

Andrew Johnson and the radical republicans politics essay



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Reconstruction policy occurred in the period of 1865 to 1877 under the reign of President Andrew Johnson who was the predecessor of President Lincoln. The radical republicans were a group of American politicians who initiated debates on various issues affecting the economy and social aspects of the Americans. In addition, the radical republicans were against a powerful president in matters of decision making and formulation of policies. Furthermore, this group of politicians aimed at reducing privileges and powers of President Johnson through the use of the voting process in the congress (Barden 97). In the wake of reconstruction era, the radical republican were determined to dethrone him from the presidency through the same process of voting as they were the majority in congress. However, the process was futile as the radical republicans failed to attain the required number of votes. President Johnson was supporting policies, which leaned towards the Whites and sidelined the slaves. This brought massive opposition from the majority radical republicans. In his tenure as the President, Andrew Johnson brought twenty bills on the floor of the congress and out of these fifteen were opposed by the radical republicans (Richter 18). One of the bills debated in the congress 1867 was Reconstruction Act. Reconstruction concept entailed historical revolution after American civil war and development of the southern part of United States on the basis of social and economic aspect.

Reconstruction policy

President Andrew Johnson initiated debate on reconstruction plan in Southern part of America. The objective of the plan was to forgive the opposing people of his governance and reinstate their privileges including

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economic empowerment. The President was on the view that the lowly placed groups such as the slaves should not have any rights as compared to the White Americans. Consequently, the policy excluded lowly positioned groups such as slaves. This led to opposition from the radical republicans who thought that the president had no mandate to formulate and implement such a policy considering his powers were reduced by the same group. In addition, the radical republican opposed the racism aspect initiated by President Andrew on the basis of rule and economic empowerment (Glenna & Richard 54). In the same year of 1865, slavery was abolished, and number of votes to initiate an amendment of bills was reduced. This provided upper hand in dominance of radical republicans in the congress. The first process of reconstruction entailed civil right act implementation in the southern part of the country. This act provided more freedom to the occupants and citizens of the South especially the Whites.

The republicans aimed at amending the act to remove the aspect of racism and offer civil rights to all males in the South. Although the president used his powers to object the amendment process, the congress led by the radical republicans voted for it. In the year 1866, one of the radical republican leader campaigned for removal of the President Andrew from power through an impeachment process, which significantly failed. The leader was known as Stevens who greatly campaigned for equality of all people in United States irrespective of color, race, social and economic status. In the same year of 1866, amendment process to civil right bill was initiated by the radical republicans to incorporate more rights to the people.

In the wake of impeachment of the president, the radical republicans opposed the process of reconstruction on the South. The republicans stated that the reconstruction act especially on civil rights failed in inclusion aspect where some people in the South were more powerful and enjoyed more freedom, as opposed to minority groups such as slaves and immigrants. The radical republicans viewed that it was paramount to include each individual in United States especially respecting their rights. The radicals opposed nepotism and racism which was the main aspect of rule used by President Andrew administration (Barden 98). Therefore, the president opposed the bill and greatly campaigned for it throughout the country especially in the Southern states. In the process of campaigning for his rule and policies, President Andrew formulated minority parties such as conservatives and formed allies with some of the radical republicans. This failed significantly as the congress amended the bill led by the majority radical republicans in the congress. The objective of the radical republicans was to oppose the president divisive concept in the Southern states and incorporate unity among all people.

The aspect of opposition among the radical republicans and the President Andrew escalated with time. Therefore, this necessitated the radical republicans to reduce powers of the president in the line of governance and military rule. This was conducted through the use of congress. The process of reconstruction ended up bringing division in military power among the Southern states. Therefore, inclusion factor was considered whereby African-Americans were supposed to work freely in the offices. Furthermore, the radical republicans then prevented some groups of people from voting who

acted as a hindrance to the amendment of the civil rights act (Richter 18). This was opposed by President Andrew who had minimal powers and viewed that the amendment was out of place. Therefore, he vowed to fight the radical republicans through using available avenues such as political powers and rule of law. As a result, the radical republicans opposed the move and initiated another amendment on the reconstruction act, which stipulated that the Southern states governance was temporary formulated by the president, thus should be abolished in due time.

In the process of the amendment of the reconstruction act in the year 1887, the president used intimidation strategy. This was through reshuffling the military leaders in Southern states especially those inclined to the radical republicans. The objective of removing and reinstating military officers was to campaign for the act and intimidate the majority republicans. The President aimed at winning the majority radical republicans to empower his rule in the congress (Richter 19). Fifteenth amendment process was debated in the congress which opposed racism. This bill was finally incorporated in the constitution. In 1872, the amendment process on military rule initiated by the congress greatly failed. The President deployed his own military officers to propagate his policies. This was because the leaders of the republicans who were opposing the president were disunited and lacked powerful financial backings. The republican leaders were also removed from offices, thus weakening their power. The Northern states, the strongholds of republicans distanced themselves from the radicals and judicial interference further empowered the president. But in 1876, Andrew Johnson was

succeeded by republican president Rutherford who developed the policies of radical republicans.

Conclusion

Civil rights among the minority groups such as African-American were maintained. The incumbent republican president withdrew all military officers stationed in various states of the South. In addition, political environment was completely changed in the South where minority groups were allowed to vote. Therefore, the reconstruction process started by President Andrew significantly failed.