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7. Democrats, Negroes, and Conscripts

THE SAME ISSUES AS IN 1861 AND 1862—POLICY TOWARD dissenters, recruitment of soldiers, and the status of Negroes—remained at the center of political conflict, but the old issues appeared in new forms. Democratic dissent flourished, controversial troop-raising measures were introduced, and a movement even developed to loosen anti-Negro discrimination. We shall portray the new developments after glancing at the results of the 1862 election.

Superficially the election returns suggested popular endorsement of emancipation, for the Peoples Party's share of the total ballot increased from 49 per cent (in October, 1860) to 52 per cent.¹ The increase, however, resulted from two contradictory political movements. About four per cent of the electors, reacting against antislavery measures or expressing disgust at the war, actually switched from the Peoples Party to the Democrats; but this movement was overbalanced by a contrary switch of about seven per cent of the voters toward the Peoples Party, driven there by Southerners' doings since the 1860 election.

These latter voters were Constitutional Unionists, who

¹ The Peoples Party had been renamed the "Union" Party in 1862, but the old title is used here for clarity. The figures refer to the vote for congressional candidates and state officers. Mayor Henry ran substantially ahead of his ticket with 54 per cent of the vote.

had balloted Democratic in October, 1860, and had backed Bell a month later, because of their distaste for the Republicans. Since the Whig demise in 1854 they had resisted alliance with the antislavery party, but secession finally drove most of them into the Republicans' arms where they remained forever after. Although Constitutional Unionists were not enthusiastic about emancipation, by 1862 the South's conduct outweighed for them all other considerations.²

On January 1, 1863, the very day of the final Emancipation Proclamation, Mayor Henry delivered the inaugural address for his third term. The mayor—a "Constitutional Unionist"—made absolutely no reference to the momentous policy inaugurated that day, except to mention that diversities of opinion existed in the North concerning measures used and contemplated for suppressing the rebellion.³

Philadelphia Negroes were careful not to offend their unenthusiastic white neighbors by public celebration. On the day of the formal proclamation they gathered indoors, where they expressed thanksgiving mixed with fear of deportation from the country, as proposed in the widely discussed "colonization" plan.⁴ The scene was described in an abolitionist's letter to Lincoln:

² Most Constitutional Unionists voted for Buchanan in 1856, against the Democrats in 1858, and for the Democrats again in October, 1860. These voters were referred to as "Whig-Democrats" in earlier chapters. I have estimated that in 1862 approximately four-fifths of the Constitutional Unionists voted for the Peoples Party. Illustrations of the ward statistics, on which the estimates in this and the preceding paragraph are based, appear in CWI, pp. 271–272.

³ *North American*, January 2, 1863.

⁴ In August, 1862, Lincoln advised Negroes to emigrate to Central America, and in the December annual message used the word, "deportation," in connection with colonization. Forney's *Press*—Philadelphia's most radical anti-Southern paper—had advocated colonization on the grounds that Negroes were forever inferior and that anti-Negro prejudice was ineradicable. Proponents of colonization were not always careful to specify whether they were referring to voluntary emigration or to forced deportation. *Press*, August 18, 1862.

I have been, all day, from early morning until . . . [nearly mid-night] in the crowded Churches of the colored people of this City [the Philadelphian wrote]. . . . Occasionally, they sang and shouted and wept and prayed. God knows, I cried, with them. . . .

As one of their speakers was explaining the effect of your Act, he was interrupted by a sudden outburst, from four or five hundred voices, singing "The Year of Jubilee". . . .

The places of business, controlled by the colored people were, generally, closed. In the private houses of the better class, festivals and Love feasts were held.

There are, in this City, about 30-000, Colored People. They have 20 Churches. They all go to Church; for the Black man, like all Oriental or Tropical races, is devout.

Today, all the Churches were open and filled.

They have among them, many men of talent, education and property. There are several excellent orators. All of these, ministers and laymen, exhorted the people, to accept the great gift, with reverent joy; to make no public demonstration, no procession or parade; To indulge in no resentment for the past, and no impatience for the future. . . .

The Black people . . . do not believe that *You wish* to expatriate them, or to enforce upon them any disability, but—that you *cannot* do *all*, that you would. . . .

Some one intimated that you might be forced into some form of Colonization.

"God wont let him," shouted an old woman. "God's in his *heart*," said another, and the response of the Congregation was emphatic. . . .⁵

Formidable new Democratic opposition now appeared. As early as August, 1862 William Reed had advocated recognizing Southern independence, but his pamphlet was intended only for private circulation. In January 1863, however, extreme Democrats launched a public campaign against administration policies in weekly lectures at a new

⁵ B. Rush Plumly to Lincoln, January 1, 1863, Lincoln MSS. (Italics appear in the original.)

"Democratic Central Club." The first speaker, Charles Ingersoll, proposed state conventions to negotiate with the South and suggested, in order to bring forth such a convention in Pennsylvania, that the legislature's Democratic lower house refuse war supplies.⁶

About this time the *Evening Journal* changed proprietors and started vehemently criticizing the administration. The editorial on January 20 declared caustically that "none of the great benefits predicted from the emancipation has been realized. The slaves have not risen and cut their masters' throats. . . . Another grand effect of this great panacea for the Union was to frighten the South, and make them quake in their knees. This fond anticipation has not been realized. Many unprotected women and children may quake upon retiring for the night, while their protectors are absent in the army, but they must put their trust in God and their faithful house servants to protect them."

Another editorial compared Lincoln's intellectual capacities unfavorably with those of Jefferson Davis. The war had passed into a stage which could have "no other purpose than revenge, and thirst for blood and plunder of private property." The South's military strength was presently greater than at any other time, the author continued, while the Lincoln administration "is incapable of . . . winning victory in the field."⁷

For publishing such editorials the proprietor, Albert Boileau, was arrested near midnight of January 27 and taken swiftly to Baltimore. Though Lincoln had formally suspended the habeas corpus privilege in September 1862, the commanding general believed a Democratic judge

⁶ Reed, *A Paper Containing a Statement and Vindication of Certain Political Opinions* (Philadelphia: John Campbell, 1862). [Henry C. Lea], *The Record of the Democratic Party, 1860-1865* ([Philadelphia, 1865 (?)]), pp. 10, 12.

⁷ *Dispatch*, February 8, 1863. *North American*, January 29, 31, 1863.

would have invoked habeas corpus proceedings—thus challenging the constitutionality of the President's assumption of power—if the prisoner had not been spirited away. The newspaper promptly criticized the arrest, whereupon federal officers seized the office and suspended further publication.⁸

Unlike the *Palmetto Flag* and the *Christian Observer*, the *Journal* was a paper of at least moderate influence, and its suppression brought forth Philadelphia's greatest wartime protest against arbitrary government. This protest did not come from conservative Whig-Republicans, though many of them disapproved the government's action. The Common Council's Democratic majority condemned the proceedings as unlawful and dangerous to public liberty, while the Select Council failed by only a single vote to authorize a \$1000 reward for the arrest and conviction of each participant in the arrest. The legislature's lower house, also by a strict party vote, called for Boileau's return for trial in Pennsylvania. A local grand jury returned a presentment against the responsible federal officers, and the Democratic judge who had initiated this action called on the district attorney to prepare indictments.

Democratic councilmen used the opportunity for bitter attacks on the Emancipation Proclamation, war profiteering, conscription, and arbitrary arrests. "Instead of taking unwilling drafted men to carry out Mr. Lincoln's bull against slavery," one speaker suggested, the government should make brigades out of rapacious army contractors. Another councilman complained that the imbecile administration was wasting away soldiers' lives in a war which could never be settled by freeing the slaves.⁹

Fortunately for the government, Boileau signed a recan-

⁸ A witness of the arrest was himself detained for a few hours to prevent his instituting habeas corpus proceedings before Boileau could be taken from the city.

⁹ *North American, Inquirer*, January 30, 31, 1863.

tation before he could be converted into a full-fledged martyr. The proprietor disclaimed having authorized publication of the offending articles and promised never to allow similar ones to be printed, whereupon he was released and the paper resumed publication. The promise did the government little good, for Boileau immediately turned the journal over to Democrats not bound by it.

While attacks on the conduct of the war were growing sharper, administration supporters organized to defend the government's policies. Republican electoral setbacks in many parts of the North, and fear of possible violence at the time of the formal emancipation proclamation, stimulated certain well-to-do Philadelphians to found the "Union League." A major purpose was to combat doctrines such as those of the Democratic Club, but the League also devoted its abundant resources to recruiting new Union regiments. Branches were soon organized all over the North.

Dissent in the city reached maturity in March, 1863, with the establishment of a new Democratic newspaper, the *Age*. For the first time since the decease of the *Pennsylvanian*, the party's extreme wing had a reliable organ. Unlike the old paper (which had been a cheap-looking tabloid with a low-toned ward-politician character), the *Age* had the dignified appearance to appeal to people of the class which read the *North American*.

The inaugural editorial was a cautious plea for radical change in Northern policies. The *Age* was to be conducted on "national" Democratic principles—implying that it would seek common ground for Northern and Southern Democrats. Thinking both of white men's civil liberties and of Negroes' slavery, the editor called for allegiance to the institutions guaranteed by the Constitution. If these were

undermined, the Union could not be saved and America's influence and power would become mock words throughout the world. Never criticizing any action of the South nor suggesting that any blame for the war lay with the seceders, the editor expressed hope that the Union would be re-established in spite of the recent Congress's pernicious legislation and the administration's fatal errors. A few days later the *Age* characterized the Emancipation Proclamation as a miserable and criminal blunder, which left the South "no other choice but war to the knife."¹⁰ The bitterness expressed here arose partly from anti-Negro feelings and from allegiance to state rights, but also from the despairing conviction that the North's military task—hitherto performed with appalling lack of success—was made only the more difficult by spurring Southerners' will to resist.

Each week the *Age* printed verbatim reports of the lectures at the Democratic Club. One speaker, ex-Congressman Charles Biddle, charged that abolitionists sought by alliance with Negroes to extirpate the white race in the South. While Biddle nevertheless favored vigorous prosecution of the war, another lecturer—William Reed—advocated a truce even if this led to permanent disunion. From the beginning, Reed implied, he had believed coercion a mistake, but he had refrained from public speeches until he could utter his undisguised convictions. George Biddle, a leading Democratic lawyer, called for a temporary truce as did the *Age* itself, without saying that this would probably have resulted in permanent disunion.¹¹

From March until June two-thirds of the long speeches and reviews printed in the *Age* were composed by members of Philadelphia's social elite. Charles and George Biddle,

¹⁰ *Age*, March 25, 30, 1863.

¹¹ *Age*, March 25, 30, April 6, 1863.

Charles and Edward Ingersoll, William Reed, George Wharton, Richard Vaux, and Peter McCall poured forth a volume of oratory and writing which marked the greatest political resurgence of socially prominent leaders in the city's history. By no means all members of the elite were Democrats nor were all prominent Democratic leaders members of the elite, but the correlation was striking by comparison with the Peoples Party leadership and with that of the peacetime Democrats. The explanation lay in sympathy between socially prominent Philadelphians and people of their own kind in the South (sometimes strengthened by family ties); in the repugnance felt by some Philadelphians for the populist tenor of Northern society; and in the need of a party, adopting policies widely regarded as traitorous, to dress in the robes of social respectability.

Great crowds sometimes gathered outside newspaper offices where the latest news bulletins were posted. "Another terrible disaster—Retreat of our Army . . . The arbitrary arrest of Clement L. Vallandigham"—these were the *Age's* bulletins on May 8, for news of Chancellorsville arrived simultaneously with the arrest in Ohio of the North's leading war critic. Men on the street twice ripped down the bulletins and attacked a protesting newspaper employee, and a crowd of one thousand quickly gathered. That morning Forney's *Press* had urged, "Let us unite the North by any means. . . . Silence every tongue that does not speak with respect of the cause and the flag," and the mob now practiced these precepts by smashing the *Age's* windows and preparing to rush the office. Virtually the whole police force was called out and Mayor Henry appeared once again to prevent violence. While warning the crowd that the publishers' rights would be preserved, the mayor unofficially

suggested conciliating the mob by removing the bulletin board, but the publishers refused. The crowd demanded that a flag be flown but the resolute Democrats defied them. When the mob tried to break into the office policemen pushed them back, but the crowd did not disperse for some hours.

Protected by the police, Democrats could continue frankly expressing themselves. The next morning their paper denounced "the villainies of the miserable Administration at Washington," and alluded to the "painful imbecility and criminal blundering of the present Administration." The *Age* complained that military authorities prevented the paper's circulation in Virginia and pointed out that the Philadelphia police had not arrested the men who tore down the placards and attacked their employee. That evening a well-known New Jerseyan, lecturing at the Democratic Club, called for immediate peace and advocated permanent continuation of slavery as the pillar of Southern strength, security, and civilization. If the war in the North against personal liberty should go on, he implied, armed resistance against tyrants might become a duty. Meanwhile the police dispersed a mob gathered outside the club house, and a little later protected the speaker from a crowd threatening him at his hotel.¹²

Democrats now resolved to express themselves in Independence Square rather than in the comparative privacy of the Democratic Club. A great meeting on June 1 was to demonstrate against the treatment of Vallandigham, who had been exiled to the South. Rumors circulated that the protest meeting, the first in Pennsylvania, would be attacked. Masses of policemen were assembled in Independ-

¹² *Age*, *North American*, *Inquirer*, May 9, 11, 1863, *Dispatch*, May 10, 1863.

ence Square, a state militia regiment was armed, and federal troops were stationed at the arsenals and armories. In consequence the demonstration proceeded without disturbance.

This meeting showed that the Emancipation Proclamation and other recent administration policies, together with despondency at the failure of Northern military efforts, had alienated many moderate Democrats, throwing them into closer alliance with their party's extreme wing. A leader of the Cassidy faction served as temporary chairman and two prominent moderates, ex-Mayor Vaux and Daniel Fox (Democratic nominee for mayor in 1862) let their names be used as vice-presidents. Charles Biddle explained the Vallandigham case to the large audience; while ex-Mayor Peter McCall declared that if a majority of the people wanted peace, peace would have to be made, no matter how much the administration might oppose it. The resolutions marked the high point of popular opposition to the war, for they omitted any reference to suppressing the rebellion but declared that if Democrats won the 1863 gubernatorial election, they would use state authority to rebuke federal usurpation and commence "reconstruction" of the Union.¹³

While Democratic opposition mounted, the dominant party cast about for new troop-raising methods. The state's authorization of a draft in October, 1862, to fill its quota had produced furious activity. Politicians descended on Washington to get the draft temporarily postponed, the city council hurriedly boosted its bounty from \$50 to \$200, and precinct committees conducted a desperate canvass to prove that more Philadelphians had volunteered than appeared in the recruiting office's inaccurate records. Thus the 1862

¹³ *North American, Inquirer*, June 2, 1863. Fisher, *Diary*, May 31, June 2, 1863.

quota was filled without recourse to the unpopular draft, but in mid-1863 a new call was made under the national conscription act. Until then Pennsylvania Negroes had been excluded from the army; it remained to be seen whether pressure to fill the troop quota would overcome the racist opposition which thus far had maintained the ban.

At the outbreak of the war three companies of Philadelphia Negroes had organized, but the state government refused their services; Governor Curtin had even refused to let Negro soldiers from other states pass through Pennsylvania. Some Negroes had questioned the strategic wisdom of enlisting until the whites gave up their anti-Negro policies. "What do we enjoy," inquired one writer in 1861, "that should inspire us with those [self-sacrificing, patriotic] feelings towards a government that would sooner consign five millions of human beings to never-ending slavery than wrong one slave master of his human property?" Would facing the cannon's mouth be worth "the satisfaction of again hearing a casual mention of our heroic deeds upon the field of battle, by our own children, doomed for all that we know to the same inveterate, heart-crushing prejudice that we have come up under?" Professing to believe that the South might soon abandon its anti-Negro policy in order to get foreign assistance, this writer advised Negroes to remain neutral, prepared to help whichever side, North or South, should initiate a policy of equal rights.

A teacher, Alfred Green, disagreed, arguing that Negroes should try to impress the whites through military service, without waiting for the whites first to stop being mean. Negroes should enlist despite the fugitive slave law, the Dred Scott decision, and all the other products of the anti-Negro spirit.

No nation [he continued] ever has [been] or ever will be emancipated from slavery, and the result of such a prejudice as

we are undergoing in this country, but by the sword, wielded too by their own strong arms. It is a foolish idea for us to still be nursing our past grievances to our own detriment, when we should as one man grasp the sword. . . . We admit all that has been or can be said about the meanness of this government [including the Lincoln administration] towards us . . . ; but what of that; it all teaches the necessity of our making ourselves felt as a people, at this extremity of our national government, worthy of consideration, and of being recognized as a part of its own strength.

When Negroes should all have been striking blows for freedom, Green lamented, they were in many respects more inactive and despondent than at any other time. "Some are wasting thought and labor . . . in counseling emigration . . . ; others are more foolishly wasting time and means in an unsuccessful war against it; while a third class, and the most unfortunate of the three, counsel sitting still to see the salvation of God."

Green's opponent replied that military virtues were not what was needed to change white men's attitudes.

No fighting will emancipate you from prejudice [he wrote]. Will anyone tell me that today a poor man, of little or no intellectual cultivation, from the Independent Government of Hayti [scene of the Santo Domingo slave insurrection], will be more respected in this or any country than one of the native born of this country, of our color? Did they not wield both fire and sword fiercely, to desperation, for the liberties they now enjoy? But to command respect, wealth and education must do it—*they* will do more towards destroying that prejudice which darkens our existence than all the fighting we can effect under the most favorable circumstances. . . . Momentary admiration for exhibitions of well drilled men and military tactics, which I believe would follow [an exhibition of Negro troops marching through the streets of Northern cities], would create sensation

among the sight-lovers who swarm in all thickly populated districts; . . . [but a permanent and effective impression on the whites] must emanate from something deeper, more reliable than brute force. . . . The most ignorant, unprincipled desperado . . . may be the most perfectly disciplined soldier.¹⁴

Democrats were horrified at the idea of putting weapons in Negroes' hands. "Do you remember how it froze our blood," Congressman Biddle had asked (referring to the Sepoy Rebellion in India), "to read of men who clasped their wives and daughters to their hearts for the last time, and then slew them to save them from the black demons, athirst with lust and rage, who swarmed around them? . . . Of the slave you can not make a soldier; you may make an assassin. But the shrieks of white households murdered, and worse than murdered, by the negro would appall the hearts and palsy the arms of more of the supporters of this war than all the race of Ham could take the place of." ¹⁵

The Negroes calculated that Democrats' lack of enthusiasm for the war, and the North's military setbacks, would finally result in Negroes' being accepted. A speaker in 1862 urged enlistment in Rhode Island, where Governor Sprague welcomed Negro volunteers. "Let Governor Sprague march a model regiment of colored men . . . through Chesnut Street, Philadelphia, and the effect would be wonderful . . .," the speaker prophesied. "The whites would begin to ask each other—Why can't this be done in Pennsylvania? . . . The wives of pro-slavery Democrats would begin to ask, Why are our husbands drafted who don't want to go, and these colored people who *do* want to go, allowed to stay at home?" A second speaker opposed enlisting outside

¹⁴ Alfred M. Green, *Letters and Discussions on the Formation of Colored Regiments* (Philadelphia: Ringwalt & Brown, 1862), pp. 3, 14, 16, 18–19, 24–25.

¹⁵ *Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 sess., 1111.

the state, for he believed a great change in public opinion was taking place, which would soon lead Curtin to accept Negro troops in Pennsylvania. Alluding to the army's retreat from the Richmond area, he predicted, "All we want is a few more reverses, and the change will be complete."¹⁶

Two weeks later the Northern army had been defeated at the Second Battle of Bull Run, and as the Confederates marched toward Pennsylvania, the *North American* printed the first petition favoring use of local Negro troops. To divert anti-Negro prejudice, the white petitioners expressed the belief "that a white man is of as much consequence as a negro, and that the lives of white men can and ought to be spared by the employment of negroes as soldiers." The policy was not altered in 1862, but Peoples Party leaders were soon advocating a change. On the eve of emancipation Forney characteristically argued that, "If the slaves of Southern rebels are liberated, their free colored brothers of the North and West must no longer be kept at home in lazy ease." The *North American* favored Negro troops as did

¹⁶ *Dispatch*, August 17, 1862.

¹⁷ The congressmen, William Kelley and W. Morris Davis, were among the most radical in Washington. For some years Davis had served on a New England whaling ship, under the immediate command of a Negro officer. Praising this man as the bravest and ablest of the ship's officers of equal rank, the congressman advocated letting Negroes earn equivalent positions of command in the army. He held "the poorest black man who sheds his blood in our country's battle, as more my brother than the highest and haughtiest aristocrat who plots this nation's humiliation by intrigues for truce or peace with armed traitors."

Clearly Davis's view was not representative of opinion in Philadelphia. The explanation of his and Kelley's electoral success is found partly in the fact that neither man represented the poorest sections of the city, where anti-Negro sentiment was strongest. Other factors were that many voters agreed at least with the candidates' anti-Southern sentiments, and that most voters would support their party's candidate no matter what his views might be. The character of the Democratic nominees, furthermore, obliged voters to choose between extremes. (Davis's opponent in 1860 was Harry Ingersoll, owner of a plantation in Louisiana, who exiled himself in Europe during the war instead of remaining with his

two local congressmen, who delivered long speeches on the subject.¹⁷

The issue was not settled until the Northern army had been smashed at Chancellorsville and Lee moved again toward Pennsylvania in June, 1863. On the 12th the government created an "Army Corps of the Susquehanna," but the new commander's call for volunteers met with little response. There followed a new call from Lincoln supplemented by proclamations from the governor and the mayor, who asked that all businesses close so that recruiting could go forward. Businesses did not close, however, and few volunteers came forward. The first local response came from 150 Negroes who had been training quietly, but state officials refused their services and the volunteers had to return to Philadelphia. As no local official would assume responsibility for the unpopular move, the national government was prevailed on to issue orders, on June 19, which finally permitted Philadelphia Negroes to join the army.¹⁸

brothers Charles and Edward to promote pro-Confederate policies.) Kelley's unusual demagogic appeal and his artful tailoring of speeches to his constituents' anti-Negro prejudices (cf. text, pp. 34-35, 37, 175) also help to explain his electoral success. Finally, Davis never stood for re-election, being succeeded immediately by a congressman whose views approximated those of the *North American*. The speech cited at the beginning of this note was delivered when Davis was already a "lame duck," with nothing more to fear from the electorate.

North American, September 8, 1862; January 3, 1863. *Press*, December 31, 1862. *Globe*, 37 Cong., 3 sess., 606-607; 654-656.

¹⁸ They were not allowed to join the short-term units but had to volunteer for three years, for which they were promised only a \$10 bonus from the private bounty fund and none from the government. (At this time whites volunteering for three years were granted bonuses totaling about \$300.) Negro soldiers were paid \$10 a month, whites \$13. A segregated camp for training Negro recruits was established north of the city limits and white officers were sent to command them. By the war's end 8,600 Negroes had been credited to Pennsylvania's troop quotas, about twice as many as for any other free state. Some were Southern Negroes recruited and trained at the expense of a committee of prominent white Philadelphians.

As the new military crisis approached, astonishing freedom of speech ruled in Philadelphia. Lecturing at the Democratic Club on June 13 (the day after the first call for volunteers), Edward Ingersoll intimated that Democrats should arm to defend themselves against the administration. Southern resistance to abolitionism was natural and wise, he said; "Don't trouble yourselves about the disunion feeling in the South . . . , take the beam out of your own eye." Southern resistance, in fact, helped protect Northern liberty against the policy of arbitrary arrests: 1862 might be pointed to as the year "in which African slavery, as protected by the Constitution, saved the liberties of America." Northern Democrats should defend popular rights against the revolutionary assaults of the abolitionists, "peaceably if you can, forcibly if you must. Your Constitution provides that 'the right of the *people* to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.'19

The Democratic state convention, which assembled the day after Curtin's call for volunteers, adopted unionist resolutions but nominated for governor a man who had privately expressed regret, shortly after Lincoln's election, that Pennsylvania was not seceding with the South. The resolutions pledged using the government's whole power to maintain the Union, and scorned consenting to peace on disunionist terms. In place of emancipation, Democrats urged stronger guarantees for slavery if Southerners showed interest in returning to the Union. Rejecting a secret proposal from the Curtin administration that both parties nominate a Democratic general for governor, the convention named instead Judge George Woodward, known for his speech at the 1860 Union meeting. Woodward had

¹⁹ *Age*, June 15, 1863. Italics appear in the original.

denied that the government had power to stop disunion, and had defended slavery as divinely sanctioned. In 1863 he pictured himself as an opponent of a "transcendental, hypocritical, canting philanthropy that would overthrow the work of the founders and set up a negro despotism upon its ruins." ²⁰

As Lee's army approached, the *Age* contributed substantially toward sapping Philadelphians' will to fight. The editor described Ingersoll's June 13th speech as sound and patriotic and blamed Pennsylvania's sorry military situation on administration blunders. Although the paper supported the calls for volunteers from June 16 to 18, during the next ten days it offered no encouragement whatever. Suddenly on June 29 the editor called for every man to come to the state's defense: "Without having a particle of faith in 'Old Abe's' wisdom or judgment," he wrote, "Pennsylvania will do her duty." Two days later, as the battle of Gettysburg commenced, the *Age* reported that all was apathy in Philadelphia for want of confidence in Lincoln and his disastrous administration.

No more than 2500 local men had volunteered for emergency service by June 25, although the city should have furnished four times that number according to the President's call. There were complaints that Lincoln's emergency force might be required to serve as long as six months, and on the 26th not a single Philadelphian was mustered into federal service. That day, as Confederate soldiers approached York, Curtin appealed for volunteers

²⁰ *Age*, June 18, 1863. Alexander K. McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1905), II, 44. Woodward to Jeremiah Black, Nov. 18, 1860, cited in Kenneth M. Stampp, *And the War Came* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), p. 49; September 10, 1863, Black MSS, Library of Congress.

to serve for only three months, in the state militia rather than in federal service, and city authorities planned another great recruiting meeting.²¹

Meanwhile, to get rid of the unpopular General Pleasanton, leading Philadelphians requested Lincoln to place the city's defenses in charge of George Cadwalader, but a Massachusetts officer was sent instead. The new general promptly blundered. Other speakers at the recruiting rally talked not of Negroes but of defending the freedom of whites; the new commander, however, tried to rouse martial fervor by describing Southern atrocities against Negro soldiers, and thus demonstrated how little he understood the local temper. Downtown Philadelphia's appearance that day was recorded by Sidney Fisher: "Recruiting parties were marching about with drum and flag, followed only by a few ragged boy[s]," he wrote; "—recruiting offices empty, —taverns and grogshops full. The people looked careless and indifferent. . . . The demagogues have spread abroad the opinion that the administration is corrupt and imbecile, that it is impossible to conquer the South and that we ought to have peace now on any terms."²²

Not until July 1, when the battle of Gettysburg had already started, were large numbers of Philadelphians mustered into the emergency forces. The first full regiment sent from the city had been kept up at the personal expense of William Thomas, the flour manufacturer whom Lincoln had appointed head of the custom house; and private organizations such as the Union League, the Merchants Exchange, and the Corn Exchange now financed about seven more regiments. Factory owners resolved to compel workers to drill half-days at the workers' expense. By the

²¹ *North American*, June 16, 17, 26, 27, 1863. *Inquirer*, *Age*, June 24, 1863. *Dispatch*, August 2, 1863; January 10, May 1, 1864.

²² *Inquirer*, June 30, 1863. Fisher, *Diary*, June 29, 1863.

end of the emergency 10,000 short-term volunteers had departed from Philadelphia, but most failed to reach the scene of hostilities until after Lee had been defeated.²³

Three events in early July showed how times were changing regarding race. On the 3rd, as news from Gettysburg began to reach Philadelphia, Negro soldiers paraded through the city streets for the first time. Benjamin Brewster (who had deserted the Democrats in 1862) invited a famous Negro abolitionist to his home and afterwards pronounced the man his equal in every respect—much to the astonishment of those who remembered Brewster's violently anti-Negro speech in January 1861. And on July 6, for the first time in the city's history, an elected politician joined Negro leaders in addressing a Negro meeting. This was Congressman William Kelley, who urged Negroes to enlist in the new regiments despite discriminatory pay.

The Negro troop policy was bound to exacerbate the antagonism of many Philadelphians to the conscription law, which was already resented for its provision that well-to-do persons could purchase exemption for \$300. Since Democrats disliked the draft, they might logically have been expected to welcome Negro soldiers as a means of reducing the number of white men who would be called. But when bloody draft riots broke out in New York on July 13, they were directed mainly against the Negroes. This was partly blind irrationality, by which despair at the cost of the war and fury at Republican policies turned against the nearest available victims. The hostility to the Negro troop policy had other roots, however, for the idea of a gun in the hand of a Negro touched the same fears which had made whites fearful of insurrection. Further-

²³ *Age*, June 23, July 2, 1863. *Inquirer*, July 3, 1863; February 1, 1865. *Fincher's Trade Review*, August 15, 1863. *Dispatch*, July 12, 1863.

more, the idea of a Negro's carrying a gun had an unconscious meaning—like the idea of a Negro man's having sexual relations with a white woman—as a symbol of that racial equality to which the emotions of many whites were so deeply opposed.

Philadelphians thus anticipated anti-Negro draft riots in their own city. Although the first day's drawing proceeded peacefully (in a ward selected at a distance from the poverty-stricken areas where antagonistic Irish and Negro populations were concentrated), alarmed leaders requested Lincoln to intervene. Philadelphia had inadequate force and no general officer whom the community would obey, wrote a state Supreme Court judge. "In a riot [the Negroes] . . . will be the first sufferers, and will be savagely murdered—The administration has asked the aid of these poor creatures—will it allow them to run the risk of massacre?"²⁴

In response to such solicitations Lincoln removed the unpopular Massachusetts commander and sent General George Cadwalader, a prewar Democrat who, because of his role in suppressing the anti-Catholic riots of 1844, had been requested originally. The draft proceeded peacefully, ward by ward, during the next two weeks. Although the *Age* temporarily moderated its editorial policy after the New York riots, the main credit for avoiding a bloody outbreak rested with General Cadwalader and Mayor Henry. Philadelphia had no riot, not because public opinion was greatly different from that in New York, but because the authorities had previously demonstrated their willingness to use force, impartially, to defend unpopular minorities from mob violence.

²⁴ *Fincher's Trade Review*, July 18, 1863. John M. Read to Lincoln, July 16, 1863, Lincoln MSS.

In the 1863 election some Democratic politicians denounced the rebellion, but most party leaders concentrated their fire on abolitionism, saying that they would willingly support the war only if the South were permitted to retain slavery. Charles Carrigan explained that "When this war was first commenced, I supposed it was a war for the defence of the Union; I was in favor of it. . . . [It] has become a war for the emancipation of the negro—a war for equalizing the blacks with the white race. I am now opposed to the war on account of its brutality. . . . It whips white men . . . for the purpose of enfranchising the black man."²⁵

Charles Biddle (who was now Democratic state chairman) used the traditional tactic of blaming both abolitionists and secessionists, but blasting abolitionists at length while implying that the secessionists' behavior was an understandable reaction. The Southerners desired re-union, he said; after the first Northern victories, "the mass of the Southern people could have been brought back into the Union . . . ; but the Abolition Party dictated a policy that set aside the Constitution, and presented in its place emancipation, negro equality and general confiscation. American white men do not submit easily to terms like these."²⁶

Since the Democrats' main plank was to overthrow the emancipation policy, party leaders took pains to justify slavery. Judge Woodward's speech at the 1860 Union meeting—cited by Democrats in 1863 as the best exposition of their candidate's views—showed that the Old Testament explicitly recognized slavery, Jesus never suggested

²⁵ *Age*, August 18, 1863.

²⁶ Biddle was the leading spirit in his party's campaign, since Woodward remained on the state Supreme Court and made no election speeches. *Age*, August 13, September 22, 1863.

suppressing the institution, and Paul's writings abounded in slavery regulations. Property in man was divinely sanctioned if not divinely ordained, the judge had concluded. Biddle also circulated *A Biblical Defense of Slavery*, penned by the Episcopalian bishop of Vermont, as campaign material.²⁷

The Peoples Party took up the issue, the *North American*, for example, devoting its leading editorials to it for the last three days before the election. Anti-Democrats argued that Southern slavery differed in important respects from that sanctioned in the Bible. The sanction of the Old Testament was not conclusive, in any case, for polygamy, revenge murders, and other practices outmoded by the progress of civilization also were countenanced there. Finally, slavery was condemned, if not by the words, by the spirit of Jesus' teachings—the brotherhood of man and the “Golden Rule.”²⁸

Thus the two parties had adopted fundamentally differing policies. The Democratic program was to repeal the Emancipation Proclamation and the conscription law; to meet the Southerners cordially with a proposal of reunion; to offer the South permanent guarantees for slavery; but to continue the war in the (allegedly improbable) event that the South would not return on these terms. The Peoples Party, on the other hand, advocated emancipation as an incident of a war for Union.²⁹ Perhaps because the North's military prospects had improved by election day, 54 per cent of Philadelphia's voters balloted for the triumphant Peoples Party candidate, Governor Curtin.

Except regarding Negroes' status, no important new

²⁷ *Age*, June 29, August 13, September 29, 1863.

²⁸ *North American*, October 6, 9–12, 1863. Sidney Fisher in *North American Review*, LXLVIII (January, 1864), 66, 68–69, 71–74.

²⁹ *Age*, June 18, 1863. *North American*, September 25, 1863.

issues were widely discussed during the war's last phase. We shall glance at the three old issues during this period.

The problem of defending Pennsylvania arose again when Confederate forces briefly crossed the border in 1864. Soon afterward an observer described Philadelphia's "miserable condition. . . . If you could have been here last week, and have seen the effect of a sort of nightmare upon the city;—thousands of men trying to go, and not getting off; and have remembered that this has happened every year for three years, and that the nightmare only grows worse, I am sure you would agree that this spasmodic soldiering is the poorest thing possible, and that we had better get up something permanent that will enable us to send our militia off in a few hours."³⁰

Although several more men were arbitrarily arrested,³¹ the government's repressive policy was comparatively mild after the *Evening Journal* case. Altogether during the war federal authorities made nineteen arbitrary arrests in Philadelphia: only six prisoners, however, were held for more than a few days. This policy had limited dissent before adoption of the emancipation program, but thereafter had proven worse than useless. Determined protests of Democratic orators, legislators, and judges had caused the government to retreat after the mistaken arrests of Charles Ingersoll and of the *Journal's* proprietor. The remarkable fact during the war's later phase was how much freedom

³⁰ E. Spencer Miller to William Meredith, July 18, 1864, Meredith MSS, HSP.

³¹ A man arrested in November, 1862, charged with enlisting men as substitutes and then enticing them away, was held in prison as late as June, 1863. A carpenter allegedly was exiled to the South in May, 1863. A Democratic supervisor of the administration of Pennsylvania's soldier vote law was arrested in 1864 and then released. Another Philadelphian was arrested in Ohio on September 20, 1864, on suspicion of connection with a Confederate raid, and imprisoned without trial until February 9, 1866.

the government conceded when faced with wholesale attack on its conduct of the war, or on the war itself.

The last mob action against dissent occurred just after Lincoln's assassination. Several men not displaying the desired respect for the dead President were badly beaten in the streets. The *Age's* office was mobbed, but once again police efficiently protected the Democratic journal. Mayor Henry advised leading Democrats to put bows at their windows to honor the President, saying that otherwise he could not be responsible for preventing mob violence; practically without exception the Democrats complied.

The Ingersoll brothers, however, did not escape. In January Edward had suggested again that armed resistance might be necessary; and the evening before the assassination, speaking in New York, he proclaimed that he "yield[ed] to no man in sympathy for the people of the South—a gallant people struggling nobly for their liberty against as sordid and vile a tyranny as ever proposed the degradation of our race." Two weeks later, abused by a mob at a railroad station, he told an army officer to "Go to hell." They fought with canes, and as the crowd approached, Ingersoll brandished a pistol, whereupon police detained him. A mob milled around all afternoon, and when Charles Ingersoll arrived to visit his brother, they dragged him out of the carriage and beat and stamped on him, while police looked on. Though policemen finally intervened to save Charles's life, they failed to arrest the attackers. Whig-Republicans made no public protest but the *Dispatch* characterized the attack as "a brutal affair, disgraceful to all who participated in it, and discreditable to the community which will suffer such acts to be committed with impunity."³²

³² Fisher, *Diary*, April 21–30, May 5, 8, 1865. [Lea], *The Record of the Democratic Party, 1860–1865*, p. 16. *Dispatch*, April 30, 1865.

The third wartime issue, the status of Negroes, was the focal point of the 1864 presidential election. Though advocates of a truce had written an ambiguous statement of their program into the Democratic platform, General McClellan publicly denied that he would countenance disunion. Sensing popular demand to carry on the war, Democratic leaders in Philadelphia were even more emphatic than McClellan in rejecting the possibility of a disunionist peace. Emancipation thus became, as in 1863, the main campaign issue. Democrats pointed to an influx of Negroes into Pennsylvania as proof that emancipation threatened local white laborers. Republican Congressman Kelley tried to deflect this argument by saying that the Negroes were merely fleeing from slavery. "Make the South free," he predicted disingenuously, "and there are not a thousand negroes in Pennsylvania who would not leave it."³³

Northern war prospects having again improved by October, the administration party won Philadelphia by the same large margin as in 1863; Lincoln's showing in November was even better. Within three months Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment, giving explicit backing to emancipation and extending it to the border states. Democrats adamantly opposed this policy, voting practically unanimously against it in Congress and in the Pennsylvania legislature. By 1865, however, the *Inquirer* (which had so hesitantly supported the original proclamation) was an enthusiastic advocate of emancipation. The editor characterized the amendment's adoption as a great moral victory and predicted that the subject, finally settled, would vanish from public attention.³⁴

³³ *Age*, September 19, 23, October 5, 1864. *North American*, September 29, October 6, 8, 10, 1864. *Joint Debates between George Northrop . . . and Hon. Wm. D. Kelley* (pamphlet, HSP), October 3, 4, 1864 and *passim*.

³⁴ *Inquirer*, February 1, 4, 1865.

The question of Negroes' status would not conveniently vanish as the *Inquirer* wished. At the moment Congress was acting to abolish slavery, a strange event occurred in Philadelphia. A movement to end Negroes' exclusion from streetcar carriages had begun in 1859, with an article of William Still's anonymously published in the *North American*. Two years later members of the "Social, Civil and Statistical Association," a Negro organization, presented a petition of 360 prominent whites to the railway presidents, but received no satisfaction. A group of Quakers, having gotten a run-around from railway officers, boycotted the cars. In 1864 two lines agreed to admit Negroes.

The next January James McKim secured cooperation of many prominent whites in public demonstration against the exclusion continued on the other fourteen lines. Peoples Party leaders nearly all avoided committing themselves and practically no Democrats, either politicians or non-politicians, took part in the meeting. Many Peoples Party lawyers, manufacturers, bankers, and ministers, however, supported the demonstration, whose president was the city's most famous manufacturer, Matthias Baldwin. A committee of whites appointed at this meeting visited the railway presidents, who avoided responsibility for an unpopular change by suggesting a referendum of the white streetcar riders. The protest committee agreed to this proposal and on January 31, the very day that the House of Representatives was approving the Thirteenth Amendment, an overwhelming majority of Philadelphia whites voted against letting Negroes sit in the streetcars.³⁵

³⁵ William Still, *A Brief Narrative of the Struggle for the Rights of the Colored People of Philadelphia in the City Railway Cars . . .* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Sons, 1867), pp. 3-7, 9, 11-14, 16. *Inquirer*, January 13, 14, 1865. [B.P. Hunt], *Report . . . Use of the Street-Cars* (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Son, [1867]), p. 2.

The *Inquirer*, which applauded slavery's abolition as such a great moral victory, printed a hypocritical account of public views on the streetcar proposal. "The prevailing opinion appears to be in favor of colored persons riding," the paper reported, "and, in order to make them as comfortable as possible, that separate cars should be set apart for their use, and that these cars should be driven by colored drivers and supplied with colored conductors.

"Some went further than this, and suggested that, in order to make the thing more complete, the cars should be drawn by colored horses."³⁶

We end, as we began, on a sour racist note. Democratic leaders had taken their usual stand, most Peoples Party leaders had avoided committing themselves, and not until after two more years of strife between North and South was segregation ended on local streetcars. Once again, as with the Negro troop issue, local politicians passed responsibility to an authority removed from the local electorate: it was the state legislature which finally ended streetcar discrimination. The contest to secure the national government's right to influence Southern race relations lasted yet another three years before Republicans, as a by-product of this contest, granted voting rights to Philadelphia Negroes—thus establishing the electoral conditions which later led to a profound revolution in the racial attitudes of local Democratic leaders.

It can be seen that during the war's last years the differences between the Democratic and Peoples parties were acute. After the successful Democratic protest against suppression of the *Evening Journal*, opposition to the administration expressed itself openly. The *Age* was defended by

³⁶ *Inquirer*, January 31, 1865.

police from mob violence, and ample protection was provided for the greatest popular demonstration against the war, a month before Gettysburg. Hostility to administration race policies was a major factor in the slow, chaotic, and inadequate response of Philadelphia's militia to federal and state demands.

Thus, during the war's last phase, as throughout the Civil War era, anti-Negro feelings strongly affected the tenor of local life. The Democratic crusade failed for the most part, but it significantly weakened public support and efforts for the war. On the latest of the national issues affecting race relations, the Negro troop question, most Peoples Party leaders were moved by the military needs of the North, not by friendship for Negroes. Here as previously—pursuing legitimate interests of Northern white men regarding the fundamental issues of the era—these leaders helped to create less degrading conditions for Negroes in the South, and, eventually, in the North.