H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Michael S. Green. *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and His Party during the Civil War.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2004. xvii + 398 pp. $65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8232-2275-9.

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Published on H-CivWar (June, 2005)

Michael S. Green views his new study of the Civil War Republican party as a companion volume to Eric Foner's two groundbreaking works on the Republican party: *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (1970) and *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (1988). While Foner expertly analyzes the pre-war ideology of the party as well as its transformation after the war, Green contends that no study has adequately explained the evolution of Republican ideology during the Civil War. For Green, that evolution is centered on the central concepts of freedom, Union, and power.

Prior to the Civil War, Green contends, the youthful Republican Party was identified with a set of beliefs and principles known as the "free labor ideology." Stressing the superiority of free institutions over the slave system of the South, Republicans emphasized stopping the spread of slavery; however, the opposition to slavery was not primarily rooted in morality, but instead focused on the benefits that would accrue to white laborers living without competition from slaves. Moreover, as a minority party prior to the war, the Republicans, according to Green, formed an opposition party without responsibility for governing. With the election of Abraham Lincoln, the secession crisis, and four years of Civil War, the Republican Party found itself in a new position of power and responsibility.

During the Civil War, Republican ideology, according to Green, did not remain static, but developed around the core principles of freedom, Union, and power. The Republican commitment to freedom was transformed. Instead of seeking only to limit the spread of slavery, Republicans slowly adopted the position that slavery must be eradicated from the United States. In order to ensure that freedom survived, however, the Union must also be preserved. In the early phases of the war, freedom and Union often appeared to be at odds. During the secession crisis and the early phases of the war, Republican factions quarreled, with radicals stressing freedom and conservatives focused on Union. The passage of the Crittenden-Johnson resolution immediately after the Union defeat at Manassas, for instance, demonstrated the priority of the Union over freedom early on in the conflict. President Lincoln realized the dangers of moving too quickly against slavery when he overruled John Fremont's controversial August 30, 1861 emancipation proclamation for the state of Missouri, arguing that it might alienate such pivotal border states as Kentucky and thus endanger the possibility of restoring the Union.

Green's narrative demonstrates how freedom and Union became intimately related as the war continued. Freedom was needed to preserve the Union. Slavery, it was widely argued, had caused the rebellion. Hence, in order to preserve the Union from future attempts of secession, slavery must be eradicated. At the same time, only a restored Union could guarantee the preservation and spread of freedom. By the summer of 1862, conservative and radical Republicans could agree on legislation that attacked slavery, according to Green, even if they endorsed that legislation for different reasons. Such was the case with the Second Confiscation Act, which, Green argues, both party factions endorsed. "Radicals could accept it [the Second Confiscation Act] as a war measure rather than going farther and seeking emancipation," Green comments, "and conservatives could concede the need to strike at the South" (p. 150).

No one understood the connection between freedom and Union more than Abraham Lincoln. In Green's narrative, the sixteenth president emerges as a master politician who skillfully managed conflicts within the party, disputes in the cabinet, and single mindedly set policy to guide the Union war effort. Lincoln had made up his mind in the summer of 1862 that the Union would survive only if slavery was attacked. Once the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, the president also played a pivotal role in getting his party to sponsor the thirteenth amendment that constitutionally prohibited slavery from the United States.

For Green a pivotal ingredient of Republican ideology during the war was power. Without it, Republicans would have been unable to implement policies necessary to preserve the Union and advance freedom. Power was something new to the infant political party; however, a Republican president, a Republican controlled Congress, and, eventually, a Republican-dominated Supreme Court grew comfortable with power as the war continued. Indeed, Republicans grew to value power and part of their Civil War strategy was designed to ensure that they held on to power during the war and after. Some uses of power were controversial, when, for instance, the president suspended the writ of habeas corpus and jailed political opponents. Lincoln's appointments to the Supreme Court, argues Green, were often made with a view to maintaining Republican hegemony. Eventually achieving a Republican majority, the Supreme Court could be expected to uphold Republican legislation passed during the war. "Republicans," Green writes, "had used their power to secure the triumph of freedom and Union by retaining the old order â?¦ and converting it into the new" (p. 205).

The Republican need for power was also tied to control of northern armies. Although Republican politicians were wary of a standing army and the professional military, Green notes that Republicans, at the same time, needed the power of the army to guarantee victory so that the Union would be preserved and freedom spread. Skeptical of West Point and often associating educated military officers with the Democratic party, it was ironic that Union military fortunes became intimately connected to two West Pointers: Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman. From a political standpoint, Green observes, the pair was the antithesis of Republican ideology; however, the two nonetheless proved to be compliant tools of Republican war policy.

Green emphasizes throughout the narrative that freedom, Union, and power solidified Republicans throughout the war. While earlier studies have made much of party factions (particularly conservatives vs. radicals), Green persuasively argues that despite occasional quarrels and differences, Republicans emerged from the war more united than divided. When Republicans changed the name of their party to the Union party in 1864, Green argues the transformation was somewhat deceptive. While emphasizing the "Union" allowed Republicans to reach out to War Democrats, Republicans never compromised their ideological commitments, most prominently their dedication to a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. Even the quarrels over Lincoln's re-election in 1864 were not, in the end, ideological quarrels, but disagreements over which Republican was more likely to win the presidency and thus more capable of carrying through on Republican objectives.

Ironically, waging war did not prevent the Republican party from achieving numerous other objectives. As Green notes, "Indeed, a sense of mission pervaded the party and cannot be separated from any description or analysis of its ideology" (p. 315). The passage of the Pacific Railway Act and homestead legislation were goals that were stated in the party's 1860 platform and accomplished during the war. At the same time, Green notes that in much of the non-military legislation passed during the war, one finds the seeds of transformation. If the prewar Republican Party endorsed a free labor ideology of small producers and petit capitalists, the war prompted an alliance with larger industrial and commercial interests. While this alliance could be justified on the grounds of the fundamental harmony between labor and capital, Green also contends the cooperation of large commercial and industrial interests were pivotal in organizing the North for victory. The alliance between business interests and the federal government, argues Green, also encouraged a larger, more active federal government while diminishing state and local governments to lesser roles.

As Eric Foner has demonstrated, the Republican Party during the Reconstruction period retreated from its earlier idealism and evolved into a party closely linked to commercial and industrial interests and less associated with rights for African Americans, workers, small producers, and farmers. Green argues this transformation occurred for numerous reasons, including the residual racism of many Republican leaders. Skeptical of the abilities of African Americans, some Republican leaders were reluctant to champion black civil rights, while others, more sympathetic to African Americans, believed the freedom established as a result of the Civil War was a freedom to labor and compete; government had an obligation only to create a level playing field. Moreover, the death of many Republican giants in the late 1860s and early 1870s prevented the party from confronting issues that divided labor and capital in the industrial Gilded Age. "Workers had the freedom to labor." Green notes. "Whether that extended to the freedom not to labor, to strike and demand particular wages and hours, was another matter entirely" (p. 340). Yet these shortcomings do not minimize the accomplishments of the Civil War Republican party. "If the terminology and the meaning of the ideology of freedom, Union, and power changed in the years after the Civil War," writes Green, "that does nothing to diminish its importance at the time–and thus for all time" (p. 347).

Well written, meticulously researched, and logically argued, *Freedom, Union, and Power* is a refreshing and original work on the Civil War Republican party. Green's judgments and conclusion are sound and convincing. For many years, historians have devoted much attention to understanding how the various ideological divisions within the Republican Party co-existed. Green's study, with its emphasis on freedom, Union, and power, provides a coherent framework for understanding how these various factions were united by a common ideology. This reviewer's only criticism is a minor one. In accounting for the Republican party's distrust of the professional military, Green may mislead readers into concluding that antimilitary bias was a particular feature of the Republican party. Although the author rightly connects antimilitarism and the fear of a standing army as consistent with fears and beliefs of the founding fathers, it should be pointed out that the distrust of a professional military was widespread in antebellum America and was not the monopoly of one particular party. Indeed, congressmen of all political parties periodically attacked the U. S. Military Academy at West Point. Accordingly, on the eve of the Civil War, despite the Democratic party's monopoly on the federal government for most of the 1850s, the U. S. Army consisted of barely 16,000 men–hardly a ringing endorsement of militarism.[1] This small criticism, however, scarcely detracts from the effectiveness of Green's study. *Freedom, Union, and Power* will be a valuable study for all serious students of Civil War politics.

Note

[1]. The literature on antimilitarism and the distrust of a professional military is voluminous. Two books that provide useful information on this subject are Thomas Goss, *The War within the Union High Command: Politics and Generalship during the Civil War* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), especially pp. 6-14; and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), especially pp. 106-121.

Citation: Bruce Tap. Review of Green, Michael S., *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and His Party during the Civil War.* H-CivWar, H-Net Reviews. June, 2005.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10638