

Thaddeus Stevens (ORIGINAL)

The cause of the war was slavery. We have liberated the slaves. It is our duty to protect them, and provide for them while they are unable to provide for themselves. Have we not a right, in the language of Vattel, "to do ourselves justice respecting the object which has caused the war," by taking lands for homesteads [sic: for] these "objects" of the war?

Have we not a right, if we chose to go to that extent, to indemnify ourselves for the expenses and damages caused by the war? We might make the property of the enemy pay the \$4,000,000,000 which we have expended, as well as the damages inflicted on loyal men by confiscation and invasion, which might reach \$1,000,000,000 more. This bill is merciful, asking less than one tenth of our just claims.

I suppose none will deny the right to confiscate the [sic: preperty] of the several belligerent States, as they all made war as States; or of the Confederate States of America; for no one ever denied the right of the conqueror to the crown property of the vanquished sovereign, even where the seizure of private property would not be justified by the circumstances. . . .

The fourth section provides, first, that out of the lands thus confiscated each liberated slave who is a male adult, or the head of a family, shall have assigned to him a homestead of forty acres of land, (with \$100 to build a dwelling) which shall be held for them by trustees during their pupilage.

Let us consider whether this is a just and [sic: politic] provision.

Whatever may be the fate of the rest of the bill, I must earnestly pray that this may not be defeated. On its success, in my judgment, depends not only the happiness and respectability of the colored race, but their very existence. Homesteads to them are far more valuable than the immediate right of suffrage, though both are their due.

Four million of persons have just been freed from a condition of dependence, wholly unacquainted with business transactions, kept systematically in ignorance of all their rights and of the common elements of education, without which none of any race are competent to earn an honest living, to guard against the frauds which will always be practiced on the ignorant, or to judge of the most judicious manner of applying their labor. But few of them are mechanics, and none of them skilled manufacturers. They must necessarily, therefore, be the servants and victims of others, unless they are made in some measure independent of their wiser neighbors. The guardianship of the Freedmen's Bureau, that benevolent institution, cannot be expected long to protect them. It encounters the hostility of the old slaveholders, whether in official or private station, because it deprives these dethroned tyrants of the luxury of despotism. In its nature it is not calculated for a permanent institution. Withdraw that protection and leave them a prey to the legislation and treatment of their former masters, and the evidence already furnished shows that they will soon become extinct, or driven to defend

themselves by civil war. Withhold from them all their rights, and leave them destitute of the means of earning a livelihood, the victims of the hatred or cupidity of the rebels whom they helped to conquer, and it seems probable that the war of races might ensue which the President feared would arise from kind treatment and restoration of their rights. I doubt not that hundreds of thousands would annually be deposited in secret, unknown graves. Such is already the course of their rebel murderers; and it is done with impunity. . . . Make them independent of their old masters, so that they may not be compelled to work for them upon unfair terms, which can only be done by giving them a small tract of land to cultivate for themselves, and you remove all this danger. You also elevate the character of the freedman. Nothing is so likely to make a man a good citizen as to make him a freeholder. Nothing will so multiply the productions of the South as to divide it into small farms. Nothing will make men so industrious and moral as to let them feel that they are above want and are the owners of the soil which they till. It will also be of service to the white inhabitants. They will have constantly among them industrious laborers, anxious to work for fair wages. How is it possible for them to cultivate their lands if these people were expelled? If Moses should lead or drive them into exile, or carry out the absurd idea of colonizing them, the South would become a barren waste.

Source: *Thaddeus Stevens, speech to Congress, March 19 1867.*

Andrew Johnson (ORIGINAL)

Before the rebellion there were 4,000,000 called colored persons held as slaves by about 340,000 people living in the South. That is, 340,000 slave owners paid expenses, bought land, and worked the negroes, and at the expiration of the year when cotton, tobacco, and rice were gathered and sold, after all paying expenses, these slave owners put the money in their pockets- [slight interruption]-your attention-they put the property in their pocket. In many instances there was no profit, and many came out in debt. Well that is the way things stood before the rebellion. The rebellion commenced and the slaves were turned loose. Then we come to the Freedmen's Bureau bill. And what did the bill propose? It proposed to appoint agents and sub-agents in all the cities, counties, school districts, and parishes, with power to make contracts for all the slaves, power to control, and power to hire them out-dispose of them, and in addition to that the whole military power of the government applied to carry it into execution. . . .

Now to the Freedmen's Bureau. What was it? Four million slaves were emancipated and given an equal chance and fair start to make their own support-to work and produce; and having worked and produced, to have their own property and apply it to their own support. But the Freedmen's Bureau comes and says we must take charge of these 4,000,000 slaves. The bureau comes along and proposes, at an expense of a fraction less than \$12,000,000 a year, to take charge of these slaves. You had already expended \$3,000,000,000 to set them free and give them a fair opportunity to take care of themselves -then these gentlemen, who are such great friends of the people, tell us they must be taxed \$12,000,000 to sustain the Freedmen's Bureau.

Source: *Andrew Johnson, campaign speech, September 3, 1866.*

Andrew Johnson (ORIGINAL)

The purpose and object of the bill - the general intent which pervades it from beginning to end - is to change the entire structure and character of the State governments and to compel them by force to the adoption of organic laws and regulations which they are unwilling to accept if left to themselves. The negroes have not asked for the privilege of voting; the vast majority of them have no idea what it means. This bill not only thrusts it into their hands, but compels them, as well as the whites, to use it in a particular way. If they do not form a constitution with prescribed articles in it and afterwards elect a legislature which will act upon certain measures in a prescribed way, neither blacks nor whites can be relieved from the slavery which the bill imposes upon them. Without pausing here to consider the policy or impolicy of Africanizing the southern part of our territory, I would simply ask the attention of Congress to that manifest, well-known, and universally acknowledged rule of constitutional law which declares that the Federal Government has no jurisdiction, authority, or power to regulate such subjects for any State. To force the right of suffrage out of the hands of the white people and into the hands of the negroes is an arbitrary violation of this principle.

Source: *Andrew Johnson, speech to Congress, March 2, 1867.*