1976

T. Thomas Fortune: Land, Labor and Politics in the South, 1883-1886

C. Edward Shacklee
Butler University

BUTLER UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

Honors Thesis Certification

Applicant C. Edward Shacklee
(Name as it is to appear on diploma)

Thesis title T. Thomas Fortune: Land, Labor and Politics in the South, 1883-1886

Department or major English and History

Level of Honors sought: General Summa Cum Laude
Departmental Highest Honors

Intended date of commencement May 23, 1976

Read and approved by:

Thesis adviser Emma Lou Thornbrough — 4-12-1976 (Date)

Honors Committee Thomas G. Clowse — 4-12-1976 (Date)
First Reader

John Beverlin — 5-6-1976 (Date)
Second Reader

Accepted and certified to Registrar:

William W. Sutton — 5/14/76 (Date)
Director

T. THOMAS FORTUNE: LAND, LABOR AND POLITICS IN THE SOUTH, 1883--1886

A Thesis

Presented to the Department of History

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

and

The University Honors Committee

Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation

Summa Cum Laude

With Highest Honors in History

C. Edward Shacklee

April 12, 1976

Contents

I. Introduction

By the middle of the 1880s, it has been estimated, more than one hundred Negro newspapers had been launched in the United States. Most reflected the opinions of a single individual, all centered on racial issues. All were weeklies, and few of them outlasted the nineteenth century. One of the most significant of these papers was the New York Globe, which started in 1881 and later became the Freeman and the Age.

Born a slave twenty-five years earlier on a Florida plantation, Timothy Thomas Fortune was the animating spirit of the Globe. The paper's reputation rested largely upon the brilliance and fire of his editorials, and its position on issues was largely a reflection of his own.

In his editorial position, Fortune exerted a considerable influence among blacks and whites of his day. The Globe was hailed by many as the leading Negro journal of its day,[1] and it is likely that, in the period between the death of Frederick Douglass and the rise of Booker T. Washington, no Negro in America was more prominent. Whites, if the many articles criticizing his stances in newspapers such as the New York Sun are an indication, were well aware of his opinions. His appearance before the Blair Committee on Education and Labor of the United States Senate indicates that even some members of the Senate took him quite seriously.

Fortune came to New York in 1881 with a Southern childhood and a good background for his vocation. His father, a former slave, but better educated than many during his years of bondage, fared well as a freedman and was prominent in politics, both in his home town of Marianna and in the Florida legislature. During this time his firstborn son gained valuable experience in learning the printing trade,[2] and as a page in the state senate.[3] Growing up in the South during Reconstruction and its decline shaped and gave color to many of the opinions he would express as a journalist.

Although his formal education was not extensive--four years at best--he read voraciously, and his work on several newspapers showed him to be a highly competent journalist. Employed as a compositor for the Weekly Witness when he first came to New York, Fortune was soon dividing his time between work on the religious paper and a small, struggling weekly called the Rumor. In the summer of 1881 the Rumor, because of Fortune's prodding, became the Globe. Within a few months, Fortune had become the editor.

The Globe, though faced with the same financial obstacles, was a cut above most Negro journals. Almost completely free of typographical blemishes, the paper, though barred along with its fellows from the white news-gathering services, had correspondents in many cities and printed newsletters from a number of smaller communities.[4] Fortune intended the Globe to be truly national in scope and circulation, but still to be a race organ. Though printing and living in the greatest city of the North, Fortune laid his main emphasis on the South, where

the vast majority of Negroes lived and his awareness of racial evils had been nurtured.

Fortune's views on the national issues of his time were, naturally, affected by his personal experience. Having grown up in the post-bellum South, he had witnessed firsthand the blunders and chicaneries of Reconstruction, the violence of its overthrow, and the poverty and ignorance the Negro had been left to wallow in.

A major influence upon his appraisal of these wrongs was John Swinton, a journalist and long-time exponent of equal rights. Swinton's economic thought had been shaped largely by the works of Henry George, and he was an admirer, if not a follower, of Karl Marx. Swinton was outspoken, eloquent, concerned about the Negro since the days of the abolitionists, and admired intensely by the young editor. Seeing most issues in terms of land and labor, Swinton's paper, founded two year's after the Globe, was politically independent, racially egalitarian, and cried out against the too great power of monied interests.[5] Fortune's paper did not come by its similarity by simple-minded imitation; anyone who merely glanced over the book reviews in the Globe finds assurance that its editor was well read on the issues of working class reform. Yet Swinton, a close friend whose ideas were harmonious with, indeed in support of Fortune's desire to see his race advanced, was not without his effect and was often praised and quoted in the Globe.[6]

Fortune was important because of his novel interpretation of other's ideas and the influence that he wielded. The Globe was the avowed champion of the black cause, focusing its attention especially on the South.

Its espousal of civil egalitarianism, land reform and the common cause of labor were all enlightened advancements of this original commitment. In his preface to Black and White: Land, Labor and Politics in the South, published in 1884, he stated:

> In the discussion of the land and labor problem I but pursue the theories advocated by more able men, in the attempt to show that the laboring classes of the country pay all the taxes, in the last analysis, and that they are systematically victimized by legislatures, corporations and syndicates... My purpose is to show that poverty and misfortune make no invidious distinctions of "race, color, or previous condition," but that wealth unduly centralized oppresses all alike; therefore, that the labor elements of the whole United States should sympathize with the same elements in the South, and in some favorable contingency effect some unity of organization of action, which shall subserve the common interest of the common classes.[7]

Fortune did not limit himself to a pragmatic adoption of the new ideas of his time, but also laid emphasis on traditional virtues long before they became the mainstay of Booker T. Washington's ideology. In both reformist and traditional answers to the racial dilemma, Fortune foreshadowed and, perhaps, inspired much of later black response.

Born in the South and hoping to further the interests of a race composed largely of the working class, Fortune was one of the first black leaders to note the common interests of the Negro and the working class as a whole. The prestige of his mouthpiece, the Globe, and his eloquence in touting the then almost new-found connection between class and race as well as a work ethic value system made him a figure of influence in his age, and one deserving of the attention of our own.

This paper will deal with Fortune's economic ideology between 1883 and 1886, early years in a career that would span four decades.

It is an attempt to show both the reformist and traditional approaches Fortune applied to the problems of his race, approaches that foreshadowed much of black thought in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The paper is based principally upon Fortune's own writings. Issues of the Globe from 1883 until its demise in late 1884, and the Freeman through 1885 were the major source. Fortune's book, Black and White: Land, Labor and Politics in the South, published during this period, provided great insight into the ideas of the young editor.

Emma Lou Thornbrough's T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Journalist was of great value in writing this paper. Books touching upon Fortune or describing the South during this period that were helpful include E. Franklin Frazier's The Negro in the United States, John D. Hicks's The Populist Revolt, F. Ray Marshall's Labor in the South, August Meier's Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915, Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris's The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement, George Brown Tindall's South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900 and C. Vann Woodward's Origins of the New South, 1877-1913.

Several articles also were valuable. Among these were "Labor and the Negro 1866-1910" by Herman D. Bloch, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick's "Attitudes of Negro Leaders Toward the American Labor Movement from the Civil War to W.W.I.," Lawrence D. Rice's "The Negro in Texas 1874-1900" and "Call Your Old Master-'Master': Southern Political Leaders and Negro Labor During Presidential Reconstruction" by Thomas Wagstaff.

II. Traditional Approaches

Fortune's economic thought during the period between 1883 and 1886 contained both traditional and unorthodox explanations of and solutions for the difficulties confronting the Negro. On one hand, the editor urged blacks to become competitive with the whites through improved education and thrift. On the other, Fortune called for blacks to recognize their need for unity with whites of their class in a struggle against monied interests. One set of sermons preached middle class values, the other prophesied class struggle. In both, Fortune sought to advance the race.

The editor's traditional approach centered on the accumulation of capital, which would pave the way to racial acceptance. Fortune viewed wealth and education to be the foundations of civil and political equality,[8] and espoused thrift and industrial education long before Booker T. Washington was to become nationally prominent because of such a stance.[9]

To Fortune greed was one of the "actuating springs" of both human nature and the free market system, and as a force was far more influential in the causation of prejudice than any other. If blacks could acquire wealth and property, thus being able to offer something to this appetite, they would readily be accepted into the fold. Christian virtues, in the editor's eyes, had done little to shape white racial attitudes.[10] Rather, Mammon was the deity that held the true respect of

America. In their search for equality, blacks must realize the importance of money.

> The American press and people are coming more and more to bow down to dollars and cents; they are educating themselves in the meanest acts of the sycophant and the presumtuous fool of fashion and money; selfishness and an exaggerated self-appreciation are taking the place of the solid virtues which make Republican government strong and beneficient to the whole people. "I am better than you are, and here are my money bags to prove it," is the watchword of the times. Colored men, know the sources of power, and work them.[11]

A major obstacle to the accumulation of wealth for Negroes was the race prejudice and economic jealousy of white society, which Fortune had himself experienced. Before launching an independent journalistic career, he had become the second black printer to be employed by the Weekly Witness. In response, the white employees went on strike. Most blacks were never offered even the opportunity for so skilled a position.[12] Even if a white employer were willing to hire with no regard to color, few were willing to risk the hazards of such an action. John Dougall, owner of the Witness, was an exception.

Although, as a regional unit, the South's economic condition improved at this time, the Negro was allowed little chance to taste the fruits of this prosperity. Apparently, wrote Fortune, "even with the improvement of the industrial condition of the South, there is no relaxation of the infamous proscription against the Negro. Because of his race he is denied the opportunity to earn his daily bread, and yet the Southerners complain bitterly against the shiftlessness of the Negro."[13] It was a cruel paradox. Yet to Fortune, this impediment called for a commitment to a new strategy and to still greater effort.

> The only way for the Negroes of the South to improve their condition, to learn the industrial arts and become manufacturers, will be through their own exertions. Let them save money, as some have already done, and those who accumulate capital will be able to hire the labor of their fellows, and use the same in manufactures and industrial pursuits.[14]

"Let them save money," was one of Fortune's most persistent homilies, one he clung to long after his disillusionment with other panaceas.[15] Though fascinated by, and eloquent in his discussion of more complicated economic issues, the Globe continued to advocate basic work ethic virtues as essential to the development of the race. Among these virtures were thrift and initiative.

"It is a well established fact," Fortune wrote, "that there is no more industrious class in the country than we are, and that no other class squanders more money on things which do us no good or seriously injure us."[16] Improvidence was a tangible enemy of the race, and Fortune strove to combat it. "The money we squander annually on balls, picnics, excursions and the baubles of fashion would astonish even ourselves if the figures were placed before us. Money we make in abundance," he lamented, "but we spend it as if it cost nothing to obtain it."[17]

A race that knew the value of money would soon surmount the financial difficulties of the present. Fortune constantly returned to this theme, urging a people that had "so long sown that others might reap, spun to keep others warm"[18] to learn financial prudence.

The editor painted a vivid picture of the choice between thrift and improvidence, noting the grim future of a race prodigal in nature.

> If all the money we throw away yearly on the "nothings" of life was deposited in a bank, bonds, or in some little business, the result would be of the most startling and gratifying nature. A people who live from hand to mouth, who make ten dollars and spend ten dollars, who ostensibly live to adorn their backs with gaudy plumage and to fill their stomachs with luxurious food, may always expect to be poor and despised.[19]

The editor noted several areas in which the race could gain advantage by application of thrift and initiative. Three that were especially important were black social organizations, small businesses, and the acquisition of land.

Black social organizations, such as literary societies, social groups and trade organizations, were often called upon to make a united effort so that the dues they collected would not be eaten away by wasteful meeting expenses.

> There are hundreds of societies in this and every other city which spend thousands of dollars per annum on rent which they could save, if properly managed. Why could not these societies agree among themselves to build a large hall for their own use, and thus save the enormous rental they pay annually? The thing could be very easily done. The combined rental they now pay to somebody else would pay for a beautiful hall in one or two years. We would like to see this effort made.[20]

Fortune reasoned that if the societies were possessed of a healthier financial base, they would be of greater benefit to the race they attempted to serve.

Blacks were urged to pursue careers in business as a way of entering the social and economic mainstream. Realizing that most initial efforts would of necessity be somewhat humble in scope, Fortune looked to the outcome for justification. He once reported a prominent white businessman to have said that a few blacks on Wall Street would do more for the race than a handful of favorable

legislative acts.[21] In the Gilded Age, as it is perhaps also true today, money was seen as the great equalizer, and entrepreneurial pursuits pursuits led to its multiplication. The future of the race was seen to hinge upon its financial development. "Our young men should save their money and start little business enterprises. It does not matter how small the beginning is, begin. Very large things grow from very small things."[22]

Blacks in the South had few opportunities to follow this advice, since they were largely in rural areas and lacked the necessary education and skill to a degree larger even than their urban fellows. Wealth, to them and to Fortune, was most tangibly represented in the ownership of land. Though Negroes were relatively insignificant in this field, in the 1880s there was still room for optimism. Responding to one of the Atlanta Constitution's characteristically derogatory racial volleys, Fortune noted reason for hope:

> . . . when we honestly consider that at the close of the Civil war the black men of the South did not own an inch of land, were brutishly ignorant of the value of time and money, even so small an exhibit as 2½ percent of the property of Georgia is no inconsiderable acquisition.[23]

Fortune, believing that the black race would improve its gains as it acquired education and other positive traits, prophesied in Black and White that the Negro would soon take his place as an equal among landholders.[24]

Land hunger was indeed a reality that the young editor's advocacy accurately reflected. Though the system of land holding was weighted against the Negro--emphasis on soil-depleting cash crops in a land

where cotton was the ruinous king, unfair tenancy agreements, prohibitive costs set by many rural southern stores on the necessities of life--perhaps the greatest barrier against his success was his own ignorance. Many blacks grew cotton because cotton was all they were capable of growing, having no experience in other types of agriculture. The soil they tilled, consequently, deteriorated because of their lack of education.[25] The farmers whose experience had allowed their fields to be more varied generally fared better than their more benighted neighbors. It was a terrible irony that the South as a whole, though predominantly an agricultural region, was not self-sufficient in its production of foodstuffs.[26] Farmers who could not or did not know enough to vary their agricultural produce were forced to purchase food supplies and fertilizers from local storekeepers, whose credit system would usually multiply the financial difficulties such needs had already imposed: To repay the storekeeper, the emphasis on cash crops would be even more solidly underlined, more fertilizers would be required and less food would be produced for personal consumption. Moreover, once in debt a farmer rarely got out.[27]

Still, the desire, though generally thwarted by lack of skill and crippling circumstances, existed; ownership of land was a goal common to a great majority of southern Negroes. "The more intelligence they have," predicted Fortune, "the more the tendency will develop."[28] The way to acceptance in the South seemed clear, and to the editor it appeared that the pathway was already being followed.

> Absolute individual ownership in the soil, while it may be, and I think is, wrong in principle, is recognized in law as just and consistent, and any man, whatever be his color, has the right as well as the opportunity to become an owner to the exclusion of all others. It has been admitted time and again that the blacks are pre-eminently the farm laborers of the South; that to all intents and purposes they have practically a monopoly of this extensive and rich branch of industry. It is susceptible of demonstration that this class of our population are investing largely in land, that they are doing this more and more as the years come and go; and the possibilities are that, with vastly diffused intelligence and advanced notions of the value and necessity of wealth, the power and immunity which accrue from ownership in the soil, this class, pre-eminently agriculturally disposed, will invest yet more extensively in the soil of the South--that they will not remain always the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Any conclusion based upon the future of the South in which the colored man is put down as the perpetual foot-ball of other men, whose only essential difference is a white skin, is false in conception and will confound the vanity and the hope wrapped up in it.[29]

Fortune recognized that, without the proper educational background, the Negro and his future wealth would be soon separated.[30] Lacking the training to manage his affairs, most of the money and the land the Negro could hope to gain would be lost or never accumulated at all. In view of this, Fortune urged extensive, practical education, especially in the South. Ignorance, which grew in that region "as rank as the grasses that choke her cotton and corn,"[31] was an implacable foe of the Negro's development.

One of the editor's main objections to the educational policies which held general sway during this period was their inappropriateness to the condition of the race. Most black spokesmen stressed higher education for all those who could possible aspire to it. Not only, to Fortune, was this emphasis too ambitious; its effects were on the

whole deleterious to the race's welfare. First, Fortune noted that, because of white bias against Negroes and the slight need for professional services within the race itself, there were few positions for those blacks who could afford extensive education. Only the ministry had a substantial need for the educated, but Fortune did not consider the extent of preparation in this field offered by many colleges to serve the needs of most youths, since their careers would be more materially oriented.[32] Indeed, most forms of higher education were extremely tangential to the true state of affairs of the race. Higher education without the need for it seemed no great blessing to the editor of the Globe.

> . . . any education is false which is unsuited to the condition and prospects of the student. To educate him for a lawyer when there are no clients, for a doctor when the patients, although numerous, are too poor to give him a living income, to fill his head with Latin and Greek as a teacher when the people he is to teach are to be instructed in the a b c's--such education is a waste of time and a senseless expenditure of money.[33]

Besides, such education was as detrimental as it was wasteful. "Many a colored farmer boy or mechanic," Fortune wrote, "has been spoiled to make a foppish gambler or loafer, a swaggering pedagogue or a cranky homelitician."[34] The great expenditure made to improve the advanced forms of education were out of touch with the true needs of the race. In some areas of the South, common schools were run only three months of the year, while a neighboring college was in session the entire twelve months.[35]

Fortune was in favor of industrial education long before the Wizard of Tuskegee rose to predominance in national affairs,[36] arguing that other forms of learning should receive less attention than one which was well suited to the race's financial and educational condition.[37] To the young editor, the implementation of such a plan was not impractical or the stuff of hazy, idealistic dreams; instead, he expressed his hope in thorough and entirely realistic terms.

> Every state in the Union should maintain an industrial college where those branches of industry could be thoroughly taught which make men more useful as well as ornamental citizens. Such institutions could very soon be made to be self-sustaining, the same as state penitentiaries are, only with greater facility and thoroughness. Such State colleges could take annually a number of boys and girls, based upon population, from the brightest pupils in the county schools. They should be taken upon average percentage in competitive examinations. Once in college they could pay the expenses of their education by devoting three or four hours of the day to whatever industry the student had a bent for--in practical farming--and the college should have two hundred acres of land under cultivation--in shoemaking, in blacksmithing, engineering, etc. The manufacture and sale of these articles would sustain the tutors in the various academical and industrial branches, while the produce of the farm could be consumed by students and the attaches of the institution, and a ready market could be found for the surplus.
>
> It appears to us that this system would work admirably. Every year it would send back into the counties of the State intelligent, practical men, where now the tendency of education is to withdraw the educated men away from the country and concentrate them in the cities, towns and villages, who find the avenues which their education fits them to ramify already overstocked with a cadaverous, dispirited class of men without hope in the present or the future.[38]

Fortune was definitely not an anti-intellectual, yet he believed that education was the preparation for future work;[39] even as the few gifted and fortunate ones should not be slighted, however, so should

the needs of the great majority of blacks be taken into account in the education of the race.[40] "Genius," wrote the journalist, "cannot be repressed;"[41] history had conspired to prove, on the other hand, that the great mass of Negroes could be. Education without practical education was an ornament the race could ill afford. By the inculcation of work ethic virtues and the spreading of useful knowledge, industrial education could, it seemed, provide obvious benefits to the race as a whole.

In the realm of political theory, the Globe's editor strongly espoused the constitutional rights and privileges assured, if not actually bestowed upon, each citizen. His rhetoric was, in effect, reformist; his insistence upon full civil equality for all Americans militated for significant change in the scheme of late nineteenth century politics. But to Fortune, such an attitude was anchored firmly in the traditional values of the United States.

Fortune angrily denounced the denial of these rights and spoke out against the state's rights mentality into which the nation had been lapsing during the Post-Reconstruction years. His political opinions were well considered and aired constantly, Fortune being unafraid to voice his deep conviction that civil rights were inalienable. Yet, perhaps because of his disillusionment with the operation of the United States' government, Fortune consistently placed more emphasis on the remedy of monetary and educational handicaps which he believed were the cause of political injustices.

"Practically," he wrote, "there is no law in the United States which extends its protecting arm over the black man and his rights."[42] Violence and prejudice had annulled almost every right to which the Negro was entitled. Slavery had been abolished, but, in effect, its eradication was in name only.[43]

Though the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment had guaranteed that no state could "make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States," prejudicial and 'strict' interpretations of the Constitution had rendered that promise inefficacious. Blacks had been intimidated and cozened out of their right to vote in the South,[44] so that, "though having magnificent majorities" in several states, "they have no voice in shaping the legislation which is too often made an engine to oppress them."[45] Civil rights legislation had done little to aid the Negro.

Fortune had no inclination to trust the states of the South with the protection of the Negro's right, though such an opinion was popular among many white journalists of his day. That the South would take care of its own was, to him, more cause for trepidation than assurance. His own father had faced the perils of a black political activist during Reconstruction in Florida.[46] To Fortune, the reason for state sovereignty was apparent, regardless of whatever rhetorical forms it assumed or whose sympathies it aroused.

> For many years the Southern press has kept up a fussilade of exclamations that the Southern whites were the best friends of the colored people. And even when the Ku-Klux and the White Liners were spreading terror and consternation in every colored man's log cabin this

> transparent fraud was yelled from every editorial housetop in the South. So persistent and vociferous has the press of the South been in this matter, even up to this time, that the Northern press has taken up the cry, and for some time has insisted that the Southern whites are sincere, that the colored man is a helpless thing any how, and that the "people who know him best," the whites among whom he lives, should be left alone to make the best of him and the difficulties besetting the problem of which he is at once the alpha and the omega.
>
> The Evening Post of this city, the Philadelphia Times, the Boston Herald, and other able papers have assumed the task of dignifying the Southern white character,--a job herculean in proportions, seeing that the principal occupation of that people for two hundred years prior to 1860 was robbing black men of their toil by sanction of National law, and since 1860 in shooting or exiling every colored man who dared to show even the symptoms of possessing intelligence and respectability.[47]

Fortune's conception of the political condition of the South was clear; he realized the fallacies contained in the arguments of those who hoped to thwart black political aspirations, yet he knew that to many the words of his opponents were still, for one reason or another, overwhelmingly persuasive. Federal enforcement of civil rights was obviously necessary if justice was to be upheld. Though the cry of state's rights was more often than not the public facade of less reasonable opinions, Fortune viewed it as equally illogical and sought to strip other sentiments of their illusion. The editor noted that the United States must have the power to enforce the laws it had been empowered to create.[48] Sagaciously, he based many of his arguments upon the viability of political structures that were not supported rather than on a sense of fair play to a little-loved race.

> The question of illegal suppression of a tremendous voting population is not a race question, it is a national question, defined minutely in the federal constitution, and cannot be lead to serious consequences by abridgement, suppression, or nullification. A people invite destruction or violent contention by permitting fundamental laws to be abused by permitting common rights to be usurped by an arrogant and violent class.[49]

Though his arguments were superior in logic and were often politic in the points they stressed, Fortune had also the common sense to know that laissez-faire political stances would still prove the most popular.[50] In consequence, his hope for political equality did not lie in persuasion, but in manly resistance to oppression and in material development.

Fortune hinted many times that docility could not forever be expected from a people so cruelly dealt with.[51] Two hundred years of quiet servitude was not a measure of black sentiment. "The condition of affairs in the South are volcanic in the extreme," he warned, "and they become more so year after year, not less because of the apparent calm."[52] His position being similar to other wronged peoples throughout history,[53] the Negro's reaction could not be circumscribed to peaceful alternatives only. That the black response had expressed itself with so little violence in the past was, in Fortune's eyes, quite remarkable: Indeed, the Negro's reaction was in damning contrast to the greatest portion of white society.

> . . . I am surprised that the race did not turn robbers and highwaymen, and, in turn, terrorize and rob society as society had for so long terrorized and robbed them. The thing is strange, marvelous, phenomenal in the extreme. Instead of becoming outlaws, as the critical condition would seem to have indicated, the black men

> of the South went manfully to work to better their own condition and the crippled condition of the country which had been produced by the ravages of internecine rebellion; while the white men of the South, the capitalists, the land-sharks, the poor white trash, and the nondescripts, with a thousand years of Christian civilization and culture behind them, with the "boast of chivalry, the pomp of power," these white scamps, who had imposed upon the world the idea that they were paragons of virtue and the heaven-sent viceregents of civil power, organized themselves into a band of outlaws, whose concatenative chain of auxiliaries ran through the entire South, and deliberately proceeded to murder innocent men and women for POLITICAL REASONS and to systematically rob them of their honest labor because they were too accursedly lazy to labor themselves.[54]

Fortune considered the mild reaction of blacks in the past to political oppression and their lack of political power in his own day to be understandable in light of their condition, but conjectured that material and intellectual development would cause a significant change.

When poor and ignorant, many indignities and privations might be borne that otherwise would not be tolerated.[55] As blacks gained economic ground, their dissatisfaction would grow less dormant. Time, education and money would eventually change the black response.

> The statement has been made. . . that a better feeling between the blacks and whites is becoming more and more apparent, but I doubt it. There is an undercurrent of restlessness in the South which the newspapers and reform politicians attempt to smother, but nothing can smother it. The longer the blacks enjoy the state of freedom, the more education and property they acquire, the more restless they will become. . . The man who thinks the blacks of the South will always patiently endure the wrongs heaped upon them, misapprehends that human nature which is the same in the Spartan Helot, the Russian serf, and the Irish peasant.[56]

Fortune did not believe the race's past political setbacks were completely unfortunate, since a people's infant energies should be directed to material gain, not to legislative action.[57] When economic prosperity arrived, as Fortune believed would happen in the near future, its social and civil accoutrements would quickly follow. Uncle Ned, the pen name of one of the paper's columnists, once wrote: "The civil rights what I believe in is money."[58] From his own very similar vantage point, Fortune saw wealth as a great equalizer. Education and work ethic virtues were crucial to its accumulation, and as such were deserving of constant emphasis. These traditional values, geared as they were to economic gain, would be useful in aiding the Negro to take a respected place in American society.

> The moral, mental and material condition of the race must be properly looked after before we can hope to establish any sort of status in the politics of the country. It is gratifying to note that for the past fifteen years earnest work has been done for the moral and mental improvement of the race. Our Southland has been literally perforated with schools, academies and colleges, and we are now, happily, reaping some valuable results from their benign inculcations.
>
> Nor has the material condition of the race been wholly neglected. We are becoming more and more owners of real estate, and here and there we are occupying places of credit in business, in the professions, in literature and other avenues of industry. This is the way to conquer. The road to success is not through the halls of legislation, but through the broad highways of commerce and the professions.[59]

III. Reformist Approaches

While his views on economic uplift and political rights were expressions of traditional American values or ideas, Fortune at the same time expressed views which were less orthodox. Searching for answers to the problems of his race, Fortune explored a variety of possible solutions. He did not accept the economic, political or social conditions of his time as just. He did not consider the free enterprise system to be operating in a manner equitable to the race or to the working class, of which the Negro was largely a part. His espousal of traditional values called on Afro-Americans to better themselves monetarily. His reformist tendencies, simultaneously, struck out against a way of living that placed so heavy an emphasis upon material gain and left untold thousands of Americans--many of them black--to suffer horribly because of the uncontrolled greed of a few.

Two important influences on Fortune at this time were John Swinton and, probably through him, the works of Henry George. The impetus for a great part of his thought came from these two sources, and he was at times accused of an almost slavish imitation of their ideas. Certainly the effect of these men was powerful;[60] but his application of other's theories to the specific difficulties of his race was both innovative and eloquent.

John Swinton had been chief of the editorial staff of the New York Sun before beginning a paper of his own in 1883. Swinton had considered

himself unable to speak as freely as he desired while employed by another. His views on the labor issue were uncompromisingly in favor of the working class, his economic theory strongly affected by Henry George. Fortune greatly admired him, praised him in his own journal and was in turn praised in John Swinton's Paper,[61] and adopted much of his ideological orientation.

George believed that all men have a natural right to "apply his labor to land." An American reformer, his ideas were simple but cut to the heart of economic questions. George held that republican governments could not last if underpinned by an inequitable distribution of wealth. Our Land and Land Policy, Progress and Poverty, The Irish Land Question and Social Problems were all available by 1883.

The impressions received from these sources, as well as others, were to help shape Fortune's conception of the condition of the black race in America. Fortune saw history largely as a struggle between labor and capital, between the landed and those who had no land. He was most interested in the South, since the American Negro was most densely concentrated in that region, but the South was no different from other places in this respect. Racial and political issues had almost inexorably hinged, though at times unwittingly, upon the difficulties between capital and labor.

The two hundred years of past slavery were, of course, an obvious repression for primarily economic reasons. Fortune believed that the government, always a dubious enforcer of professed American ideals,[62] had failed the Negro especially in its bungled handling of his emancipation. The follies involved in this action were at the root of many of the problems faced in the editor's own day.

The black race was not prepared for its emancipation. The Negro had been robbed of two hundred years of labor,[63] left to ponder the "boon of freedom and the burden of the franchise"[64] in a condition of almost total ignorance and poverty. More than this, his fate was soon left in the hands of those who had enslaved him, still benighted, still unprotected, and possessed of the same disadvantages that had made him helpless to unfetter himself. Blacks in the South were left to become almost exactly what they had been; an oppressed minority with little or no legal claim to the land they had so long tilled.

> . . . a generous Government had made his an ignorant voter and a confirmed pauper--the victim of his former master, to be robbed outright by designing and unscrupulous harpies of trade, and to be defrauded of his franchise by blatant demagogues or by outlaws. . .[65]

Fortune blamed the Union for abandonment of his race when it needed assistance most. The Civil War was fought to reunite the country, not to abolish slavery.[66] Having defeated the slave power, the government freed the enslaved race, yet at the same time set out on a course "more fatuous, more replete with fatal concessions and far more fatal ommissions than any ever before adopted for the acceptance and governance of a rebellious people on the one hand and a newly-made, supremely helpless people on the other."[67] The South, even two decades after its defeat, argued the cause of states' rights with a haughty impunity. Reconstruction, the hasty ordering of a house divided against itself, was too brief, accurately reflecting the North's lack of deep interest in or comprehension of issues in the South and that region's stubborn refusal to change its ways.

Reconstruction, in short, did little except on paper to reform the unrepentant South.

> Reconstruction was predicated on the orientalism that the moon is made of green cheese and that the lamb should lie down with the lion of his own free will or be made to do it. Every black man who lived in the South through the Reconstruction era, as I did, does not need to be told how defectively devised it was or how disastrously it operated.[68]

The North, apparently did not, or did not wish to understand that the problems of the South ran far deeper than mere color legislation.[69] The major conflict in the South before and after the Civil War concerned class interests. This, of course, had perpetually been intertwined with the struggle between whites and blacks. But race, in Fortune's eyes, had been used to soften class differences by the monied interests. It was natural, then, that racial troubles would have resumed in the South, since nothing had been done to alleviate the true reason for their occurrence; the water became muddy because the turbulence was allowed to continue.

The greatest evil in the South, according to the journalist, was the maldistribution of land. Ownership of property was still in the hands of a few. Emancipation had truly changed little: The Negro remained in a position of subserviency, kept there by terrible disadvantages in wealth, education, and upbringing.[70] This was a serious oversight in the North's plans for racial harmony, assuming that such a desire did exist.

> The government of the United States confiscated as "contraband of war" the slave population of the South, but it left to the portion of the unrepentant rebel a far more valuable species of property. The slave, the

> perishable wealth, was confiscated to the government and then manumitted; but property in land, the wealth which perishes not nor can fly away, and which made the institution of slavery possible, was left as the heritage of the robber who had not hesitated to lift his iconoclastic hand against the liberties of his country.[71]

Class was very important to the editor's conception of the problems of the South and his interpretation of its history. Fortune noted four major groups; poor whites, blacks, small white farmers, and the hereditary landlords.[72] The interrelationships between these classes were, for a great part, both the cause and the effect of Southern history.

The poor whites were described as crude but, through their brutish ignorance, willing tools of the upper class in the repression of the black race. From this group came the overseer of the past and the klansman of post Civil War days, easily manipulated by their fear of social leveling with the Negro.[73] Fortune had good cause to dislike this class, but nevertheless expressed a certain amount of sympathy for their plight.

Blacks were described in proud terms, in contrast to the adversities of their condition. They were the "great labor force in the South, the class upon whose ample shoulders have fallen the weight of Southern labor and inhumanity" for hundreds of years.[74] Left "bankrupts in morality, in intelligence, and in wealth"[75] by thier enforced servitude, their progress in the last twenty years since emancipation, Fortune firmly believed, was remarkable.

The small white farmer class was drawn from the thriftiest of the poor whites and war-ruined fragments of the landed class. Fortune noted them in a speculative and rather hazy manner, describing them as another

class of producers thought of as not as important as the Negro.

The editor, as might be expected from a fierce, class oriented champion of an impoverished race, reserved his special vehemence for the rich. For indeed, the only true class division was between those who had and those who had not.

> They are the gentlemen who have their grip on the throat of Southern labor; who hold vast areas of land, the product of robbery, for a rise in values; who run the stores and torture the small farmer to death by usurious charges for necessaries; these are the gentlemen who are opposed to the new conditions resultant from the war which their Hotspur impetuousity and Shylock greed made possible. In short, these gentlemen comprise the moneyed class. They are the gentlemen who are hastening the conflict of labor and capital in the South. And when the black laborer and the white laborer come to their senses, join issues with the common enemy and pitch the tent of battle, then will come the tug of war.[76]

Though these four groups were the prime movers of historical events in the South and were peculiar to that region, Fortune recognized that class existed everywhere. The struggle for economic well-being and the attempt of others to rob the Negro of his just share of the wealth made the advance and continued repression of the black race understandable, yet it also fitted the phenomena into a much larger frame; color was a tool in the fight of land against labor. Place and time, the settings for events, could be analyzed within this framework.

The landowner's position after the war was, despite the ruined condition of much of Southern property, very desirable in comparison with his fellows. The freed man had been given ownership of his labor only, and was denied the fruits of the race's past toil which

had been the cause of much of the South's prosperity. He was left with a mind made ignorant by cruel slaveholders fearful of revolt, a degraded moral sensitivity and absolute poverty. The former slaveholder, on the other hand, possessing the fields that were worked to produce wealth, was left to accrue an unjust profit from another's work, just as he had done before. It was apparent to Fortune that a settlement such as this one was not fair; the distribution of land was not, to a substantial degree, based upon justice.

The Negro was not given his due at the war's end. "What claim can compute," Fortune raged, "the dollars stolen from the black man in the shape of wages for a period of a hundred years! What claim has the slaveholder against the government for confiscation of property by the side of the claim of the slaves for a hundred years of wages and enervated and dwarfed manhood! A billion dollars would have bought every slave in the South in 1860, but fifty billions would not have adequately recompensed the slave for enforced labor and debased manhood."[77] The wealth of the past had been left in the hands of the white landowners. Even more reprehensible, the sources of future wealth--land, education and money--were still possessed almost solely by the former ruling class. Blacks were thus only given a soured taste of freedom by their emancipation. Indeed, freedom thus received contained serious disadvantages for the race and for the Union.

> At the close of the Great Rebellion the Negro population of the country was thrown upon its own resources, as it were; made men and citizens at one stroke of the pen; poor, ingorant beyond measure, cowed and debauched by the foul iniquity of slavery, and surrounded by a hostile public sentiment, which

> vented itself in all sorts of intolerance--in assassination, intimidation and open robbery. Assassination for political causes has ceased, because no longer necessary, but intimidation remains. So that the Negro population of the South is to-day, as it was thirty years ago, a disturbing element, requiring a wise statesmanship to properly adjust it. But instead of attempting honestly to adjust it, the people of the country constantly talk of eliminating the problem from political discussion and consideration--as if it were possible to heal a cancer by leaving it severely alone.[78]

The political freedoms, though necessary for the fullest expression of citizenship, were small compensation for the remaining disadvantages. And, given the condition of the race at the close of the Civil War, the franchise was not a blessing.

> No people became great and prosperous by devoting their infant energies to politics. . . This being granted, it is easily to be seen how unfortunate has been our education. We were literally born into political responsibility--had the cares of civil duties thrust upon us before we had mastered the economic conditions which underlie those duties. Hence every step taken since our enfranchisement has been attended with mistakes and woeful disasters.[79]

Fortune stressed that most of the improvidences of Reconstruction governments were the work of white men, and was not generous in his estimation of carpetbaggers.[80] The Negro, so foolishly and immediately thrust into the center of politics, was at times a cat's paw and a too malleable tool in the hands of the dishonest. Placed in a position of equality without any of the qualities necessary for its maintenance, it was predictable that he would lose the franchise, especially with no interposition from the government of the United States.[81] The black man, "formerly used as a beast of burden, and now as a football, to be kicked by one faction and kicked back by the other,"[82] had gained little in a field in which others used him to their advantage. Retreating from

the responsibilities it had incurred, the North left a great vacuum in the field of political influence, to be contested by "the haughty and arrogant free man on the one hand and the crouching, fearful freed man on the other--the lion and the lamb."[83] Political activity, on the whole, had been disastrous for the Negro.[84]

Reconstruction had, because of lack of foresight, only served as an unequal field of battle between two classes. The rich white South, though employing the venerable rhetoric of racial supremacy to justify the Negro's subjugation, looked into the future in the same way it had seen the past--from, fundamentally, an economic viewpoint.[85] The Negro, despite his legal freedom, was in a plight perhaps more miserable than ever before.

> They are more absolutely under the control of the Southern whites; they are systematically robbed of their labor; they are more poorly housed, clothed and fed, than under the slave regime; and they enjoy, practically, less of the protection of the laws of the State or Federal government. When they appeal to the Federal government they are told by the Supreme Court to go to the State authorities--as if they would have appealed to the one had the other given them that protection to which their sovereign citizenship entitles them![86]

Emancipation had served to arouse to an even greater degree the hatred and jealousy of the poor white class, which the wealthier elements were quick to exploit. Though his class level should have caused him to realize his similarity of interests with the Negro, race distinction kept him on the side of the monied class. Unified around traditional leaders, afraid of social dislodgement by a race newly unfettered, poor whites held fast to a position that was economically of detriment to them.[87]

Management did not shrink from taking advantage of the delicate relationship between blacks and whites. If blacks were available for work, white wages could be substantially held down.[88]

Fortune's ideas reflected the logic of this sentiment, but his racial sympathies were at times somewhat apparent.

> They the poor whites instinctively hate the black man; because the condition of the black, his superior capacity for labor and receptivity of useful knowledge, place him a few pegs higher on the social scale. So these degraded white men, the very substratum of Southern population, were ready tools of the organized chivalrous brigands (as they had been of the slave oligarch), whose superior intelligence made them blush at the lawlessness they inspired . . .[89]

The two races, competing for subsistence wages in the fields and mines, were set against each other by those with wealth.

Almost every racial issue was seen, eventually, to have its roots in economic matters. This was good, Fortune thought, in that social conditions seemed more universal, the frame of reference and insight much broader. Pragmatically, it also pointed to the folly of racial stigmas and barriers. Thus class cooperation was both logical and practical as an approach.

Fortune's view of class, however, was severely truncated. Though he could see the international importance of the struggle, it concerned him mostly in its effect, or possible effect, upon the Negro. He made allusions to other peoples, most frequently the Irish, whose conditions were similar to the Negro's.[90] Fortune's paper was primarily a Negro weekly, and his devotion matched its theme.

> While we are earnestly concerned about the welfare of the people of the whole country, we do not disguise the fact that our interest is more nearly centered in the welfare of our own race. We have a duty to perform--to point out the needs of the race and advocate, as far as we can, measures of relief--and we have no disposition to shirk that duty.[91]

The editor's thoughts concerning the relief of his race, on the contrary, were framed by the universal ideology of class warfare, whether violent or repressed. Fortune noted many evils plaguing the race, many of which he defined in terms of the struggle between rich and poor. Among these were tenant farming, the convict lease system, political parties, and education.

By the end of Reconstruction the old system of slave labor in agriculture had been replaced by forms of tenancy, sharecropping, and wage labor. The specific geographical area, the disposition of the landowners and the farm workers themselves, were factors in the type of working contract chosen. Many of these contracts were not written. These new systems gave many Negroes an unprecedented degree of independence. Yet, for the basic necessities--land, supplies and farm instruments--most black farmers were as dependent as they were before.

Southern farmers, whether under contract or individual proprietors, were at this time almost universally impoverished. Those who had land usually purchased it on credit; those who were tenants were usually in debt to a landowner or storekeeper. Most of them began with little or nothing; with practically no reserve to see them from one harvest to the next, their only alternative was to borrow.

Credit in the South was purchased at a dear price. Merchants and large landowners kept prices for charged goods extremely high, and often,

in a rural area, it was possible to buy goods in only one place. "The farmer," wrote one scholar, "saw his account at the store mount by leaps and bounds. Try as he might, or quite as often as he might not, his purchases almost always exceeded the returns of his crop. The thrifty storekeeper was indeed at some pains to see that this was the case. An unpaid account, provided it were not too large, was of some value, and it insured him against the loss of a customer and, often enough, against the loss of a tenant as well."[92]

Fortune was quite justified in denouncing such a system, dominating as it did both the property and capital of the South to the detriment of those with few possessions. Yet in his zeal, his attacks seldom considered sympathetically the reasons that called such a system into existence.

Landowners and storekeepers were often in pursuit of most unjust profits, but there were other factors to consider. Nor were they solely responsible for the unhealthy emphasis on cotton agriculture. Many of their motivations were, of course, shameful; but many others were quite understandable in view of the depressed condition of the South and its markets.

High prices and usurious interest rates on credit accounts seemed necessary because of the great risk involved in such investments. Many tenant farmers would die in debt, others would leave without paying. Also, the merchant was often responsible for the double obligations of banker and storekeeper.[93]

The cotton kingdom was not the invention of the current generation of landlords and storekeepers. Nor could they be expected to resist the tempting prices offered by English spinners. Moreover, most farmers knew how to raise little else.

Fortune also tended to lump the South's history together, holding the present-day landowners responsible for the deeds of the past. Though it was true that blacks had as much claim to the land as the whites, it was not so easy to make this truth comprehensible in individual cases. That the South's landholding system was unjust is difficult to deny. But actual redistribution of the land involved people, not theory, and was much more complicated.

The bulk of Fortune's thoughts, however, struck entirely and justifiably home. Land distribution was inequitable, many blacks were cheated and were innocent victims, and many of those with wealth were dominated by the actuating spring of greed.

If it truly desired to free the Negro from his previous bondage, the North made a grave error by failing to adopt a policy of land reform after emancipation. Land, to Fortune, was essential to equality, and all were entitled to use it. "They," he wrote of the white monority in South Carolina, have no more right to the soil of South Carolina than the black majority, for both are citizens in common. If they claim immunity from usurious taxation," Fortune believing as did Henry George that rent was an unjust tax on labor, "by virtues of purchase of the soil, the blacks can justly claim for themselves that they were unrighteously robbed of their labor, the proceeds of which went to create the claim."[94]

> . . . the question comes home with tremendous force--why do the few own the land to the exclusion of the many? The Southern fellows who hold a monopoly in the land, purchased with money wrung from the labor of black slaves, may yet have to answer this question.[95]

Centralization of land ownership was, to Fortune, the cause of much evil, and did not affect only the South and the Negro. Rather, it affected the way of life of the rural and urban areas, and of all of the lower class, in an adverse manner.

> Land monopoly--in the hands of a few individuals, corporations or syndicates--is at bottom the prime cause of the inequalities which obtain; which desolate fertile acres turned over to vast ranches and into bonanza farms of a thousand acres, where no one family finds a habitation, where muscle and brain was supplemented by machinery, and the small farmer is swallowed up and turned into a tenant or a slave. While in large cities thousands upon thousands of human beings are crowded into narrow quarters, where vice festers, where crime flourishes undeterred, and where death is the most welcome of all visitors.[96]

Blacks, caught in the grasp of unscupulous landholders, were not to be blamed for their infamous reputation of shiftlessness and moral bankruptcy. "We freely admit," he wrote in reply to a derogatory article in the Sun, "that the Negro population of South Carolina is given largely to indolence, thievery, and mendacity, but it has had consummate instructions in all these branches of depravity. Where in all the world can you find more infamous robbers, murderers, and liars than the white people of South Carolina?"[97] And Fortune was possessed of personal experience to show that the Negro was not receiving a fair deal in his position of debtor. In a report to the Blair Committee, he categorized them.[98]

Pay was, in the first place, very small for such great expenditures of labor. "The average rate of wages received by a farm laborer in the South," he testified, "is fifty cents a day," out of which all the necessities of a household must be purchased. He was often paid in money orders which could be redeemed only at certain stores. Such a system bred improvidence by making money an abstract, unseen thing. Moreover, most blacks were held in a state of eternal indebtedness, with a lien on the next year's harvest. Even worse, these accounts, inequitable in the first place, were seldom kept fairly. His own father had nearly been cheated of $150.00 in such a fashion, and was saved only by his meticulous keeping of records. Most blacks, however, lacked the skill required even to do this. It was manifestly unfair to call a race so magnificently and thoroughly swindled shiftless and lazy.

> I have known honest but ignorant colored men who have lost large farms magnificently accoutred by such thievery. The black farmers, and those of other occupations in the South, are robbed year after year by the simplest sort of devices; and the very men who rob them are the loudest in complaining that Negroes are lazy and improvident. For my part, I am surprised that a larger number of them does not go fishing, hunting, and loafing.[99]

The convict lease systems which arose in the South after Reconstruction were perhaps the greatest and cruelest legal swindle perpetrated on the race, and all colored papers were loud in denouncing it.[100] Fortune, editor of perhaps the most prestigious Negro paper of his day, was not in the background. His

> . . . arraignment of the penitentiaries of the South was based upon the knowledge that those institutions were foul, vermin-ridden, death-breeding dens, which would be regarded

> as an outrage and disgrace to any government less noted for inefficiency, neglect and cruelty than the governments of the South. But nothing we have ever said approaches a just presentation, a just reprehension of the infamous under consideration.[101]

Blacks were given longer sentences than whites for even trivial offenses, and sent to chain gangs where they would earn revenue for the state and line the pockets of the corrupt through lucrative work contracts. Others from more objective standpoints than Fortune's were struck by the cruelty, inequitousness, and profiteering that riddled the South's penitentiaries. "The degradation and brutality produced by this system would be incredible," mused one scholar, "but for the amount of evidence from official sources."[102]

Fortune saw this outrage, in its broadest implications, as only an indication of the Southern mentality.

> They think it a sounder principal of government to equip and maintain vast penal systems--with chain gangs, schools of crime, depravity and death, than to support schools and churches. Millions of money are squandered annually to curb crime, when a few thousand dollars, properly applied, would prove to be a more humane, a more profitable preventative. The poor school teacher is paid <u>twenty-five dollars per month</u> for three months in the year, while the prison guard is paid <u>fifty dollars per month</u> for twelve months--ninety days being the average length given to teach the child in the school and three hundred and sixty-five being necessary to teach him in the prison, whence he is frequently graduated a far worse, more hopeless enemy of society than when he matriculated.[103]

The convict lease system was a case of class exploitation hidden by Southern prejudice. Through the ruse of white supremacy, class protest was muffled by the misconception of race.

Another product of ignorance and foolish prejudices was the political system. Deprived of the right to vote in many areas, shunned by the Republicans in their attempt to formulate a new Southern strategy, the Negro still clung to the "party of moral ideas." Fortune, unlike the majority of his fellows, was a maverick and unorthodox in his views. He advocated political independence, since neither party provided what the Negro desired. The phantoms of the past, he argued, should not be clung to without reason.[104]

Concerning the Democrats, he hinted that a fair handling of Negroes would quickly swing their vote away from the Republicans and would be of great benefit to the South.[105] He realized, however, that this was not likely to happen.

The poor whites supported the Bourbon Democrats even though their class interests were not served by that party. Like the Negro, they remained because of the racial stands that were associated with their political affiliation. Class, Fortune thought, would eventually be the overwhelming determinant of party allignment. Whites and blacks would learn to cooperate, though the best that could be expected in the near future was a marriage of political convenience.

> It has been said that the whites of the South will not co-operate with the colored men in crushing the hydra-head of Bourbon Democracy, but we know this to be a piece of sophistry designed to impose upon the country. They will co-operate. But with the true instinct of the businessman, they will subordinate the colored man if they can and recognize them if they must. The colored man must not only vote straight, but demand his rights before and after he has voted.[106]

The struggle between labor and capital was central to all men, but both parties played on race and other issues. They were, in Fortune's opinion, antiquated machines filled with stale promises and glib lies, and of no real use to the working man. The Republican party was an organization of "organized hypocrisy and plunder," while the Democrats were a party of "organized ignorance and brigandage."[107] Parties were only agencies of the moment, and times had changed. "New issues," said Fortune, "require new men and parties."[108]

> What we need at this time are new principles and new parties. The times are ripe for such. Old issues have become law or eliminated from our politics; a new generation has come upon the scene, and it is restive under the foggyisms and the exploded theories now championed by the two historic parties. When a new party comes forth as the champion of equal civil and political rights to all men; of civil service reform; of reduction of unnecessary taxation and a proper readjustment of our disjointed tariff laws; of a National system of compulsory education, and of proper and needful restrictions upon the power and extent of monopoly and corporate extortion,--when such a party makes its appearance, I will make one of its partisans, however humble. Until that time, I shall lean towards the Republican party and give it my support.[109]

Fortune, though forced by circumstances to support the lesser of two evils during elections, had no intention of laying a wreath of black votes on Lincoln's grave every November fourth if a better party arose.

The lack of education was one of the great causes of all these evils, for ignorance was a political and an economic weakness. Fortune supported national aid to education, and gave the Blair Bill for Education substantial coverage and enthusiastic backing. The inability to read ballots, to think independently, to learn new methods of agriculture,

to keep accounts, all this stemmed from ignorance. The journalist argued that the South alone could not successfully combat this problem, nor should it have to. Given the racial climate of that region, it was apparent that outside help would be required if the United States was to be filled with productive citizens and avoid the perils of an ignorant and impoverished voting population.

> It is a demonstrable fact that the South is not able to handle with success the great and increasing bulk of ignorance in her borders. The question in its nature is purely a state affair, but in its magnitude and the multiplied evils flowing from it, it rises into a National question. It is an evil which grows. . . Does the State furnish ample facilities to the child, with which to make preparation for the great responsibility which will devolve upon him at manhood? The National Government has a perfect right to ask this question...[110]
>
> Let the Government of the United States establish a Bureau of Education. Let it place within the reach of every child in the South the means of liberal industrial education. It is necessary to train the head and the hand. It is useless to talk about leaving matters to the States. The South will not educate the black child; it does not educate the white child. The two grow up in ignorance and vice and stupidity. And so the whites grow up to lawlessness and the blacks to crime. Anarchy is the natural result. The South is today a sleeping volcano.[111]

One of the most common arguments against education of the poor or blacks by government agencies, either state or federal, was that these groups did not contribute as much in taxes as others. How, then, could it be fair to spend an equal amount on education? Fortune saw numerous fallacies in such reasoning. It was foolish to

> object to popular education on the grounds that blacks pay no taxes, supremely oblivious that the laboring classes of every country always creates capital and pay in rental the taxes of the land owner, who has no more inherent right in ownership of the soil than the laborer. What the State refuses to pay for education it gladly pays for penitentiaries, preferring a pound of remedy to an ounce of cure.[112]

Education of the lower classes, especially those of the black race, was important to Fortune's hopes for the future. Intelligence and wealth went hand in hand, and all other good things followed them. In both class-oriented and traditional modes of thinking, these two were the most important goals of Fortune's philosophy since they would be the most beneficial to his race.

IV. Conclusion

In his search for answers to the problems confronting his race, the young editor embraced ideas that anticipated the range of later black protest. Traditional and reformist at the same time, Fortune was a paradox sprung from pragmatism.

Fortune's thought suggested the path which several radical ideologists would later take. He denounced the theory of state's rights and admonished the federal government for its timidity. His protests against civil and economic exploitation would find echoes in reformist platforms of the future. Calling for redistribution of land and dividing the nation along class as well as racial lines, Fortune now seems an eloquent prototype of much that would follow in his demands for change.

Fortune also foreshadowed Booker T. Washington's more conservative economic approach. Prominent years before Washington rose to national leadership, Fortune clearly anticipated much of Washington's thought. The Wizard of Tuskegee, in his espousal of industrial education and work ethic values, conjured no new answers for the race. Years earlier, the Globe had encouraged blacks to gain their rights through thrift and hard work. Washington's assessment of Reconstruction, labelling it an ill-conceived failure that the Negro had no opportunity, in his state of unpreparedness, to make work, could have been lifted just as easily, though in more fiery terms, from Black and White as from Up From Slavery.

Fortune, then, deserves close attention from those studying the black response to America. An important speaker whose ideas appear seminal to a great deal of Afro-American thought, the editor deserves note both as an individual and as an advocate of ideas.

Footnotes

[1]Emma Lou Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Journalist, University of Chicago Press (Chicago and London, 1972), p. 56.

[2]Ibid., p. 13.

[3]Ibid., p. 19.

[4]Ibid., p. 44.

[5]Ibid., p. 42.

[6]Globe, 5 July, 1884, p. 2, col. 1, 4.

[7]Timothy Thomas Fortune, Black and White: Land, Labor and Politics in the South, Arno Press and the New York Times (New York, 1969; originally published in 1884), pp. 5, 6.

[8]Globe, 3 November, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[9]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, pp. 54, 157-159.

[10]Fortune, Black and White, p. 14.

[11]Globe, 1 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[12]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, p. 37.

[13]Globe, 21 April, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[14]Ibid.

[15]August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Attitudes of Negro Leaders Toward the American Labor Movement from the Civil War to W.W.I," in Julius Jacobson, ed., The Negro and the American Labor Movement, Doubleday & Company, Inc. (Garden City, 1968), p. 37.

[16]Globe, 3 November, 1883, p. 2, col. 3.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Freedman, 3 October, 1885, p. 2, col. 2.

[19]Globe, 25 August, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[20]Ibid., 3 November, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[21]Ibid., 25 August, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[22]Ibid., 3 November, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[23]Ibid., 13 October, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[24]Fortune, Black and White, pp. 213-215.

[25]John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, University of Nebraska Press (Lincoln, 1961), p. 47.

[26]Ibid., p. 49.

[27]George Brown Tindall, South Carolina Negroes 1877-1900, University of South Carolina Press (Columbia, 1952), p. 106.

[28]Globe, 28 April, 1883, p. 2, col. 5.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., 3 November, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[31]Ibid., 22 April, 1883, p. 2, col. 3.

[32]Fortune, Black and White, p. 25.

[33]Ibid., p. 81.

[34]Ibid., p. 82; Globe, 4 July, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[35]Fortune, Black and White, p. 80.

[36]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, p. 55.

[37]Globe, 15 December, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[38]Ibid., 7 April, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[39]Fortune, Black and White, p. 82.

[40]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, p. 75.

[41]Fortune, Black and White, p. 85.

[42]Ibid., p. 29.

[43]Ibid., pp. 27, 39, 235, 236.

[44]Ibid., p. 29; Freeman, 7 November, 1885, p. 2, col. 1, 2.

[45]Fortune, Black and White, p. 123.

[46]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, pp. 14-19.

[47]Freeman, 7 November, 1885, p. 2, col. 1.

[48]Fortune, Black and White, p. 43.

[49]Globe, 13 January, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[50]Freeman, 30 May, 1885, p. 2, col. 1.

[51]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, p. 77; Fortune, Black and White, pp. 33-34.

[52]Globe, 22 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 5.

[53]Fortune, Black and White, p. 35.

[54]Ibid., pp. 239, 240.

[55]Ibid., p. 33; Globe, 29 December, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[56]Globe, 22 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 5.

[57]Freeman, 4 April, 1885, p. 2, col. 5.

[58]Globe, 1 December, 1883, p. 2, col. 4.

[59]Freeman, 4 April, 1885, p. 2, col. 1.

[60]Thornbrough, T. Thomas Fortune, pp. 42, 43.

[61]Ibid.; Globe, 7 May, 1884, p. 2, col. 1.

[62]Globe, 3 January, 1884, p. 2, col. 1.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Fortune, Black and White, p. 39.

[65]Ibid., p. 38.

[66]Ibid., p. 21.

[67]Ibid., pp. 49, 50.

[68]Freeman, 6 December, 1884, p. 2, col. 5.

[69]E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro in the United States, MacMillan Co. (New York, 1957), p. 151.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Fortune, Black and White, p. 235.

[72]Ibid., pp. 196-209.

[73]Ibid., p. 201.

[74]Ibid., p. 202; Globe, 9 August, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[75]Freeman, 17 March, 1885, p. 2, col. 5.

[76]Fortune, Black and White, pp. 209, 210.

[77]Ibid., p. 60.

[78]Globe, 22 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 3.

[79]Freeman, 4 April, 1885, p. 2, col. 2.

[80]Fortune, Black and White, p. 139.

[81]Ibid., p. 42.

[82]Ibid., p. 18.

[83]Ibid., p. 42.

[84]Ibid., pp. 29, 30.

[85]Ibid.

[86]Ibid., p. 28.

[87]F. Ray Marshall, Labor in the South, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, 1967), p. 10.

[88]Jay J. Jackson, New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896, Louisiana State University Press (Baton Rouge, 1969), p. 226.

[89]Fortune, Black and White, p. 200.

[90]Globe, 22 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 3.

[91]Ibid., 1 May, 1884, p. 2, col. 2.

[92]Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 44.

[93]Ibid., pp. 44, 45.

[94]Globe, 17 March, 1883, p. 2, col. 4.

[95]Ibid., 6 October, 1883, p. 2c col. 1.

[96]Fortune, Black and White, p. 5.

[97]Globe, 13 January, 1883, p. 2, col. 1.

[98]Globe, 22 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 4, 5.

[99]Ibid., col. 5.

[100]Ibid., 1 September, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[101]Ibid., 2 February, 1884, p. 2, col. 1.

[102]C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, Louisiana State University Press (Baton Rouge, 1966), p. 213.

[103]Fortune, Black and White, p. 76.

[104]Globe, 21 April, 1883, p. 2, col. 2.

[105]Ibid., 9 August, 1884, p. 2, col. 2.

[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid., 4 May, 1884, p. 2, col. 2.

[108]Ibid., 31 March, 1883, p. 2, col. 3.

[109]Ibid., 13 September, 1884, p. 2, col. 3.

[110]Ibid., 8 March, 1884, p. 2, col. 2.

[111]Ibid., 1 March, 1884, p. 2, col. 2.

[112]Fortune, Black and White, p. 77.

Bibliographical Materials

Primary

Fortune, Timothy Thomas. Black and White: Land....South. New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; originally published, 1884.

New York Freeman. 23 November, 1884 through 1885.

New York Globe. 1883 through 8 November, 1884.

Secondary

Frazier, E. Franklin. The Negro in the United States. New York: MacMillian Co., 1957.

Hicks, John D. The Populist Revolt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.

Meier, August. Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963.

Thornbrough, Emma Lou. T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Journalist. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Tindall, George Brown. South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952.

Woodward, C. Vann. Origins of the New South, 1877-1913. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1966.

Articles

Bloch, Herman D. "Labor and the Negro 1866-1910," Journal of Negro History, vol. 50, no. 3, July 1965, pp. 163-184.

Meier, August and Elliott Rudwick. "Attitudes of Negro Leaders Toward the American Labor Movement from the Civil War to W.W.I," in Julius Jacobson, ed., The Negro and The American Labor Movement, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc. (Garden City, 1968).

Other books and articles which have been used in the research and writing of this thesis are cited in the footnotes, or in the introduction.