impartial student of southern his-
tory will give some of the demagogues a large place in the progress of the South.

The South has adhered to the Democratic party in national politics to its own hurt. Just now, however, a rebellion is developing against the New Deal leadership of the party. There are northern Democratic leaders today who are as indifferent to the South as were many of them in the days when Calhoun and Yancey spoke dire warnings. Indeed, they are apparently about as little interested in the South’s welfare as were the Radical Republicans of Reconstruction times. They would for Negro votes, if for no other reason, reconstruct the social order of the South. Governor Frank M. Dixon of Alabama, in a recent address before the Southern Society of New York, warned the Democrats of the North that the South puts its social system above loyalty to the party. If New Deal Democrats in the North help the South to overcome the habit of unswerving fidelity to the Democratic party they will unwittingly make a fine contribution to the South’s well-being.

The South’s poverty and shortcomings have been so constantly exposed to public view by pen, pictures, and theatricals that it has become as sensitive as a child whose faults are discussed with neighbors in its presence. It has been surveyed by the specialists—educational, social, political and economic—until it feels like a patient in a charity hospital who is probed and discussed daily by the hospital staff in the presence of curious visiting doctors and interns. No section of the country has been discussed nearly so much as the South. It has been easy copy for the journalists, a fertile field for the social scientists, and positively alluring to the fictionists. Whatever one’s emotional reaction to the South, its appeal has been irresistible. It has been a veritable Thebes, but fortunately it has not killed all those who failed to explain its riddles. Since the days of Frederick Law Olmsted legions of unfriendly writers have swooped down out of the North, investigated for a few weeks, maybe only days, found what they expected and wanted and then entertained their reading public back home with racy accounts that perverted perspective.
A throng of literary Scalawags has sprung up in the South and has outdone most of the literary Carpetbaggers in slandering the South and distorting true perspective. The object has been to write something that the northern press would publish and to win recognition as writers—bold, fearless and realistic critics of their own South. Actually, what most of them have written is worthless—worse than worthless—as a means of understanding the South. They have known that there is a market in the North for the sort of stuff they have written about the South, much of it lecherous and filthy, and they have exploited the market. For a mess of lucre and laudation they have been willing to bring disrepute upon the South that nurtured them. These Scalawags compare sadly with most of the Scalawags of the old Reconstruction days.

The manifold needs of the South to achieve parity of opportunity with the North and a position of equality in the nation should be a matter of concern not only to the South, but also to the entire nation. The treatment that the South has had since 1865—much of it the result of indifference and unconscious prejudice and avarice, rather than of malice aforethought—is extraordinary in a country that makes any pretense to true nationality and to democracy.

The South of today, the product of forces set out in this paper, gives the nation an economic and political unbalance. With its immense wealth of capital resources and its manifold economic problems and potentialities, what it can give to the nation and what it could consume, were it generally prosperous, are things of prime concern to the whole nation. It does not need alms; it cannot subsist on the crumbs that fall from the sumptuous northern business table which it has helped to provide. It does not need reconstruction to conform to any particular mold; it does not need the nostrums of professional social uplifters who know nothing of southern traditions and mores and who have what Roscoe Conkling called the "man-milliner" complex. It is tired of Carpetbaggers and Scalawags in politics, education, up-lift work, and literature. It will not want to give up its individuality and become a part of a monotonous whole. It will not be willing to barter its birth-
right for a mess of potage. It may, as Jonathan Daniels has said, even "prefer a sloppy South to a South planned in perfection by outlanders." What it needs is to be given parity of opportunity and to be treated as a full-fledged part of the nation. It must be emancipated from a labyrinth of adverse and deadening differentials. Another abolition movement is needed, this time to free both Negroes and whites in the South from the yoke of economic oppression.

The welfare of the 37,000,000 people of the South is a matter of great national importance. The white people are in the main descended from old American stock and are steeped in American traditions. In this important sense the South is the most American part of America. About 97.6 per cent (71 per cent white) of the people are native born. Their present lot, by and large, contrasts sadly with the dreams of their forbears who helped to launch the nation on the wings of hope and high promise. The very poor whites, underfed, underprivileged, without incentive, and inured if not reconciled to a wretched existence, have seemed to many critics a worthless lot. But they are not, as many have supposed, biologically degenerate. Nor is the Negro a hopeless creature. Wherever the poor whites of the South have had a chance they have shown themselves to be capable of doing the highest type of work. These whites and the blacks can profit by training; they may continue to be a liability or they may contribute something to the nation's progress.

The South is the chief population replenishing area of the United States. "It is the land of children." Many of these children do not have a decent chance in life. Adequate food, clothing, health protection, and training for them are essential to the successful functioning of our democracy. With only one-sixth of the nation's school revenues, the South must educate one-third of the nation's children. The task is even worse than these facts indicate, because the South maintains separate schools for its white and colored children. Southerners are not indifferent to their educational problems. The southern states devote a larger share of their tax income to schools than do some of the northern
states, and their taxes in proportion to the ability of the people to pay are relatively higher.

In the language of the National Emergency Council: "The South, in fact, has been caught in a vise that has kept it from moving along with the main stream of American economic life. . . . Penalized for being rural, and handicapped in its efforts to industrialize, the economic life of the Southern people does not provide an adequate market for its own industries nor an attractive market for those of the rest of the country."

The national government has been little influenced by southern conditions, interests, and viewpoints, in either its legislative or its administrative policies. Many examples could be given. Recent labor policies well illustrate. Southern conditions were of little consequence when Congress was legislating on the labor question. When John L. Lewis, with the approval of President Roosevelt, forced southern coal operators, regardless of the extra cost of mining coal in the South, to pay the same wage that northern miners were receiving, David Lawrence, the national columnist said: "The worst economic blow the South has received since the War Between the States has just been administered by the Roosevelt administration." It is a significant fact that although southern coal operators were made to pay the northern wage—a situation favorable to the northern operators, whether so intended—, the WPA has paid a seventeen per cent higher wage to northern workers than to southern workers. Incidentally, this is an example of a differential against the South set up by the deliberate action of a national administration.

In this narrative of the South's plight it should be stated that Southerners have not always made the best of their opportunities. They have not always been enterprising and resourceful. They have too often excused themselves for not doing more because of abject poverty visited upon them by the Civil War and Reconstruction. They have too long lived in an atmosphere of despair; though there has been much to depress their spirits. They have suffered from the habit of acquiescing in a do-without economy. They have been the victims of both their own
inferiority complex and the superiority complex of the North. Northerners have assumed their superiority because of their superior achievements in material things, and because wealth and cultural facilities are centered in their section. They have not made a critical self-analysis to see how it has all come about and what the South has contributed. They have not been timid about asserting their superiority or pushing themselves into positions of leadership. When large technical and business engineering projects are sponsored in the South by corporations or the federal government northern men generally are employed, though southern men just as well fitted may be available. Southerners have lacked boldness and aggressiveness. They have given outside capital more advantages than were necessary to procure it.

There are optimists in the South who believe that the South, the stone rejected by the builders since 1865, is destined to become the "head of the corner" of the national edifice. Theirs is a dream. To be sure, there are some encouraging signs. There are dozens of things that tend to promote understanding and good will among the sections, and to produce a disposition to deal fairly with each other and to think on the national scale. Just now a very potent cementing influence is the fact that men and women from all sections are offering their all for the defense of a common heritage. The South is awakening. It is acquiring a much needed faith in itself and is beginning to rebel against the do-without economy. It is doing considerable introspection. Its scholars and business men are planning. As opportunities multiply, fewer of its talented youth will go North. Research has made available the materials needed for a planned economy for the region and for pooling its resources for an "all-out" attack upon its problems. There are growing signs, too, that the South may in the not-too-distant future place its own interests above party loyalty, that it will not submit to continued discriminations even at the hands of the Democratic party. It is learning, if slowly, that it is not necessary to pamper capital in order to attract it. All this augurs well. The South's destiny is in many respects in its own hands. There is some hope if it will commit itself to intelligent and courageous leadership.
The task, however, of rejuvenating the South and lifting it to a place of dignity and equality in the nation is herculean. It cannot be done wholly by the South. There will have to be a change of attitude and a change of perspective on the part of the North. Northern interests will have to give up those advantages and privileges on which they have batten. But discriminations against the South are deeply imbedded in the economic system of the nation. To give the South a chance by obliterating these discriminations would be shocking to the North that has grown rich on advantage. It would extract many eyeteeth and precipitate serious problems of adjustment. The North will oppose with all its might, and it has the might and votes to protect itself. The argument that the North and the entire nation would gain much from a prosperous South, not to mention the matter of justice to the South as a part of the nation, will probably not suffice, for men do not readily give up immediate advantages for opportunities that may evolve in the distant future.

What can be done about outside ownership of most of the great capital resources and large industries of the South? How are more than half of the farmers, who own no land, to procure lands now in the hands of northern insurance companies and other corporations, or in the bloated estates of wealthy individuals? What is to be done about the large and growing ownership of the distribution business in the South by northern corporations?

Ninety-three years ago John C. Calhoun died while leading the South in a bitter fight for its rights. When told by Robert Barnwell Rhett that the South needed him more than ever before in Washington, he remarked, with tears in his eyes: "There, indeed, is my only regret at going,—the South,—the poor South." The South's position in the nation today is in some important respects worse than it was in 1850. Were Calhoun living he could still say with the same solicitude, "the south, the poor South."