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History

Paper 1K (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 02 Student 1

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 11/11/15

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## Specimen Answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

### Paper 1K (AS): Specimen question paper

**02** 'The end of Reconstruction by 1877 was due to the violence of the Southern segregationists.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**[25 marks]**

#### Student response

The violence of Southern segregationists did play a part at the end, and part of the reason reconstitution failed, but other factors also had an influence, such as the weakness of the Republican Party, along with them being war-weary. The actions of Johnson also hindered the success of reconstitution.

There were many different groups of Southern segregationists, including the Ku Klux Klan, the White League, and the Red Shirts. These groups were violent and are seen as the white terror groups. These groups gave violent resistance to try and stop the African Americans from voting. They were able to scare the black people who would have voted Republicans out of voting because of their violent acts to others and, if some black people did vote, many of them would vote for the Democrats out of fear of what might happen to them if they did not. An example of the violence is shown during the 1868 elections in Louisiana, where a violent uproar happened. It ended with the white terrorists killing 1,000 freedmen. This could be seen as the main cause of why reconstruction failed as, although laws had been passed to give African Americans more freedom, the actions of their groups permitted them from using their new found rights.

Another cause of the failure of reconstruction and why it ended could be the overall weakness of the Republican Party. In 1873, the stock market panic occurred along with the issue of the Indians, for example the Red River in 1874. These things created more urgent issues for the President to sort out and this therefore led to reconstruction taking a back seat as there were more important things that the President felt he needed to do. Along with this, the Republican Party was full of corruption the Secretary of War was caught taking bribes. This did not reflect well on the Party. An outcome of the corruption was the divide in the Party, making them appear weak. This therefore gives us another reason as to the end and failure of reconstruction as the Party itself were not working together so nothing could be agreed.

Not only was the Republican Party showing weakness it was also war-weary. They had grown tired of the constant battles between themselves and the democrats. The Party had won the election but Grant's position was weakened from the corruption of the Party and the economic problems that were faced because of the stock market panic. Liberal Republicans were becoming more reluctant to keep on using federal troops to suppress Southern discontent as it was costing a lot of money and also could be seen as not helping as the new laws were not being kept. The pursuing of the Amnesty Act in 1872 came from Grant's decision to help the redeemers, which allowed everyone to return back to political life if they had been banned before. Later, this Act led to President Hayes agreeing to remove military corruption from the South when elected. These actions weakened reconstruction

and, because the measures were removed, which were put in place in order to see the reconstruction succeed, the failure can therefore be linked back to the weariness of the Republicans as now even they were not trying to help it succeed.

The actions and personality of President Johnson had an influence over reconstruction's end and failure. Johnson made it much easier for ex-confederates to return to politics, granting 13,000 pardons. This enabled the old Southern elites to get back into office as Johnson put no laws in place to stop them, meaning they were able to dominate the new office, introducing things like the Black Codes. Johnson can be seen to have undermined the aims of the North by letting the ex-confederates come back, leading to the loss of momentum in the black progress. Even the military officers which Johnson put in the South to safeguard the progress of reconstruction were conservative and therefore lenient towards them.

In conclusion, I think that although each factor had a part in the ending and failure of reconstruction the main cause was the violence of Southern segregationists as, through their violent actions, it scared many black people out of voting along with scaring even white Republicans. This violence did wear down the Government and they started to lose support, ending and resulting in the failure of reconstruction.

#### **Commentary – Level 4**

This answer is generally focussed on the demands of the question, which are clearly understood. It is comprehensive in coverage and presents a clear overall conclusion. It is also generally a controlled and consistently relevant response. There are weaknesses which are reflected in the final mark. It is important in such questions to distinguish clearly between 'democrat' and 'Democrat'; the answer tends to exaggerate and generalise in places, asserting, for example, that every Republican was corrupt; the evidence to illustrate Segregationists' violence is also limited, citing just one example. Given, however, appropriate knowledge and relevance, the answer is good.