

IMPORTANT NOTICE: due to the shortness of time, and to allow you to have access to the maximum of the year's programme, I have condensed the remaining chapters. The following three chapters (Slavery, Civil War, and Reconstruction) are further explained in separate courses. In addition, some items in the text are indicated by an asterisk (*), which means that you might find further information and explanation about those items in corresponding papers herein published. Moreover, you may interact with me through my blog by posting comments, questions, and inquiries under the appropriate headings. Good luck for all in these difficult times. May the Almighty protect all of us.

SLAVERY, CIVIL WAR, AND RECONSTRUCTION

A. Chapter Four: SLAVERY

1. Growing Sectional Conflict:

American victory in the war over Mexico (see the corresponding paper) ripped open the slavery question again. Was it to be allowed in the new territories? The unsuccessful Wilmot Proviso (1846) was to be replaced by the Principle of Popular Sovereignty. The latter became an important element of the Compromise of 1850, which also gave legislative power to slave-owners to reach into northern states to recapture their escaped slaves. Thus, as the 1850s began, it seemed that the issue of slavery and other sectional differences between North and South might eventually be reconciled. However, with the westward thrust of the American nation, all attempts at compromise were thwarted, and diverging economic, political and philosophical interests became more apparent.

2. Political Fragmentation:

In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the huge lands of the Louisiana Purchase to settlement on the basis of Popular Sovereignty. The North exploded in rage. Thousands effected the Whig party to establish a new and much more antislavery body (and one wholly limited to the northern states), the Republican Party.

The Kansas civil war broke out between pro-slave and anti-slaves settlers as each attempted to formalize its position on the institution prior to the territory's admission as a state. The Democratic presidents Franklin Pierce (1853-1857) and James Buchanan (1857-1861) appeared to favour the pro-slavery group in Kansas despite its use of fraud and violence. This and the Supreme Court's decision in the Dred Scott affair convinced northerners that a "slave conspiracy" had infiltrate the national government, and that it intended to make slavery a nationwide institution.

In 1860, the political system became completely broken up. The Democrats split into northern and southern wings, presenting two different candidates for the presidency; the Whig Party seemed to be dying out; and the newly established Republican Party, which absorbed the short-lived Free-Soil Party, grew rapidly to secure the election of Abraham Lincoln to the White House.

Southerners had viewed the rise of northern-dominated Republican Party with great alarm. They were convinced that abolitionists secretly controlled the party, and that they would use the power of the government to enforce their moralistic crusade. Their suspicion was reinforced by John Brown's raid on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry; thus they believed in case northerners obtained political control of the county, nationwide emancipation of slaves was sooner or later inevitable.

3. Secession:

Southern leaders had threatened to leave the Union if Lincoln won the election of 1860. Many South Carolinians, in particular, were convinced that emancipation would lead to bloody massacres as blacks sought vengeance against whites. To prevent such outcome, South Carolina seceded in December 1860. Before Lincoln was inaugurated six more States followed suit (Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia,

Louisiana, and Texas). In February, their representatives gathered in Montgomery, Alabama, to form the Confederate States of America. On April 12, 1861, when Lincoln moved to provision the federal troops at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, Confederate forces launched a 34-hour attack on the fort, forcing its surrender. The American civil war had just begun.

B. Chapter Five: THE CIVIL WAR

Lincoln moved swiftly. On April 15, he called on the States still in the Union to provide 75,000 troops to put down what he considered as a rebellion. As a result, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee reluctantly seceded. The capital was moved to Richmond.

When the civil war began in 1861, Northerners expected to end the fighting in a few months, but after the Southern victory in the first battle (Bull Run), the two sides settled down for a long conflict: the war would last four long years, costing a tremendous amount of money and taking the lives of more than 600,000 soldiers.

As a war strategy, the North relied on the Anaconda Plan. The advanced of Union troops in the west under Ulysses S. Grant was relentless. By mid-1862, much of the Mississippi river was in Union hands. In the east, however, George B. McClellan moved more cautiously. Confederate troops under Robert E. Lee were able to prevent the capture of Richmond and even to win the second battle of Bull Run. However, a confederate offensive in 1862 was unsuccessful and ended with the bloody battle of Antietam.

Northern morale was boosted by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation* early in 1863. General Lee attempted a second invasion of the North in mid-1863 but his drive into Pennsylvania ended at Gettysburg, where both sides suffered huge losses. In the West, Grant gained complete control of the Mississippi river and a clear path to Georgia and Alabama. Heavy casualties did not stop his move toward Richmond. His troops outlasted Lee's diminishing army to take Petersburg and finally Richmond in April 1865. Meanwhile William T. Sherman, another Union General, had captured Atlanta and led a devastating march across the coast of Georgia. The Civil War was over.

C. Chapter Six: RECONSTRUCTION

1. Reconstruction during the War:

At the close of the Civil War, the Federal government found itself confronted with the hard issue of rebuilding the defeated South. The difficulty was not as much how the ex-Confederate States should be treated but rather which, in the governmental circles, should carry out that task. In fact, the struggle over that question had already appeared while the war was progressing, in Union favour.

President Lincoln initiated a reconstruction plan aimed at putting those states under provisional governments with the view of organizing state elections for their final readmission with pre-war status. Eager to end the harsh military occupation southerners quickly fulfilled the conditions and held elections for state and federal representatives. However, the President's plan was failed when Congress refused to sit the new representatives, arguing that the reconstruction of the South was a congressional not a presidential task. Believing that Lincoln's plan was too lenient, Radical Republicans, who dominated Congress, managed to get the passage of the Wade-Davis Bill; but as it was expected, Lincoln vetoed the bill and thus nothing was accomplished about reconstruction before the end of the war.

2. Radical Reconstruction:

President Andrew Johnson, thrust into the presidential office following Lincoln's assassination, angered Moderate Republicans who finally sided with the Radicals, enabling them to enact their plan of reconstruction. The latter was embodied in the Reconstruction Act; it consisted of dividing the South into five military districts. To be readmitted, Southerners should elect new state legislatures that would draft new state constitutions explicitly granting blacks the right to the ballot. They should also ratify the 13th amendment (emancipating slaves), the 14th amendment (giving blacks the right of citizenship), and the 15th amendment (guaranteeing their right to vote).

3. The End of Radical Rule:

Efforts to rebuild the Southern economy caused problems and resentment. Slavery was replaced by sharecropping and tenant farming. Carpetbaggers and Scalawags formed new State governments. Among Southerners, hatred towards radical rule increased and was expressed in violent attacks on blacks. Northerners began to lose interest in reconstruction and radical Republican's influence in Congress declined. By 1877, Reconstruction ended and the Democratic Party had finally regained power in the South.