

Ulysses S. Grant's Moral Crusade for Peace—1865-1879

by Robert Ingraham

This article includes contributions from Dennis Speed, William Jones, and Frank Scaturro.

*“Let us have peace”
—Motto at Grant’s Tomb,
Riverside Park, Manhattan*

On March 3, 1864 President Abraham Lincoln promoted Ulysses S. Grant to Lieutenant General, giving him command of all Union Armies. Two months later, General Grant led his Army across the Rapidan River in Virginia, initiating the Overland Campaign. Between May 4th and June 12th, the troops under Grant’s command fought fourteen battles with the Army of Northern Virginia. There were over 100,000 casualties in fewer than fifty days. By the end of the campaign, Robert E. Lee’s army was shattered as Lee retreated into a defensive siege at Petersburg, leading to his eventual surrender at Appomattox Court House in April of 1865.

Only days after Lee’s surrender, on Good Friday, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in Washington D.C. Thus began the test of National Leadership that fate thrust upon Ulysses S. Grant, for, during the next fourteen years, it would be Grant who would assume the mantle of

Lincoln, and who would provide the quality of Presidential leadership which saved the American Republic and re-established the nation’s commitment to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of the United States.

First as Commanding General of the United States Army, then as President of the United States, for twelve years Ulysses Grant personally led the fight for full citizenship for black Americans. This commitment to full equality and opportunity for all Americans, i.e., to the

notion of an “*American Citizen*” as such was created at the Constitutional Convention by George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris, extended to Grant’s approach to dealing with the American Indians during his Presidency, as well as to his fight for free national public education for all Americans, regardless of wealth, race or religion.

Both during his two terms as President and later during his two-and-one-half year long World Tour, Grant challenged the world to emulate the Constitutional System of America. Between 1877 and 1879, in meetings with numerous world leaders, Grant intervened forcefully against the policies and “principles” of the British Empire, counterposing the American example as the means by which peace and co-



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First as Commanding General of the United States Army, then as President of the United States, for twelve years Ulysses S. Grant personally led the fight for full equality and opportunity for all Americans, the Constitutional notion of an American Citizen, against the ongoing war by the Confederacy.

operation among nations might be secured. In many of those discussions, Grant made clear that it was not just the military might, nor the economic power of the United States that other nations should admire. Rather, he repeatedly pointed to his nation's battle to end slavery and the efforts to secure successful Reconstruction of the South, which represented the key philosophical approach to transforming the world away from the tradition of Empire.

Grant's anti-imperial Crusade for Peace holds many lessons for us today. It points the way towards a New World, a vision which we see glimmers of in the magnificent recent completion of the Second Suez Canal by the nation of Egypt and the New Silk Road perspective of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Chinese government. All men *are* brothers, and all share in the divine creative nature of our species. That is the eternal message which comes down to us from the American struggle of 1861 through 1879, and we would be wise to heed it.

I. Commander of the Armies— 1865-1869

Treat the Negro as a citizen and as a voter; as he is and must remain, and soon parties will be divided, not on the color line, but on principle. Then we shall have no complaint of sectional interference.

Ulysses Grant

The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude, was passed by the U.S. Senate on April 8, 1864 and by the House of Representatives on January 31, 1865. Anticipating early ratification of the Amendment, in March of 1865, at the request of President Abraham Lincoln, Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau, under the jurisdiction of the Department of War and led by Union Army General Oliver Howard.

The Freedmen's Bureau was charged with overseeing the process of emancipation in the Southern States and securing the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for the new black citizens of America. During its tumultuous existence, the primary historic contribution made by the Freedmen's Bureau was its creation of an extensive network of both primary and

university schools for freed blacks throughout the South.

Prior to the Civil War, no southern state had a system of universal public education, and all the states prohibited slaves from gaining an education. The Bureau spent \$5 million to set up schools for blacks. As early as late-1865, more than 90,000 former slaves were enrolled as students in public schools. By 1870, there were more than 1,000 schools for freedmen in the South, and such was this sustained effort, that by 1877, 571,000 black children were in school. At the same time, between 1866 and 1872, an estimated twenty-five institutions of higher learning for black youth were established. These included the Richmond Union (1865), Fisk University (1866), and Howard University (1867).

By late 1865, President Andrew Johnson had revealed himself as a bitter opponent of both black equality and the post-war vision of Abraham Lincoln. Johnson's intention was to block all efforts at black suffrage in the South, return the Southern blacks to a status of *de facto*, if not *de jure*, slavery, and to re-establish the full voting strength of the Confederate States, in alliance with the Copperheads of the North, to take back control of the nation from the Republican Party. In 1865 and 1866, state after state in the South, with the approval of President Johnson, enacted *Black Codes* that eliminated all civil rights for blacks in the South and created legal and economic conditions almost indistinguishable from slavery.

In November 1865, Johnson sent General Grant on a fact-finding mission to the South. The conditions which Grant found during this trip convinced him of two things: that full equality for the former slaves was the only basis for peace in the nation, and that the only institution capable of enforcing the needed transformation in the South was the United States Army, of which he was the Commanding General. Almost simultaneous to Grant's trip, in December 1865, the Ku Klux Klan was founded by a group of Confederate veterans in Pulaski, Tennessee, and the war which ensued between the Union Army and a Klan made up almost entirely of Confederate veterans, was nothing less than a continuation of the Civil War under new conditions.

On May 1st, 1866 a "riot" erupted in Memphis, Tennessee. Over three days forty-six blacks were murdered, but the violence was not indiscriminate; it focused especially on the homes (and wives) of black Union soldiers. Less than three months later a well-planned attack, misnamed a riot, took place in New Or-

leans in which 238 former slaves, who had been peacefully marching for civil rights, were killed by well-armed groups of whites. Federal troops stopped the massacre, jailing many of the white attackers, mostly former Confederate soldiers. Louisiana military commander Philip Sheridan later stated, “It was no riot; it was an absolute massacre . . . a murder which the mayor and the police of the city perpetrated without the shadow of a necessity.”

In the 1866 Congressional elections, the Southern States, largely still under the control of white former Confederates, elected to the United States Congress a combined delegation which included the vice-president of the Confederacy (Alexander Stephens), four Confederate Generals, five Confederate colonels, six Confederate cabinet members, and fifty-eight Confederate Congressmen. None of them ever took their seats. Despite President Johnson’s view that all of these un-repentant secessionists should be seated in Congress, almost all were either prevented from leaving their home states by Union troops, or were arrested on the way to Washington, D.C., by order of General Ulysses Grant.

In response to these developments, during 1866, Congress enacted a series of laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In 1867, Congress passed the Military Reconstruction Act, the Second Military Reconstruction Act and the Third Military Reconstruction Act. These acts divided the South into five military districts, placing the entirety of the former Confederacy under U.S. military occupation. No state was allowed to form a government, nor to elect representatives to Congress, until they called new constitutional conventions, provided for black suffrage, and ratified the Fourteenth Amendment.

The five U.S. military commanders in the South were instructed to register eligible voters, establish a timetable for holding constitutional conventions, and set up machinery for ratification. Local mayors, sher-



The Mission: President Lincoln and his military commanders depicted in George P.A. Healy's 1868 painting, "The Peacemakers," during their consultation on the terms of the South's surrender on the steamer River Queen a few days before Appomattox. From left to right: General William T. Sherman, General Ulysses S. Grant, President Abraham Lincoln, and Admiral David Porter.

iffs, and other civilian officials who refused to go along with the military orders were either removed from office or jailed by Union commanders.

Under the Third Military Reconstruction Act, the Southern state governments were made subordinate to the military district commanders—who were given explicit authority to remove civil officials and appoint replacements. Voter registration boards were authorized to reject potential voters believed to have perjured themselves concerning their prior allegiance. General Grant was granted full authority to ensure that the Reconstruction Acts were faithfully enforced.

In New Orleans, General Sheridan ordered the desegregation of streetcars and the admission of blacks to jury duty. On March 27th he discharged the Mayor of New Orleans, the state attorney general, and a district judge. Later he removed the white supremacist governor.¹ Grant wired his immediate support, “It is just the thing. I approve what you have done. I have no doubt it will also meet with the approval from the reconstructed.”

1. Earlier, with Grant's approval, Sheridan had deposed the governor of Texas, holding him responsible for the upsurge of violence in the state.

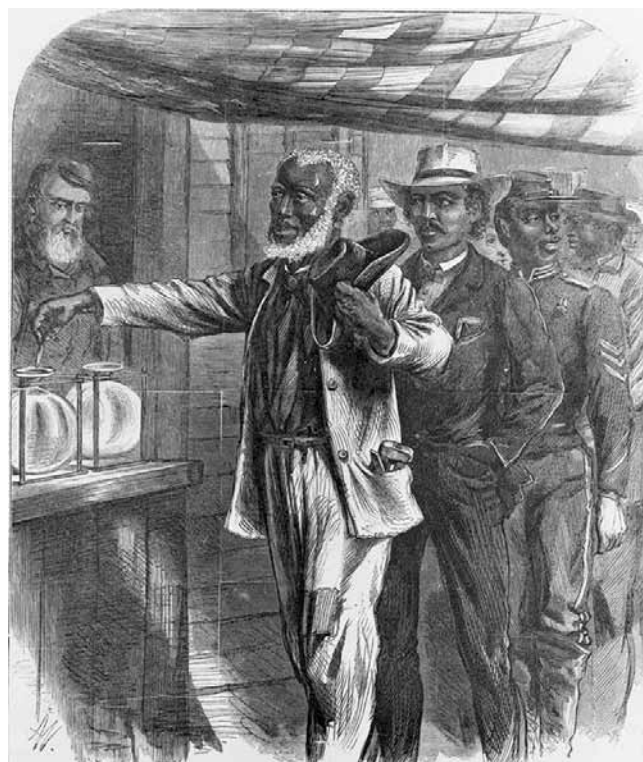
In the Carolinas, General Daniel Sickles issued orders revising the civil and criminal codes to remove discriminatory provisions that denied the freedmen equal justice. General John Schofield, commanding in Virginia, offered military protection “in cases where the civil authorities fail to give such protection.”

Congress enacted the Reconstruction Acts, but it was to Grant, and Grant alone, that the full weight of the enforcement of the Acts was given, and he attacked the obstacles with the same tenacity and sense of mission he had demonstrated during the War.

Between November 1867 and January 1868, state constitutional conventions were held in Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas, South Carolina, Florida, and North Carolina. These assemblies adopted revolutionary constitutions. The full racial integration of public accommodations, generalized public education for white and black males, as well as, in some cases women, and redistribution of land were implemented. The right of women to vote nearly passed the South Carolina Legislature. South Carolina went from having 500 teachers and approximately 5000 public school pupils, to 3000 teachers, 1000 of them black, responsible for 30,000 pupils, in approximately eight years.

As early as 1865 Union military commanders had first appointed black men to political posts in the post-insurrection South. Once African-Americans received the right to vote in 1867, they used it vigorously. Two-thirds of the new South Carolina legislature were Blacks. In descending order, the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia had significant, if not majority, African-American representatives. Even in the nearly-purely-evil state of Mississippi, black people won fifty-five out of one hundred fifteen House seats and nine out of thirty-seven seats in the State Senate. On the state level in 1873, black men served as secretary of state, superintendent of education, commissioner of immigration, commissioner of agriculture, and lieutenant governor. Two African-American Senators and fifteen Representatives were elected to the United States Congress.

All of these accomplishments were achieved under essentially war-time conditions. By 1868 the Ku Klux Klan had about a half million members, mostly Confederate veterans who deployed as military units without uniform. This was nothing less than irregular warfare against the Federal Republic. Opposed to them were



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An 1867 drawing depicting African-Americans exercising their right to vote.

white and black federal troops and militia, as well as governors, state legislators, and others who were determined to implement the Union perspective.

In Washington, D.C., Johnson began removing the Grant-allied Commanders of the Southern Military Districts. Sheridan was the first to be fired, followed by the Commanders in the districts of Georgia-Alabama-Florida and in Mississippi-Arkansas. In response, Grant, acting under the authority vested in him by the Third Reconstruction Act, issued Special Orders No. 429 forbidding the new district commanders from restoring civilian officials deposed by their predecessors. The following day his staff released to the press Grant's letter to Johnson protesting Sheridan's removal. When Sheridan's replacement, Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock, assumed command in New Orleans, he initially issued orders nullifying many of Sheridan's policies and declaring the state's civil authority paramount. Grant immediately reversed all of Hancock's orders. President Johnson responded by sending a special message to Congress censuring Grant.

From 1865 to 1869, as Commanding General of the United States Army, it was Ulysses Grant who directed

the battle for human freedom in the South. He never wavered in this mission, nor in his commitment to continue Abraham Lincoln's revolution. Emancipation was enforced by Union troops. Black schools and Universities were protected by regiments of Union Soldiers.² Secessionists and Confederate loyalists were removed from office, and between 1867 and 1877 truly democratic elections were held throughout the South, including the 1872 election which has been called the most democratic election in U.S. history until 1968.³ As Grant stated on several occasions, these actions were the pre-condition for the true unification of the nation, under the Constitution, overcoming all sectional interests. All of this was carried out under Grant's direction and at his command.

Executive Treason

In 1866, General Grant received reports that President Johnson might be planning a *coup d'état* to prevent a Republican victory in November. Johnson had already asked Attorney General Henry Stanbery for an opinion as to the legitimacy of the 39th Congress. Rumors swirled that the President contemplated recognizing a new Congress made up of Southern representatives and cooperative Northern Democrats. When asked for his view on such an action, Grant replied, "The army will support the Congress as it now is and disperse the other."

To prevent the possibility of an Administration-supported Southern insurrection, Grant quietly ordered the removal of weapons and ammunition from federal arsenals in the South. He then wrote Sheridan warning him to be on guard. "I much fear that we are fast approaching the point where he will want to declare [Congress] itself illegal, unconstitutional and revolutionary. Commanders in the Southern states will have to take great care to see, if a crisis does come, that no armed headway can be made against the Union." By mid-October Grant canceled plans to attend the wedding of his aide Colonel Orville Babcock. "I cannot fully explain to you the reason," he wrote Congressman Elihu Washburne, "but it will

not do for me to leave Washington before the elections."

Grant's fear of a presidential coup was not unfounded. With two weeks remaining before the election, Johnson was pressing to deploy federal troops in Maryland to support the white supremacist state government against the Union Army in Baltimore. The issue involved adding ex-rebels to the voting lists, many of whom did not qualify. City registrars were opposed to adding the names, and the governor was threatening to replace the officials with men more sympathetic. Wearing civilian clothes, Grant visited the city twice in the next ten days to mediate the dispute. In the end, the election came and went peacefully.

The Democrats claimed victory, Johnson rejoiced, but the Democratic victory in Maryland was the exception in 1866. Elsewhere Johnson's supporters were swept away in a Republican landslide. The election turned into a referendum on the Fourteenth Amendment, and Northern voters came down squarely on the side of the Radicals. The Republicans elected 128 members to the House, against thirty-three Democrats, and retained their three-to-one edge in the Senate. In every state where a governorship was contested, the Republicans won; in every state other than Maryland where the legislature was up, the Republicans carried it.

The lame duck 39th Congress reassembled in Washington on December 3, 1866. Its term would expire March 3rd, and ordinarily the newly elected 40th Congress would not meet until the next December. But the Republicans were unwilling to allow so long an interval, lest President Johnson use the hiatus to undo their plans for Reconstruction.

As its first order of business the outgoing Congress broke precedent and enacted legislation calling the 40th Congress into session on March 4, 1867. That would ensure continuous legislative oversight of Reconstruction and limit President Johnson's ability to act independently. Congress then passed a District of Columbia bill enfranchising freedmen in the nation's capital and the first of three Reconstruction Acts placing the South under military government. All three measures became law over Johnson's veto. Finally, the president's power as Commander-in-Chief was curtailed through a rider attached to the Military Appropriations Bill. Henceforth, any orders Johnson might have for the army would have to be issued through Grant as general-in-chief, who, the rider specified, could not be removed without the Senate's consent.

2. In fact, many of the new black Southern Universities were established on the grounds of then-existing Union troop encampments, under direct military protection.

3. It should be stated that the true democratic nature of these elections is measured not simply in the number of black voters, but also in the millions of poor white Southerners who were also enfranchised for the first time in history.

II. President

The adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution completes the greatest civil change, and constitutes the most important political event that has occurred, since the nation came into life.

Ulysses S. Grant, March 30, 1870

Ulysses Grant was elected President of the United States on Nov. 3, 1868.⁴ Three months later, both houses of Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, prohibiting federal and state governments from denying a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." After an intense national battle, lasting more than one year, the amendment was ratified and adopted on March 30, 1870.

During the next two years, armed with the authority of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, Congress, with the full support of President Grant, enacted three "Enforcement Acts" to ensure compliance throughout the South to the policy of Reconstruction. These Acts were criminal codes which protected African-Americans' right to vote, to hold office, to serve on juries, and receive equal protection of laws. The Second Enforcement Act ("An Act to enforce the rights of citizens of the United States to vote in the several states of this union"), permitted federal oversight of local and state elections if any two citizens in a town with more than twenty thousand inhabitants desired it.

The Third Enforcement Act, aka the Ku Klux Klan Act, was drafted by the Grant White House and passed by Congress only at the personal insistence of the President. It made state officials liable in federal court for depriving anyone of civil rights or the equal protection of the laws. It further elevated a number of the KKK's intimidation tactics into federal offenses, authorized the President to call out the militia to suppress conspiracies against the operation of the national government, and prohibited those suspected of complicity in such conspiracies to serve on juries related to the Klan's ac-



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President Ulysses S. Grant, as photographed by Matthew Brady, sometime during his two terms. (1869-1877)

tivities. The Act also authorized the President to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* if violence rendered efforts to suppress the Klan ineffective.⁵

At first the Congressional Republican leadership refused to support such sweeping legislation. On March 23, with his entire cabinet in attendance, Grant made a rare visit to Capitol Hill where he told the Republican legislators that "the Ku Klux Klan was attempting to reverse the decision at Appomattox...", and that there was "no other subject on which I would recommend legislation during the current session."

At the same time, also at Grant's request, Congress passed legislation—signed into law on Feb. 25, 1870—

4. In the Presidential election of 1868, out of 5,720,000 votes cast, Grant defeated the Copperhead Democrat Horatio Seymour by 306,000 votes. Because of the actions of the Union Army between 1865 and 1868, over 700,000 Southern Blacks voted in the election, and it is almost certain that it was their votes which made the difference for Grant.

5. In his second inaugural address, Grant called for another civil rights act. This resulted in a fourth Enforcement Act, aka the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which guaranteed African-Americans equal treatment in public accommodations, public transportation, and prohibited exclusion from jury service. Declared unconstitutional during the later Jim Crow Era, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 would be the last Civil Rights legislation enacted in the United States until the Eisenhower-era Civil Rights Act of 1957. In 1964, several of the original provisions of the 1875 Act would be included, almost verbatim, in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

establishing the U.S. Justice Department. This was done explicitly to provide the Attorney General with greater resources to enforce the provisions of both the Enforcement Acts as well as the mandates of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments. Grant's second Attorney General, Amos T. Akerman, used these new capabilities to their fullest potential.

A Shooting War

Led by the Ku Klux Klan, a reign of terror was unleashed upon the South. Black schools were burned, teachers beaten, voters intimidated, and political opponents of both races kidnapped and killed. Hundreds of black soldiers, Freedmen's Bureau officials, and elected officials were murdered outright. The Autumn elections in 1870 were particularly violent. In South Carolina, observers listed 227 "outrages" in one county, 118 in another, and 300 in a third. In North Carolina, Klan terrorism helped the Democrats recapture the state, electing five of seven congressmen. Attorney General Akerman, assisted by Union troops, began a sweeping prosecution of Klan members. In North Carolina, where army units sent by Grant helped apprehend suspects, hundreds of men were indicted. In northern Mississippi, where Klan violence was endemic, United States attorneys secured nearly 1,000 indictments in the early 1870s, and fully 55% of the cases resulted in conviction.

After a series of incidents in early May, Grant ordered troops in the South to take the field and help federal officials "arrest and break up bands of disguised night marauders." In October, when Akerman reported the situation in South Carolina out of control, Grant proclaimed "a condition of lawlessness" in nine upland counties, suspended the writ of *habeas corpus*, and rushed reinforcements to the state. With Akerman directing operations on the spot, United States marshals, assisted by squads of soldiers, made hundreds of arrests, forced an estimated 2,000 Klansmen to flee the state, and restored a semblance of order to the region. Throughout the South the Klan was put on the defensive. Federal grand juries returned more than 3,000 indictments in 1871. By 1872 Grant's willingness to bring the full legal and military authority of the Government



"The Louisiana Murders," an illustration from Harper's Weekly, depicts the aftermath of the Colfax massacre of 1873, one of the most horrendous mass-murders of blacks in the Confederate guerrilla war during the Grant administrations.

to bear had broken the Klan's back and produced a dramatic decline in violence in the South. The election of 1872 went off without a hitch. African-Americans voted in record numbers, with Union troops standing watch.

The military and judicial defeat of the Klan did not stop the violence. Other groups emerged. Perhaps the worst of these was The White League, founded in Louisiana in 1874 by Confederate veterans who had participated in the Colfax massacre in April 1873. Through violence, intimidation, and assassination, its members reduced Republican voting and contributed to the Democrats' taking over control of the Louisiana Legislature in 1876. Another group was The Red Shirts, founded originally in Mississippi in 1875, later becoming very active in both North and South Carolina. These were para-military groups, which combined murder and outright terrorism with electoral politics, their intent being to subjugate the blacks and drive both the national Army and the Republican Party out of the South.

The Colfax Massacre and its aftermath was a turning point in Reconstruction. Colfax was the county seat of Grant Parish, in Louisiana. On Easter Sunday, 1873, militia and freedmen loyal to the official government guarded the courthouse to protect county officers. They were attacked and overpowered by whites armed with rifles and light artillery. When the sun set, well over a hundred blacks were dead, many shot in cold blood after they had surrendered. A federal grand jury indicted

seventy-two whites for their part in the massacre, nine were tried, and three were convicted. In 1875, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *United States v. Cruikshank*, overturned these convictions, ruling parts of the Enforcement Act of 1870 unconstitutional and limiting the power of the National Government to intervene to protect the rights of private citizens.

The violence escalated. In Coushatta, near Shreveport, the local White League murdered six Republican officeholders. In New Orleans, on September 14, police and black militia commanded by General Longstreet fought a pitched battle with 3,500 White Leaguers intent on seizing the statehouse and overturning the government. Longstreet, who was wounded in the fighting, lost eleven killed and sixty wounded, and the White League succeeded in storming the state offices and installing a rival Democratic government.

If Grant had been looking for an easy way out, he would have accepted the New Orleans *coup d'état*. Instead, he moved swiftly to suppress the revolt. On September 15, 1874, the day after the battle, Grant issued a Presidential Proclamation calling on the rebellious citizens to disperse within five days and submit to the duly elected state government. Five thousand troops and three gunboats were dispatched to New Orleans, resistance crumbled, and by September 17 the insurgency had been crushed.

On Christmas Eve 1874, President Grant sent a private wire to Sheridan in Chicago instructing him to undertake an immediate inspection of Louisiana and Mississippi and “ascertain the true condition of affairs.” Sheridan was given what amounted to as a military blank check, and he was authorized to issue orders on the spot, and if he deemed it necessary, to assume command of the Division of the South. In effect, Grant was assuming personal responsibility for Louisiana, with Sheridan as his deputy.

The Louisiana legislature was set to convene January 4, 1875. Sheridan arrived a few days before. When the legislature convened on January 4, the Democrats forcibly seized control of the House and proceeded to seat the five Democratic claimants to the contested seats. In response, the Republican governor requested the army to evict the five Democrats, none of whom possessed the proper election credentials. Under Sheridan's direction, the five newly seated Democrats were forcibly ejected, at which point the remainder of the Democrats stalked out in protest. The Republicans then organized the House and elected a speaker.

That evening, Sheridan assumed command in New Orleans. The firestorm raged for a week. Sheridan was threatened with assassination, and in Washington, the Senate requested details of the situation. Grant replied on Jan. 13 with a blistering report detailing the atrocities in Louisiana and strongly defending Sheridan's actions:

The spirit of hatred and violence is stronger than law... Lieutenant-General Sheridan was requested by me to go to Louisiana to observe and report. No party motives nor prejudices can reasonably be imputed to him; but honestly convinced by what he has seen and heard there, he has characterized the leaders of the White Leagues in severe terms and suggested summary modes of procedure against them, which ... if legal, would soon put an end to the troubles and disorders in that State... To the extent that Congress has conferred power upon me to prevent it, neither Ku Klux Klans, White Leagues, nor any other associations using arms and violence can be permitted to govern any part of this country. (Message to the Senate, January 13, 1875)

For the last two years of his Administration, Grant stood watch over the South almost alone. His cabinet was uninterested, the Supreme Court had eviscerated the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, and the same group of “Liberal Republicans” who had attempted his defeat in the 1872 election were now condemning him and calling for an end to Reconstruction.⁶ But Grant never wavered, and as in the Wilderness, he never stopped fighting.

Shortly after he left the Presidency, Grant reflected on the postwar period:

Looking back, over the whole policy of reconstruction, it seems to me that the wisest thing would have been to have continued for some time the military rule. That would have enabled the Southern people to pull themselves together and repair material losses. Military rule would have been just to all: the negro who wanted free-

6. This network included Horace Greeley, Edwin L. Godkin of *The Nation*, William Cullen Bryant of the *Evening Post*, James Russell Lowell and David A. Wells of the *North American Review*, Henry Adams together with most of the Adams Family, and Carl Schurz.

dom, the white man who wanted protection, the Northern man who wanted Union. As state after state showed a willingness to come into the Union, *not on their terms but upon ours*, I would have admitted them. The trouble about the military rule in the South was that our people (in the north) did not like it. It was not in accordance with our institutions. I am clear now that it would have been better to have postponed suffrage, reconstruction, State governments, for ten years, and held the South in a territorial condition. But we made our scheme, and must do what we can with it. Suffrage once given can never be taken away, and all that remains now is to make good that gift by protecting those that received it.



This painting by Robert Lindneux shows the "Trail of Tears," the forced march of the Southeastern Indian tribes, thousands to their death, mandated by Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830.

III. Another fight for the Human Soul

In April of 1869 President Grant stunned the nation once again when he appointed his longtime aide, Brigadier General Ely S. Parker, commissioner of Indian affairs.⁷ Already, in his inaugural, Grant had spoken in heartfelt terms about the plight of Native Americans, and the implications of his appointment of Parker, a full-blooded chief of the Senecas and grand sachem of the Iroquois Confederacy, were undeniable. Already, between his election and inauguration, Grant had deployed Parker to explore with the Society of Friends the

7. Ely Parker was also an accomplished engineer, lawyer, and soldier, who as a young man had been a director of work crews on the Erie Canal, served as resident engineer in charge of construction of the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal linking Norfolk with Albemarle Sound in North Carolina, and then built lighthouses for the Treasury Department along the Great Lakes.

possibility of employing Quakers as Indian agents, and by appointing Parker and enlisting the Quakers he moved quickly and aggressively to put in place what would soon be known as "Grant's Peace Policy" toward the Plains Indians.

Grant's policy was a revolution against what had been official U.S. policy since the administration of Thomas Jefferson, a policy which can only be characterized as "slow extermination." In 1803 Jefferson suggested relocating the Indians west of the Mississippi. Later, James Monroe proposed the Eastern Tribes be forced to remove to the region "between the present States and Territories and the Rocky Mountains." In 1830, at Andrew Jackson's urging, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, leading to the forced ethnic cleansing of the Southeast, and the deaths of thousands of Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Seminole, and Chickasaw Indians along the infamous "Trail of Tears."

When Grant took office, he reversed 70 years of U.S. government policy. At that time, in 1869, the Great Plains seethed with unrest. Clashes with the western Indians had grown more frequent and more violent since 1862. Treaties with the Indians had not been honored, the tribes were becoming increasingly militant and settlers were clamoring for protection. The Jefferson/Jackson policy had been one of extermination against the

Indians, and many in 1869 expected Grant to act in similar fashion. The result would have been total war with tens of thousands of deaths. Grant abruptly changed direction. Rather than fight, he chose to make peace with the Plains Indians.

Quite simply, Grant believed that the Indians deserved better treatment. Unlike many of his military commanders, Grant believed that most of the problems on the frontier were attributable to the settlers.

Grant also believed Indian affairs had been consistently mishandled. "Most Indian wars have grown out of mismanagement of the Bureau [of Indian Affairs]," he wrote Sheridan in disgust on Christmas Eve, 1868. Above all, Grant believed Indians should be treated as individuals, and that they should be afforded the opportunity to become citizens as quickly as possible. Grant's conciliatory approach to Indian affairs was shocking to many Americans.

Grant's messages to Congress and the American people pleaded the Indian cause with an intensity rarely encountered in official communications:

Wars of extermination . . . are demoralizing and wicked. Our superiority should make us lenient toward the Indian. The wrongs inflicted upon him should be taken into account and the balance placed to his credit. (First Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1869)

A system which looks to the extinction of a race is too horrible for a nation to adopt without entailing upon itself the wrath of all Christendom and engendering in the citizens a disregard for human life and the rights of others, dangerous to society.

Can not the Indian be made a useful and pro-



Library of Congress
President Grant (second from left) shakes hands with Red Cloud, the chief of the Oglala Sioux, during his visit to Washington in 1870.

ductive member of society? If the effort is made in good faith, we will stand better before the civilized nations of the earth and our own consciences for having made it. (Second Inaugural, March 4, 1873.)

I do not believe our Creator ever placed the different races on this earth with a view of having the strong exert all his energies in exterminating the weaker.

As in Reconstruction, Congress, at first, gave Grant what he wanted. \$5 million was appropriated for food and supplies for the Western Tribes, and another \$2 million to enable the President to secure peace. The President was authorized to appoint a ten-person Board of Indian Commissioners. That Board would later issue a report recommending the concentra-

tion of the Indians on small reservations, abolition of the treaty system, and immediate citizenship for the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory (Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole). Above all, the board recommended that Indian agents and district superintendents be selected on the basis of moral and business qualifications, without reference to political affiliation.

Grant also initiated what became known as his "Quaker Policy," enlisting hundreds of Quakers as Indian agents. When enough representatives of the Society of Friends could not be found to fill all of the posts, Grant replaced the remaining Indian agents with army officers on active duty, men he was confident he could count on to carry out orders without reaching into the till.

Grant's peace policy was almost destroyed when, on January 23, 1870, elements of the 2nd Cavalry, seeking to punish renegade Piegan warriors (the Piegans

were a subset of the Blackfeet tribe), fell upon and destroyed a Piegan village along the banks of the Marias River in northern Montana. This was a defenseless tribal village, made up of mostly women and children, many suffering the final stages of smallpox. One hundred seventy-three Indians were killed; all but fifteen were women and children. Fifty of the casualties were children under twelve, many in their parents' arms. Northern newspapers labeled it "a sickening slaughter," and a "national disgrace."

Despite this incident, Grant's policy was succeeding. The White House received a message that Red Cloud, the mighty chief of the Oglala Sioux, wanted to meet the "Great Father." The meeting was arranged, and Red Cloud, together with a group of other Chiefs, met with the President. Following this meeting, for the remainder of his life, Red Cloud never again took up arms against the United States. Another of the Chiefs, Spotted Tail, said he was for peace, but the government had not reciprocated. Grant acted swiftly. The following day the War Department issued orders to all military commanders in the West: "When lands are secured to the Indians by treaty against the occupation by whites, the military commander should keep intruders off by military force if necessary."

From Washington the Sioux chiefs traveled to New York. On June 16, 1870, the delegation made a triumphant appearance before a capacity crowd at Cooper Union. A packed auditorium heard Red Cloud deliver an eloquent indictment of past policy. "The riches we have in this world, Secretary Cox said truly, we cannot take with us to the next world. Then I wish to know why agents are sent out to us who do nothing but rob us and get the riches of this world away from us?" Red Cloud's description of the wrongs suffered by the Indians held the audience spellbound. A reporter from *The Nation* noted that the emotional effect "was comparable to the public recital of a fugitive slave in former years."

Peace with Red Cloud and the Oglala Sioux was a major achievement. Other breakthroughs followed. In December 1870 the Five Civilized Tribes, meeting in Okmulgee, about forty miles south of Tulsa, approved a constitution and bill of rights for a territorial government and a future Indian state. Grant immediately forwarded the documents to Congress and urged quick approval.

But the Indian proposal for territorial government provided for more independence than Congress cared for. Amendments were proposed giving final authority

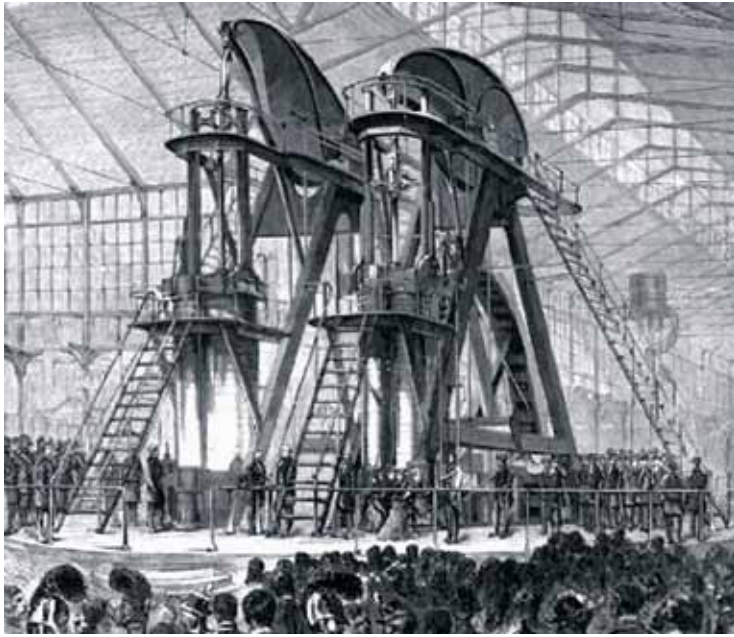
over legislation and appointments to the government in Washington, and at that point the Native Americans backed away. The railroads, with a huge stake in rights-of-way across Indian land, also opposed territorial status. As a result, the most serious effort to extend citizenship to the Native Americans in Indian territory was never realized.

In the Southwest, Major General Oliver Otis Howard rode unarmed and alone into Cochise's stronghold in the Dragoon Mountains of Arizona and convinced the legendary chief of the Chiricahua Apaches to move onto a nearby reservation. Howard's bold gambit brought peace to a large portion of the Southwest, and for the first time since 1861 Cochise's warriors posed no danger to the settlers. Oliver Otis Howard was typical of a number of senior officers in the West who supported Grant's peace policy. Known as "humanitarian generals," they shared the President's view that relations with the Indians should be based on honesty, justice, and eventual assimilation.

Perhaps the greatest of the humanitarian generals was George Crook. A West Point classmate of Sheridan's, Crook had turned Jubal Early's flank at Fisher's Hill and later commanded a cavalry division in the Army of the Potomac. He served more than thirty years in the West and worked assiduously to make the Apaches self-sufficient. He fought tenaciously against unscrupulous government functionaries both within the military and without. When Crook died in 1890, he was eulogized as a tower of strength for those who worked for Indian equality. Red Cloud said, "General Crook came, and he, at least, never lied to us. His words gave people hope." Against the advice of many people, Grant never ceased in his support for his humanitarian generals, and despite many setbacks and efforts to sabotage relations with the Indians, Grant maintained his Peace Policy until the day he left office.

IV. Against Empire

The Centennial International Exhibition of 1876, the first official World's Fair in the United States, was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from May 10 to Nov. 10, 1876. Bells rang all over Philadelphia to signal the Centennial's opening. The opening ceremony was attended by U.S. President Ulysses Grant and his wife and Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II and his wife. The opening ceremony ended in Machinery Hall with Grant



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President Grant and the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro stand before the huge Corliss Steam Engine, as they inaugurate the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

and Dom Pedro turning on the Corliss Steam Engine which powered most of the other machines at the Exposition. The science, the industry, the might of the American Republic was on display for the entire world to witness.

One year later, on May 17, 1877, Ulysses Grant, now ex-President, together with his wife, aides, and other family members, left Philadelphia on a two-and-one-half year long circumnavigation of the earth, a world tour which would take them through Europe, Africa, Asia, and across the Pacific. During this trip, Grant visited more countries, saw more people, and conversed with more kings, diplomats, and world rulers than any other individual in history up to that time.

Ignored in all history books and relegated by most historians to the status of a retirement pleasure trip, Grant's World Tour was his final, profound intervention on behalf of the American Republic and against the power and principles of the British Empire.

It must be understood that Grant, at this time, was a legendary figure, the Hero of Appomattox, the victor of the world's greatest war since the fall of Napoleon, and the two-term American President who had vanquished Southern slavery. He also personified and represented the marvel of modern American technological and industrial power.

In England, Grant and his wife were Queen Victoria's houseguests at Windsor Castle. In France, Marshal MacMahon, president of the Third Republic, spent days at Grant's side. In Italy, he talked with Leo XIII, the reformist Pope, and dined with King Umberto. In Russia, Czar Alexander discussed the future of the Plains Indians at length with the ex-President. Later, in Egypt, China, Japan, and many other nation's Grant was given a hero's welcome.

In Berlin, no sooner had Grant arrived than Chancellor Bismarck sent his card, requesting a private meeting. The former president immediately returned the courtesy, and a meeting was arranged for four o'clock that afternoon. John Russell Young, later Librarian of Congress, accompanied Grant on the trip and here he relates the impact of Grant on Bismarck and their discussion of the Civil War:

Bismarck began by stating to Grant, "You are so happily placed in America that you need fear no wars. What always seemed so sad to me about your last great war was that you were fighting your own people. That is always so terrible in wars so very hard."

"But it had to be done," said the General.

"Yes," said the prince, "you had to save the Union just as we had to save Germany."

"Not only save the Union, but destroy slavery," answered the General.

"I suppose, however, the Union was the real sentiment, the dominant sentiment," said the prince.

"In the beginning, yes," said the General; "But as soon as slavery fired upon the flag, it was felt, we all felt, even those who did not object to slaves, that slavery must be destroyed. We felt that it was a stain to the Union that men should be bought and sold like cattle."

"I suppose if you had a large army in the beginning, the war would have ended in a much shorter time."

"We might well have had no war at all," said the General, "but we cannot tell. Our war had many strange features, there were many things which seemed odd enough at the time, but which now seem Providential. If we had had a large army, as it was then constituted, it might have gone with the South. In fact, the Southern feeling in the army among high officers was so strong that when the war broke out, the army dissolved. We had no army. Then we had to organize one. A great commander like Sherman or Sheridan even then might have

organized an army and put down the rebellion in six months or a year, or, at the farthest, two years. But that would have saved slavery, perhaps, and slavery meant the germs of new rebellion. There had to be an end to slavery. Then we were fighting an enemy with whom we could not make peace. We had to destroy him. No convention, no treaty was possible only destruction.”

“It was a long war,” said the prince, “and a great work well done and I suppose it means a long peace.”

“I believe so,” said the General.

From Berlin, Grant traveled to Scandinavia, then to Russia to meet with Emperor Alexander II, and with Russian Foreign Minister Gorchakov.

Alexander II had been an ally of Lincoln during the Civil War and, during the war, had sent Russian ships to both the East and the West Coast of the United States, signaling to the British that if they were to enter the war on the side of the Confederacy, the Union side would not be without its allies. Visiting Kronstadt, Grant also met some of the sailors who had been on the Russian ships during the Civil War.

In Grant’s discussions with Alexander, the Czar asked him many questions about his policy with the Indians, explaining that as the head of an empire with many different ethnic groups, he desired to learn from Grant how these differences could be overcome through diplomacy, rather than war. When he was leaving, Alexander said: “Since the foundation of your Government, relations between Russia and America have been of the friendliest character, and as long as I live nothing shall be spared to continue this friendship.”

Much of Grant’s agenda in Germany, France, and northern Europe was spent on examining industrial areas. As a clear sign of his personal interest in technology and manufactures, Grant spent a full day in March 1878 at the Paris Exposition examining state-of-the-art machinery.

The record of Grant’s conversations with European



Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1873, one of the many world leaders whom former President Grant met and advised during his world tour in the late 1870s.

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leaders, particularly in his repeated stress on the issues of slavery and the American Indians, demonstrates an undeniable conscious intent to convey the essence of the American Constitutional Republic to these leaders, to communicate the meaning of what it means to be an American citizen.

From Russia, the Grants went back to France, and on to the Iberian Peninsula, Egypt and the pyramids, the Holy Land, Constantinople, and Athens, which required another several months. Much of this time the Grants spent in Egypt, visiting and studying archaeological sites, museums and all aspects of Egypt’s 7,000 year history.⁸ From the Mediterranean Grant sailed through the Suez canal, which had

opened only eight years earlier, to the Red Sea, India, and the Orient. Most of 1879 was moving through Bombay, Delhi, the Straits of Malacca, Singapore, Siam (Thailand), Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Tientsin and Peking, and Japan.

Confronting the Empire

It was in Asia that Grant made his most powerful intervention on the world stage. Throughout his travels in Asia Grant was appalled by the racist attitude of the Westerners he found living there. Visiting India, Grant commented, “The British did not come to India to leave money behind, but to take it away.” Later, in China he remarked, “The course of the average minister, consul, and merchant in this country towards the native is much

8. Grant spent hundreds of hours examining the architectural masterpieces, art galleries, and museums along his route. In Paris, he spent days in the Louvre. In Rome, he browsed the Vatican library, and spent long sessions in the Sistine Chapel admiring the frescoes of Michelangelo and the Coronation of the Virgin by Raphael. In Florence, his first stop was the Uffizi Gallery, where he spent a full day. Young reported that the General devoted the following day to the Pitti Palace, taking in the beauty of more priceless paintings by Rubens, Raphael, Titian, and Veronese. In Berlin, it was Museum Island on the Spree, the famous Egyptian collection at the Altes Museum, and another of the world’s great collections of old masters at the *Gemäldegalerie*.

like the course of the former slave owner towards the freedman when the latter attempts to think for himself in matters of choice of candidates.”

Upon his arrival in China, Grant was greeted with an unprecedented twenty-one gun salute. During his stay he held numerous meetings with Li Hung-Chang, the great viceroy of the Middle Kingdom, whom Grant compared to Bismarck. In their discussions, Grant underlined the importance of the construction of railroads and similar infrastructure for strengthening the Chinese nation.

The Grants arrived in Japan on July 4, 1879 and stayed for three months. Their landing took place at Nagasaki. Later, in Tokyo, after the festivities and the banquets, he was granted a personal audience with Emperor Meiji, who was also eager to speak with him. During this and later meetings with leading members of the Japanese government, Grant was extraordinarily pointed in his warnings against the British Empire. He told the Emperor:

Nothing has been of more interest to me than the study of the growth of European and foreign influence in Asia. When I was in India, I saw what England had done with that empire, but since I left India, I have seen things that made my blood boil, in the way the European powers attempt to degrade the Asiatic nations. I would not believe such a policy possible. It seems to have no other aim than the extinction of the independence of the Asiatic nations. On that subject I feel strongly, and in all that I have written to friends at home, I have spoken strongly. I feel so about Japan and China.

Grant also warned against taking foreign loans. Using the example of how Egypt and Turkey had been put under the thumb of Britain through such loans, Grant explained:

There is nothing a nation should avoid as much as owing money abroad.... You are doubtless aware that some nations are very desirous to loan money to weaker nations whereby they might establish their supremacy and exercise undue influence over them. They lend money to gain political power. They are ever seeking the opportunity to loan. They would be glad, therefore, to see Japan and China, which are the only



A drawing of President Grant's meeting with the Emperor of Japan in the Emperor's summer-house, during his 1879 visit to that nation.

nations in Asia that are even partially free from foreign rule or dictation, at war with each other so that they might loan them on their terms and dictate to them the internal policy which they should pursue.

Grant's relationship with the Japanese government had actually begun earlier, during his Presidency, with the 1871-1872 tour of the United States by the Iwakura Embassy. Composed of leading figures from the Japanese government, and led by Ambassador Iwakura, the Embassy spent two years touring the United States, visiting steel mills, locomotive factories, machine tool plants, universities, farms, and other productive facilities. In Washington, D.C., they visited Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Library of Congress, and on March 14 the Embassy held a formal reception at Arlington House Hotel, with President Grant and over 1000 of Washington's most prominent political, commercial, and social movers in attendance. On April 1 the Embassy had another dinner with President Grant, which also included Vice President Schuyler Colfax and twenty-eight heads of the U.S. military and civilian affairs.

A month before his departure from Japan, Grant wrote a letter to a friend in America, wherein he said:

The progress they have made in the last twelve years is almost incredible. They have now Military and Naval Academies, Colleges, Engineering schools, schools of science, and free schools, for male and female, as thoroughly organized, and on as high a basis of instruction, as any country in the world. This is marvelous when the treatment their people—and all eastern peoples—receive at the hands of the average foreigner residing among them is considered. I have never been so struck with the heartlessness of Nations as well as individuals as since coming to the East. But the day of retribution is sure to come.

Grant sailed for San Francisco on the City of Tokio steamer, Sept. 3, 1879. The imperial cavalry escorted him to the palace, where Emperor Meiji and the Empress were waiting to say goodbye. The route from Tokyo was lined with cheering multitudes waving American and Japanese flags. At the Admiralty Wharf, Grant was greeted by the Japanese naval command, the fleet riding at anchor in the distance. A navy band broke into “Hail Columbia,” fireworks lit the sky, and the Admiralty barge, festooned with color, moved out into the harbor, carrying the general to his steamer. The City of Tokio, the largest steamer on the Pacific run, got underway, convoyed to the open seas by a Japanese man-of-war, the imperial cabinet drawn up on deck. One by one, as Grant’s vessel passed, the naval ships in the harbor bellowed a twenty-one-gun salute, cheering crewmen aloft in the rigging and manning the yards. As Mount Fujiyama faded in the distance, the accompanying Japanese man-of-war turned homeward and fired a final salvo in salute.



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

“Let us have peace,” is the motto on Grant’s Tomb in Riverside Park, Manhattan, shown here.

V. War against War

Upon his return to the United States, Grant held discussions with Secretary of State William Evarts. He urged the United States to issue a Monroe Doctrine proclamation, short of an alliance, as a statement of principles committing the United States to long-term cooperation with Japan and China, a statement that would send a clear message to the British, as well as to China and Japan, regarding U.S. intentions. As he had noted, a war between the two countries would be devastating, and it would result in the opening-up of both nations to European nations eager to gobble up the pieces as China fell apart.

On learning in 1881 that China was intent on building railroads to unite the country, an issue which Grant had recommended during his talks with China’s Prince Kong, he wrote to Li Hongzhang:

Just the day before I was obliged to leave New York City in order to connect with the steamer now about to depart, I learned that your great country was contemplating the building of four great trunk lines of rail roads. I was delighted to hear this, and had I not been obliged to hurry off could have made it my duty and pleasure to have seen the Chinese representatives to our country to offer my assistance in any way that I might be

useful. You no doubt remember the conversations we had on the importance of railroads to develop the resources of the country; to give employment to the millions, and to give strength to a country against an outside enemy.

Grant also expressed a willingness to help in whatever way he could to make this a reality. "If China contemplates what I hope she does—the building of railroads—I would advise an examination of our system before adopting any other," Grant wrote.

I think we build railroads faster than any other country, build them quite as well, and build better locomotives and other rolling stock. For civil engineers, especially those engaged in the construction of rail-roads and all connected with them, the American engineer is unsurpassed. Should a foreign loan be required it can be effected in the United States, through an American syndicate as well as elsewhere. I repeat: If I can help China in matters of internal improvements, either in suggesting persons for employment in laying out roads, building them, or running them

after being built; to construct and superintend the necessary work shops for repairs; or in suggesting parties here to negotiate any loan that may be wanted, I will be glad to render such service.

* * *

And there we have the man, from Appomattox, through Reconstruction, his eight-year Presidency, and his final intervention against the British Empire in Asia. His commitment to human equality and *human development*, as exemplified in his ten-year battle for justice in both the South and among the Indians of the American West is unparalleled in the history of our Nation.

Most compelling, Grant understood that it was this quality of what America represented—of what had been won in the 1861-1877 years—that provided the basis through which friendships could be built with other nations and peoples, capable of defeating the anti-human policies of empire and securing the future for all nations. His was always a *Peace-winning strategy*, and if it had fully succeeded, the later events of the Nineteenth Century, together with the World War of 1914, never would have occurred.

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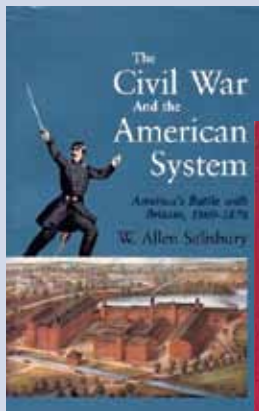
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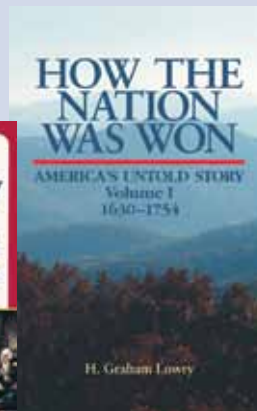
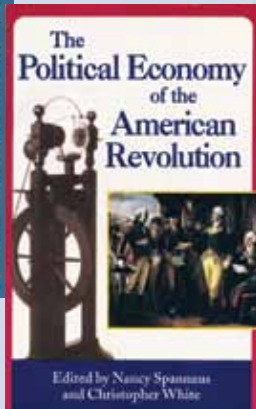
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