

SOUTHERN PROPAGANDA  
1850 - 1860

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SOUTHERN PROPAGANDA

1850-1860

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An Abstract  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
Austin Peay State University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Martha Joye Parker

July 1980



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine Southern polemic literature, to determine its types, and to place those within the larger scheme of modern propaganda.

The literature of the South from the years 1850 to 1860 can be divided into two large groups. The first of these is literature which defends slavery. Within that division there are five smaller groups. The first is the Biblical argument. It was the first slavery defense to develop. The second part of the defense was the historical argument. Third was the notion that slavery was essential to the social order. Scientific argument made up the fourth division of the defense of slavery. Last was the accusing argument which berated Northern manufacturers for their "wage slavery," worse than Negro Slavery, surely.

The second large group dealt with the Southern culture. The cultural propaganda was broken into three areas. The first and dominant area was the political arena. Second was economic issues. The third type of propaganda dealt with Southern society and its superior way of life.

After examining the literature it becomes obvious that Southern polemics was a form of sociological propaganda. Unknowingly, Southern agitators used the tactics and techniques

which we call modern propaganda. The effort was largely successful. The agitators achieved their goal: a South united politically. Unity, however, failed to be permanent.



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July 1980

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Martha Joye Parker entitled "Southern Propaganda 1850-1860." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Richard P. Dillie

Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War lasted four years. The tragedy of 1861-1865 had developed over a period of 200 years. From the writing of the Constitution to Lincoln's inaugural speech, words, written and spoken, inflamed emotions. The people of two centuries based their positions upon the ideas and thoughts of leaders of public opinion. These people felt strongly about what was happening within the nation and they voiced their emotions with eloquence. Thousands of men died on American soil fighting fellow Americans as a consequence of the fiery orators' appeals.

From the discovery of America to the founding of the nation, slavery and slave trading were accepted. Slave traders did their work with pride and profit. Slaves were used throughout the colonies, although the majority of slaves were held in the South. Eventually, Northerners found that slavery was not in their best interest. This was, however, not the case in the South. Southerners increasingly viewed slavery as an indispensable part of their culture and economy. Thus, the attack upon slavery was seen as a vicious assault upon the South.

The propaganda of the South during the ten years immediately preceding the Civil War can be grouped into two broad areas. By far the largest amount of time was spent in a defense of that sacred institution, slavery. Politics and economics also played a large role in the development of Southern sectionalism which eventually became a cry for a Southern nation.

The defense of slavery was of several types. The earliest argument was the Biblical argument. Next to develop was the historical argument. Social function and an orderly society was the third argument. Science was utilized to build up an array of "facts" to support the idea of racial inferiority. Finally, Southerners were quick to recognize and exploit the failures of the "wage slavery" of the North.

As events unfolded, the proslavery propaganda became more aggressive. Its proponents screamed at the top of their lungs and wrote volumes of material. They spoke in the pulpit, the university, the home, the state capital, the county courthouse, and the Congress of the United States, seeking to sway those undecided on the issue. The "fire-eaters" were successful. The slavery issue became a symbol of all the differences between the two sections. It involved people, not figures. Everyone could relate to the question, on one side or the other.

The slavery issue was the symbol. But other, less visible issues, were important in the South's decision to

secede. The problems were there early. "This government subjects everything to the northern majority. Is there not, then, a settled purpose to check the southern interest?" Patrick Henry said.<sup>1</sup> Southerners continued to feel that way. Finally, after almost ninety years of compromise, the conflict erupted.

It erupted because two almost seemingly entirely different nations had developed within one. The south was a nation of agriculture, states' rights, slavery, specialization, hierarchy, and slave labor. Northerners favored manufacturing interests, federalism, anti-slavery, diversification, and free labor.

Both regions, fed by fiery orators, lost their ability to see compromise as a viable alternative. The Civil War was an example of sectionalism triumphing over nationalism. It was not just Southern sectionalism but a sectionalism in both regions that undermined the idea of loyalty to the nation and its interests.<sup>2</sup>

As we look back upon the events leading to the outbreak of war, we can readily find fault with both sides. It is not the purpose of this paper to assign blame, but to examine the varied propaganda used prior to 1861 in the South. Secondly, the writer wishes to determine how the orators' attitude and perceptions fit into the scheme of psychology and propaganda as we know it today.

It is wise, when studying the period, to remember three



facts. Slavery was not the only issue which aroused strong emotions on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. The South considered itself a minority. Without being aware of it, propagandists used techniques which are incorporated into propaganda literature today. With these ideas in mind, let us proceed to look at the defense of slavery, sectionalism, and propaganda styles of the South.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEFENSE OF SLAVERY

Until approximately 1850 Southern slave holders offered several defenses of slavery which can be termed "apologetic defenses." These included: 1) that the climate made it necessary for labor to be fitted for work in the heat and swamps; 2) that the Negro was naturally inferior; 3) the problem of slavery was a local one; and 4) that the slavery problem was inherited from past generations.

With increased profits in cotton production and the opening of Western lands for settlement, Southerners began to defend and actively promote slavery. What greater authority to stand upon than the Bible? If one acknowledged that slavery was sanctioned by the Holy Book, then it could not be a moral evil. The second argument was historical. Slavery had always existed, somewhere, in some form.<sup>3</sup>

The Biblical argument for slavery had two thrusts. The first, patriarchal, rested upon the Old Testament tradition and law. The second prong rested upon the New Testament and Christ. The foundation of the Old Testament defense was Leviticus 25: 44-46.

Both thy bondman and thy bondmaids, which  
thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen  
that are round about you; of them shall

ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.<sup>4</sup>

Thornton Stringfellow, in "A Scriptural View of Slavery", summed up the above verse by saying: "I ask any candid man, if the words of this institution could be more explicit?"

An unknown minister saw the verses this way:

. . . whether God, in his infinite goodness, did not see that slavery would be a blessing, both to the master and servant, as the ground of his appointment of the institution amongst his chosen people? And if he had seen slavery to be a social and moral evil, would he not inflicted a curse, and not a blessing upon whom it was his intention to bless?<sup>5</sup>

There! The argument was complete. Plainly the scriptures advocated the buying, selling, holding, and bequeathing of slaves. Why, the Lord in his edict encouraged the purchase of slaves. Why, the Lord in his edict encouraged the purchase of children to be raised as slaves and passed from generation to generation.

Our representative in Congress used the argument contained in the scriptures, and their opponents dared not tell them that the historical parts (and all that refers to slavery is historical) were uninspired and untrue.<sup>6</sup>



Lest abolitionists were unwilling to accept this viewpoint, Southerners inundated them with scriptural texts supporting slavery. Genesis 9:25 was interpreted as the beginnings of slavery.

And he /Noah/ said, cursed be Canaan;  
A servant of servants shall be unto  
his brethern. And he said, Blessed be  
the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall  
be his servant. God shall enlarge  
Japeth, and he shall dwell in the  
tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his  
servant. Ham /Negro/ will be ever  
lower than Shem /Arab/; Shem will be  
lower than Japeth . . . Ham will be  
ever lower than Shem, because he was  
sent to Central Africa. Man south of  
the Equator--in Asia, Australia,  
Oceanica, America, especially Africa--  
is inferior to his Northern brother.  
The blessing was upon Shem in his  
magnificent Asia. The greater blessing  
was upon Japeth in his man-developing  
Europe.

The above view was taken by prominent Southern ministers and laymen. Thornton Stringfellow, James Henley Thornwell, and others challenged Christians to interpret this passage differently. Leviticus 25:44-46 also put the morality of Northern "wage slavery" in the picture. Were not Northern employers holding their brethren in bondage? "The curse was the ultimate basis on which the religious element in the South justified slavery."<sup>8</sup>

Genesis' references to slaveholding were numerous. Genesis 14:14, 16:9, 24:35, 36, and 17:12, 13 all supported the idea that slavery was sanctioned by God. Even the Commandments supported the Southern viewpoint.

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maidservant . . . Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thou neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Two things are important in this scripture. First of all, the Lord acknowledged slavery. He does not condemn it in any fashion. Second, the "manservant" or "maidservant" is the neighbor's. The key is the verb. "Is" implies ownership and control.

Thus, Southerners held two things to be scripturally true: that the Almighty sanctioned slavery in the patriarchal age, and that laws supporting and upholding slavery were incorporated into the only Constitution to come from God. Now, it was only left to show that Jesus did not destroy these ordinances.<sup>9</sup>

Christ did not expressly discuss the morality of slavery. By his association with slaves, he acknowledged its existence, but chose not to discuss the morality of it. His silence, and his statement: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," indicated his approval of those institutions and relationships which he did not expressly attack. In 1857 the Southern Methodist Church took this position when it argued that the Southern Methodist Church was neither

proslavery nor antislavery but that it "let the matter alone, as did Jesus. I affirm then, first, (and no man denies), that Jesus Christ has not abolished slavery by a prohibitory command: and second, I affirm, he has introduced no new moral principle which can work its destruction."<sup>10</sup>

Slaveholders who searched Jesus' words for support found it in the Golden Rule. "The interpretation of the Golden Rule was that it fostered love in the hearts of the slave and master." Frederick Ross, a Presbyterian minister said: "Why, sir, if a man can hold three slaves with a right heart and the approbation of God he may hold 30, 3,000, or 30,000. It is a mere question of heart and the capacity to govern." Many Southern clerics used this tactic when developing their position on slavery.

Has this divine institution of God's appointment, done our Southern slaves wrong in placing them beneath the protecting banner of the Constitution and laws of the most civilized portion of the world: . . . . /T/ thus rendering their civil condition superior to that of any class of pqqr in any section of the known world?"<sup>11</sup>

The works of Paul helped support the Southern viewpoint. One entire book, Philemon, is devoted to a discussion of the master-slave relationship. In Titus 2:9 he commands servants to be obedient to their masters. Ephesians 6:5-10 exhorts servants (slaves) to obey their masters as though they were serving Christ. Again, in Colossians he repeats his commandment: "Servants, obey in all things your masters . . . ."



Peter, too, supports slavery in his writings. The second chapter of First Peter offers this advice: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward." Earlier in the same chapter he commanded his reader to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."<sup>12</sup>

After thus searching the Scriptures, Southern apologists felt they were on solid ground. There is nothing in the Bible which forbids subjection of one race by another. James Henry Hammond rested the defense of slavery "on the revealed Will of God--on custom--on utility--on the happiness of the greater number--in one word on Law--but the Law of God and Man, on which all rests . . . all the true and rational freedom we enjoy." It was left to the church to develop a practical attitude toward slavery and slaves within the bonds of the Scriptures.

The church's position was twofold: first, to expound the duties and responsibilities of the master; second, to promote the Christian instruction of the slave. The church's stance in the slave society was that it had no right or desire to "wage war on every human ill."

Slavery is a part of the curse which has introduced into the world and stands in the same general relations to Christianity as poverty, sickness, disease, or death. In other words, it is a relation which can only be conceived as taking place among fallen beings-tainted with a curse.

Dr. Thornwell declared that "the power of the church is only ministerial and declarative." The church was to announce the principles, enforce the commands of, and prohibit whatever the Holy Book condemned, but not to develop social theory that did not stand expressly on the Word of God.<sup>13</sup>

The Pastoral Address of the 1336 Methodist Convention held in Philadelphia clearly stated that denomination's perspective: "The church had no right or intention to interfere within the civil and political relation as it exists between master and slave in the slave holding states of this union."<sup>14</sup>

The Golden Rule was interpreted by the slaveholders to say that it fostered love in the hearts of slave and master.

. . . (T)he golden rule may exist in relations of slavery. Let him (Northern philanthropist) learn that slavery is simply an evil in certain circumstances. Let him learn that equality is only the highest form of social life; that subjection to authority, even slavery, may, in given conditions, be for a time better than freedom to the slave, of any complexion. Let him learn that slavery, like all evils, has its corresponding and greater good; that the Southern slave, though degraded compared with his master, is elevated and ennobled, compared with his brethren in Africa.

The corresponding good theme runs throughout the propaganda literature.

Were the belligerent parties engaged in struggling warfare, wrong when this benign institution interposed to induce the conquerors to make slaves of their captives instead of butchering them in the most cruel manner? And were those

captives thus mercifully spared as slaves, wronged on being transported from a state of savage slavery under unfeeling tyrants in their native land of sickness, ignorance and idolatry, to the protection and guardianship of kind, christianized and civilized masters, in a land of Bible light, of civil and gospel privileges, and of health and plenty? Has this divine institution of God's appointment, done our Southern slaves wrong in placing them beneath the protecting banner of the Constitution and laws of the most civilized portion of the world; and under the guardianship of owners, whose Christian sympathy and personal interest combine to furnish them (parents and child) a comfortable love for life, and such supply of food, raiment and medical aid, as may be best calculated to secure health and prolong life! Thus rendering their civil condition superior to that of any class of poor in any section of the known world? Has this heaven born institution done our slaves wrong in providing them apartments in every house of worship throughout the Southern country, where they may sit with their owners under the proclamations of gospel grace; and through which thousands of them are enabled to rejoice in the glorious hope of a blessed immortality.<sup>15</sup>

Even in the North this line of "positive good" was encouraged. The New York Herald, under the editorship of James Gordon Bennett, said that "merely to keep slaves in the worst kind of slavery in Africa and to leave them savage cannibals and idolators, instead of civilizing and Christianizing them by the mild servitude of Christian masters in America" was wrong.<sup>16</sup>

The historical argument was rooted in the Bible and the



gentile worlds. Preachers declared that the patriarchs owned slaves under the divine decree. "The first type of argument was the scriptural argument. If the Bible sanctioned slavery then how could it be a moral evil? Then followed the historical type of argument. Slavery existed in all ages, in some form in all countries."<sup>17</sup>

There are two sides to this propaganda. The first is the history of the Negro. Two statements from the decade speak for the South. The first, by Josiah Nott, a prominent Southern scientist:

In the broad field and long duration of Negro life, not a single civilization, spontaneous or borrowed, has existed, to adorn its gloomy past. Numerous attempts have been made to establish the intellectual equality of the dark races with the white; and the history of the past has been ransacked for examples, but they are nowhere to be found. Can any one call the name of a fullblooded Negro who has ever written a page worthy of being remembered?

There is no instance to be found in all history, where any branch of the Negro race, any tribe, or even an individual, has been civilized, in the sense we generally understand that term. The Negro . . . is at this moment just where the race was 3,000 years ago, when sculptured on Egyption monuments. Portions of it in contact with the superior race have been temporarily advanced; but invariably, without exception, they have returned to the African standard as soon as this contact ceased.

On the other hand, all great civilizations had slaves

who did menial duties requiring little skill or intellect. This allowed the other class time for "progress, civilization, and refinement." J. R. Franklin, a Maryland representative in 1854, deemed slavery ". . . a necessary condition of civilized man from earliest periods; . . . it (slavery) must spring from an ordinance of nature, universally recognized and universally binding."

The social system, too, reflected the dilemma of the Southerner. "What the antislavery agitators seemed never to grasp was that the problem of slavery was also a race problem."<sup>18</sup> The social intercourse between the races was a ticklish problem. The North faced it, too. The editor of the Pennsylvanian complained of the economic competition of free blacks, the threat of social equality, and physical contact. He "objected to being 'jostled' on the sidewalks of Philadelphia by 'strong smelling bucks and steaming negro wenches.'"

Dr. Thomas Dew, reviewing emancipation legislation in Virginia, agreed with the Northern editor.

Taken as a whole class, the latter (free blacks) must be considered the most worthless and indolent of the citizens of the United States . . . They have been most harshly expelled from that state, and forced to take refuge in a foreign land. Look through the Northern States, and mark the class upon whom the eye of the police is most steadily and constantly kept--see with what vigilance and care they are hunted down from place to place--and you cannot fail to see that idleness and improvidence are at the root of all their misfortunes.



The social propaganda dealt with two areas. First, the relationship between the black and white persons must be considered. Secondly, the relations among whites cannot be ignored.

Two contemporaries, a Southern lady and a Northern clergyman, made similar findings in observing and comparing Southern and Northern black-white relations. While visiting Philadelphia the Southern lady ". . . searched for some evidence of equality between the two races, and found none. In the South, a black man can ride alongside of his master, and he will converse kindly all day with his slave . . . ."19

Nehemiah Adams, a Northern minister visiting the South, agreed that the black-white relationship was generally one of respect. He found that the two groups interacted "without restraint" and to their mutual benefit. Indeed, Mr. Adams was surprised by the social gains in the slave society. This society, he declared, had no mobs, little crime by the lower classes, no pauperism, and personal liberty was far more extensive than realized in the North. Another minister, Dr. Ross, felt that slavery "give(s) the honor of chivalry to Southern young gentlemen . . . ." Thus the slave society provided for amicable relations between the two races and allowed the society to better itself.

The non-slaveholder made up the biggest part of the Southern white population. On the eve of the Civil War, nearly 6 of the 8 million whites did not belong to the

slaveowning families. However, Southern propagandists contended that

the non-slaveholders of the South may be classed as either such as desire and are incapable of purchasing slaves, or such as have the means to purchase and do not because of the absence of the motive . . . . The non-slaveholder of the South preserves the status of the white man, and is not regarded as an inferior or a dependent.

These same men raised the specter of social quality.

If emancipation be brought about as will undoubtedly be the case, unless the encroachments of the fanatical majorities of the North are resisted now, the slaveholders, in the main, will escape the result, by emigration, for which they would have the means, by disposing of their personal chattels: whilst the nonslaveholders without these resources, would be compelled to remain and endure the degradation.<sup>20</sup>

The examination of the social system led the propagandists into another area: that of the respective gains and losses of Northern and Southern employees, for planters considered the slave their employee. The slaveholder had only the slave's labor. The slave kept his right to life, livelihood, happiness, marriage, and religion.

The two ideas that he is a person, and as a person, held to service, constitute the generic conception of slavery. How is his obligation to service fundamentally differenced (sic) from that of other laborers? By this, as one essential circumstance that it is independent of the formalities of a contract. Add the circumstance that it is for life

and you have a complete conception of the thing.

In 1861 Samuel Seabury, an Englishman, distinguished slavery in America from that elsewhere by saying, ". . . /T/he obligation to service for life, on condition of protection and support, is the essence of American slavery."<sup>21</sup>

Here, in Seabury's statement, lays the key to much of the South's propaganda. The "condition of protection and support" was diametrically opposed to the "wage slavery" of the North. George Fitzhugh devoted two books, Cannibals All or Slaves Without Masters and A Sociology for the South to a close and vivid examination of the two labor systems.

Propagandists condemned industrialists as having no interest in their laborers. If they died, fine. If they worked, fine. If they were sick, too bad. It mattered not to the capitalist: "The capitalist has no preservation interest in the laborer. Their sickness or death, is not a direct economic injury to the capitalist."

White Slave Trade . . . is more cruel,  
in leaving the laborer to take care  
of himself and family out of the  
pittance . . . allowed him . . .  
When the day's labor is ended, he  
is free, but is overburdened with  
the cares of family and household,  
which make his freedom an empty and  
delusive mockery, but his employer  
is really free, and may enjoy the  
profits made by others' labor with-  
out a care . . . as to their well-  
being You (capitalist), without the  
command over labor which your capital  
gives you, are a slave owner--a  
master. The free laborer must work



or starve. Indeed, they have not a single liberty to die.

On the other hand Fitzhugh declares:

The Negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessities of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care nor labor.<sup>23</sup>

Southern poet William J. Grayson took his propaganda to a new vehicle of persuasion--poetry. In "The Hireling and the Slave" he compares the two positions, finally concurring with Fitzhugh's judgment.

"No want to goad, no faction to deplore./ The slave escapes the perils of the poor."

The master had his duties under the church's position on slavery (as noted earlier). Neither the church, nor the law required the employer to provide for his employees, but "slaves never die of hunger, scarcely ever feel want."<sup>24</sup>

If, instead of praying over what does not need their prayer, the condition of the happy negroes in servitude under Christian masters, who provide them with food and raiment and shelter, and take care of them in sickness and old age, these philanthropists would only direct their efforts toward the amelioration of the free negroes in the North, to say nothing of the numerous white slaves starving in all our large cities, willing to work, but unable to get anything to do, they might accomplish some good. Our social system of free labor makes no provision for the



destitute, and gives the white man  
 no legal right to demand sustenance  
 . . . /He/ is in need of far greater  
 commiseration than the sleek, well  
 fed fat negroes of South Carolina  
 or Alabama.

The South accused the North of slavery with its horrors  
 but without its compensations.

The Senator from New York said  
 yesterday that the whole world had  
 abolished slavery. Aye, the name,  
 but not the thing; . . . (Your)  
 whole hireling class of manual  
 laborers and "operatives.", as you  
 call them, are essentially slaves.  
 The difference between us is, that  
 our slaves are hired for life and  
 well-compensated; . . . 26

This comparison of the two labor systems showed the  
 Southern slaveholder as a caring, benevolent protector of  
 his worker, the slave. The capitalist, on the other hand,  
 was full of self-interest. Once his worker became unable to  
 produce, the Northern industrialist lost all interest in him.  
 Thus, the master was obeying the Golden Rule, i.e. giving  
 the slave good things of life while shouldering the slave's  
 maintenance as his responsibility. And his Christianizing  
 the slave could but elevate them both. The capitalist, how-  
 ever, could be accused of breaking God's Word by holding  
 his brethren in bondage. ". . . /E/ut over your brethren  
 the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another  
 with rigour." At least the Southerners held in slavery an  
 inferior race!

. . . /N/ot that the negro is a brute, or halfman and half brute, but a genuine human being, anatomically constructed, about the face, more like the monkey tribes and the lower order of animals than any other species of the genus man.

The Negro's nervous system had a longer, more developed medullary spinal cord. The occipital foramen, being a third longer than the white man's, threw the black's head backward, thus making the Negro walk steadier with weight on his head. "Hence, from the small brain and the larger nerves, the digestion of the prognathous species is better than that of the Caucasian, and its animal appetites stronger, . . . ."

His enlarged nostrils gave the black a better sense of smell. Indeed, all his senses were more acute, but said to be less discriminating. Blackness was not confined to his skin but "pervades, in a greater or less degree, the whole inward man down to the bones themselves, giving the flesh and the blood, and the membranes, and every organ and part of the body, except the bones a darker hue than is in the white race."

Lastly, the propagandists delighted in the Negro's brain and mental capacity, or rather, his lack of it. Scientists of the day backed the Southern claim of black inferiority with "facts" such as these.

. . . /T/he face of the young monkey ultimately outgrows the cranium, so, also, does the face of the young negro, whereas in the Caucasian, the face always continues to be smaller than the cranium. The superficies of

the face at puberty exceeds that the hairy scalp both in the negro and the monkey, while it is always less in the white man. Young monkeys and young negroes are superior to white children of the same age in memory and other intellectual faculties. The white infant comes into the world with its brain enclosed by fifteen disunited bony plates--the occipital bone being divided into three, the frontal into two, each of the two temporals into two, which with the two parietals, make fifteen plates in all--the vomer and ethmoid not being ossified at birth. The negro infant, however, is born with a small, hard, smooth, round head like a gourd. Instead of the frontal and temporal bones being divided into six plates, . . . they form but one bone in the negro infant.

In other words, the black brain was smaller in size and lighter in weight. The negro's cerebrum was at least 15 cubic inches smaller than the white's. And, the Negro's history spoke loudly and clearly of his intellectual achievements, as Josiah Nott said, ". . . /N/ot a single civilization . . . has existed . . . ."29

There stood the South on slavery. The foundation of her argument was Biblical. The walls of slavery's house were the historical use of slaves. This area of defense was capped with the social dimensions of slavery. Within the house of slavery, the scientific and labor arguments furnished the propagandists with sufficient ammunition. But that was not all, no, indeed not! The attack on slavery was just a prelude to an attack on Southern civilization, the Southern

life; and therein lies the second force in the propaganda--  
sectionalism.



## CHAPTER III

## THE SOUTHERN MIND AND THE CRISIS OF THE 1850's

Slavery was not the only issue causing the rift between the North and South. The political, economic, and social changes which were taking place in the nation were unacceptable to Southerners. The section lost sight of its nationalism. Southerners felt that they had lost any control over political happenings. Economic changes were largely in the hands of Northerners. The society of the South was based on a different foundation than that of the North. Southerners felt blocked on every side. Southern sectionalism was a result of this feeling of being threatened.

The conflict which devastated the Southland grew out of "two entirely different philosophies of government which in turn had evolved from different economic systems and narrowly and immediately, a conflict between local and national sovereignty; basically, a conflict between agrarianism and industrialism."<sup>30</sup> Politics was one of the streams the conflict took as it flowed toward the river of blood known as the Civil War.

In 1849 the House of Representatives struggled to elect a Speaker. Finally, William J. Brown, with Southern support, began to lengthen his lead. When it was revealed that Brown

had carried on correspondence with David Wilmot and the Free Soilers, Southerners withdrew their support. Richard K. Meade of Virginia bluntly said that if the election of a speaker was to be followed by restrictions upon slavery he trusted he had seen the last Speaker of the House. Elihu Root of Ohio replied: "If dissolution must come, why, the sooner the better. Let it come before the House was (sic) organized." The moral issue of slavery was spilling over into the political arena, something John C. Calhoun of South Carolina had foreseen.<sup>31</sup>

With the death of John C. Calhoun in 1850, the South lost its strongest, most complex leader. His ideas would influence Southern thinking until the break with the North was complete. At the time of his death, politicians were just beginning to hear the thunder before the storm of war. Already some Southerners--John Quitman of Mississippi, Edmund Ruffin and Robert Barnwell of South Carolina, and William L. Yancey of Alabama--"relished the idea of secession" and "hungered to break up the Union. All of these men had one common goal--to dissolve the Union as soon as possible!"<sup>32</sup>

Southerners viewed the federal government as the agent of the states. It could not act beyond its written instructions, the Constitution. Slavery could not be abolished by the federal government. It had no instructions for such action. Northern states had acknowledged this by abolishing slavery state by state. However, the federal government did

have control over territorial lands and in that lay the abolitionists' chance. Confusion existed over the extent of the central government's authority. Three doctrines appeared in the 1840's and 1850's with regard to this issue. The first of these was based upon the fifth amendment (the key phrase being ". . . nor be deprived of life, liberty . . . ") and was known as freesoil. John C. Calhoun developed a doctrine of nonintervention, the territories being the common property of the states. Douglas became a proponent of the squatter, or popular-sovereignty doctrine, which made the issue of slavery strictly an internal affair of each territory.<sup>33</sup>

The Compromise of 1850 settled the boundary of Texas, admitted California as a state, organized Utah and New Mexico into territories, prohibited the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and provided a strong fugitive slave bill. As moderate Southerners viewed the Compromise they saw little tangible gains, but closer inspection gave them hope. The North had acknowledged slavery as an institution by its prohibition of the trade. If Northern states would enforce the fugitive slave law there was hope. The North Carolina Standard warned. "Let this question of Slavery alone. Take it out and keep it out of Congress; and respect and enforce the Fugitive Slave Law as it stands. If not, we leave you! Before God and men . . . if you fail in this simple act of justice, the bonds will be dissolved!"<sup>34</sup>

More radical, the Mississippi Free Trader was certain



that the South had doomed itself by submitting to the Compromise. The section would quickly see the abolition of slavery and suffer a fate worse than that of Jamaica. "Either we submit to disgrace, and soon to ABOLITION, with all its horrors, or we must . . . prevent it . . . by secession." growled the Woodville Republican. The yielding of South Carolina to the compromise was particularly painful to the fire-eaters. South Carolina, the leader in Southern resistance, often stood alone. This time she could not. The Black River Watchman bemoaned her yielding.

The fact stares us in the face that we have submitted to wrongs which we solemnly and wisely resolved a free people could never submit to, without a loss of honor and of self-respect . . . we have submitted, infloriously submitted! . . . The Age of Chivalry is gone! We live in an age of speculators, of calculating traders and narrow reasons, who would never venture one blow for honor or independence, if that effort brought hazard or danger.

The Richmond Enquirer insisted that the "destiny of the Union depended upon the present decision." Only by a strict observance of all the guarantees of the Constitution could the Union be preserved. "The only Union we love is a confederacy of equals . . . . We will remain in it on no other condition." The "confederacy of equals" was becoming more and more difficult to find. The compromise of 1850 made two things crystal clear. Slavery had reached the limits of its expansions. More importantly, the South was, undeniably, a



minority section.<sup>35</sup>

Up until 1850 the South had some control over events within the Federal Government. The executive branch had been controlled by Southerners for 70 percent of its time in existence. For much of the remaining time a Northerner, with Southern sympathies, had lived in the White House. Short of this office the South had no decisive power. If, however, the South could control the presidency it could be protected. As Jefferson Davis said, "The veto of the president gives to a considerable minority a power which may be relied on to shield it from legislative invasion of a vital right."

The Judicial Department held little hope for the South so it remained to the legislative branch of government to protect the South. Early in 1850 Jefferson Davis declared:

I believe . . . it is essential that neither section have such power in Congress as would render them able to trample upon the rights of the other section of the Union. It would be a blessing, an essential means to preserve the Confederacy, that in one branch of Congress the North and in the other the South should have a majority of representation.

Davis was not alone in these thoughts. Already the South (even with the help of the 3/5 rule) had lost its majority in the House of Representatives. To admit California would cost the South her last political refuge, the Senate.

If we should admit California into the Union as a State, with the boundaries now claimed by its inhabitants, without receiving guarantees for the protection of our rights in other portions of the territories belonging to us, we should transfer the center of political power at once and forever into the hands of the enemies of our institutions, and the slaveholding states would enter upon a fixed, dreary, hopeless minority in the face of a growing aggression which threatens our very existence. Today we hold a balance in the Senate of the United States, but the entrance of another non-slaveholding State into the Union would turn that balance against us. We shall never be stronger than we are today.

Southerners felt that their political power was being threatened in its last stronghold--the Senate.

We stand on the verge of an act which is to form an era in the history of our country. Now, for the first time we are about, permanently, to destroy the balance of power between the sections of the Union by securing a majority to one, in both Houses of Congress . . . .

The last, the best, the strongest guarantee, senatorial equality, has gone. The admission of California has at once, and forever, destroyed the equality between the sections, which had existed from the adoption of the Constitution.

The South was a minority section, giving up not only its rights, but being picked clean by the North. John C. Calhoun and his followers talked about abstractions while Henry Clay and Daniel Webster dealt in concrete items. It

seemed that the South gained in abstract terms, while losing any tangible results. "The North has fattened and grown strong upon the substantials, while we are starving and growing weak upon honors."

An anonymous pamphlet "The Union, Past and Future: How it Works and How to Save it," published in 1850, reinforced the idea of a North devouring a South.

The whole amount of duties collected from the year 1791 to June 30, 1845, after deducting the drawback on foreign merchandise (sic) exported, was \$927,050,097, of this sum the slaveholding States paid \$711,200,000, and the free States only \$215,850,097. Had the same amount been paid by the two sections in the constitutional ratio of their federal population, the South would have paid only \$394,342,180. Therefore, the slaveholding States paid \$316,342,180 more than their just share, and the free States as much less . . . . And yet, during the five year period from 1833 to 1837, inclusive, 90 million of dollars in duties alone were taken from the Southern people, while only 37 millions were returned in the form of federal disbursements.<sup>36</sup>

Here, then, was another sore spot in the relations between the North and South. The South felt, with some justification, that its money was being spent to build up Northern interests.

Southerners questioned a Western expansion with no slavery but favored a Southern expansion with slavery. Senator Albert Gallatin Brown put the case bluntly to some of



his Mississippi constituents.

I want Cuba, and I know that sooner or later we must have it . . . I want Tamaulipas, Potosi, and one or two other Mexican States; and I want them all for the same reason--for the planting or spreading of slavery. And a foothold in Central America will powerfully aid us in acquiring those other states . . . Yes, I want these countries for the spread of slavery.

To John A. Quitman, governor of Mississippi, annexation of Cuba was "a means of strengthening the South and States' rights within the union, . . . " He wanted Cuba to enter the union as a slave state to balance the admission of California as a free state in 1850.<sup>37</sup>

During the debates on the Compromise passions rose in the South. The national political parties were affected. Whigs, favoring nationalistic policies with strong Northern and Southern support, lost much of its Southern backing. By 1852 it had ceased to exist as a national party. Southerners turned to the Democrat party as the vehicle for their schemes. The Northern Democrats tried to remain within the party and yet rally Free-Soil and antislavery support. Eventually the antislavery men united to form the Republican Party.<sup>38</sup>

The fiery debates of 1850 brought the issue of Southern rights to the forefront of the fray. However, with the passage of the bill, the flame for Southern independence was quenched, but not forgotten.



It may be taken as a fixed fact, that the people of South Carolina do not now love this Union. So far from it, their dislike, their detestation of it is rapidly increasing in its intensity. They have felt the Union to have been the instrument of inflicting wrongs upon them, which if perpetrated by one independent people upon another would have caused the earth to flow with blood.<sup>39</sup>

The passage of the Compromise of 1850 and the subsequent admission of California as a free state set Southerners searching for Constitutional protection. Robert B. Rhett spoke for the fire-eaters. "The Constitution of the United States was not framed to enforce the will of a majority merely, it aims far higher in its pretensions. Its object is, to enable the whole of the people of the United States--not a Part only--to rule themselves."

There were three keys to the conservative Southern version of the Constitution. The argument against abolishing the slave trade and tariff regulation was based on Article I, section 9, clause 1: "The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens of the several States," and Article I, section 9, clause 6, which stated "No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one State over those of another." The source of protection for minority (the South's) interests was the tenth amendment which stated in part: ". . . the powers not delegated to the United States

by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."<sup>40</sup>

From these ideas came the theories of nullification and concurrent majority. John C. Calhoun developed the theory and used it in his battle against Northern interests. But now, in the face of growing opposition, Southerners came to depend upon it more fully.

Calhoun reiterated that the federal government drew its power from the States and only with their consent. In the Fort Hill Address he stated:

The great and leading principle is that the general government emanated from the people of several States, forming distinct political communities, and acting in their separate and sovereign capacity and not from all the people forming one aggregate political community.<sup>41</sup>

He developed resolutions placed before Congress, which summed up the South's position.

That the delegating a portion of their powers to be exercised by the Federal Government, the States retained, severally the exclusive and sole right over their own domestic institutions and police, and are alone responsible for them and that any intermeddling of any one or more states is an assumption of superiority not warranted by the Constitution; . . . tending to weaken and destroy the Union itself . . . . Resolved, that the intermeddling of any State or States, or their citizens to abolish slavery in this District, or any Territories, on the ground or under the pretext, that it is immoral or sinful; or

the passage of any act or measure of Congress, with the view, would be a direct and dangerous attack on the institutions of all the slaveholding States.

Other resolutions stated that the government was a common agent of the States and bound to "resist all attempts by one portion of the Union to use it as an instrument to attack the domestic institutions of another . . . ." and that the union of the states is built upon "equality of rights and advantages among its members, and what ever destroys that equality, tends to destroy the Union itself: . . . ." Calhoun viewed the right of a negative vote as an inherent right, "to interpose and protect their reserved powers and suspend the operation of a law they considered unconstitutional, pending a decision by all the States in convention assembled."<sup>42</sup>

The concurrent majority, as developed by Calhoun, was one "in which the majority is estimated, not in reference to the whole, but to each class or community of which it is composed, -- the assent of each taken separately, -- and the concurrence of all constituting the majority," This majority "is better suited to enlarge and secure the bounds of liberty, because it is better suited to prevent government from passing beyond its proper limits, and to restrict it to its primary end--the protection of the community."

Calhoun contended that true liberty was not possible



in a system of the absolute majority. The concurrent, or constitutional, majority gave to each part of the community a negative on the others which "prevents all partial or local legislation; while securing the rights and liberties of individuals and communities."<sup>43</sup>

Upon these premises and assumptions the South stood. It waited for the North to recognize the truth of its doctrines: "the doctrine of state sovereignty, the doctrine of strict construction of the Constitution, the doctrine of nullification; . . . ." In 1850 the North and the American Congress had listened to, but failed to accept these ideas. It was easy for Samuel C. Elam of Georgia to conclude:

The battle between the North and South has already been fought and the North is the victor . . . . A few more years and the preponderance of power in the Senate and House will be so greatly in favor of the non-slaveholding interests, that the Federal legislation between West and East on protective tariffs and internal improvements will bear insupportably heavy upon the cotton growing states . . . . I see no escape then but independence out of the Union.<sup>44</sup>

From the passage of the Compromise and subsequent collapse of the Southern rights movement, through the early 1850's little occurred to invoke threats of secession. Congressmen went about the nation's business as usual. Discussions about slavery were kept at a minimum. Behind the glare of national politics important things were happening.

Men were appearing upon the scene, who would change the government's way of ruling. Men were elected to Congress during this period based on their position on slavery, not on their political effectiveness. Thus, men who had little knowledge of politics and its workings, were placed in positions of political power. They were social reformers, not politicians.<sup>45</sup>

Then, in January of 1854, Congress received a proposal to organize the Kansas Territory which stated, that "when admitted as a State or States, the said territory, or any more of the same, shall be received into the Union, with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission." This bill drew an admendment from the South that would allow Southerners to take their slaves into the territory. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, in return, offered an admendment, that nothing in the bill should "in any way contravene" the Missouri Compromise. But inherent in the passage of the bill was the repeal of that very compromise.

Disapproval of the repeal raged from both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. But it was not enough. The bill eventually passed and the South bore the blame for its passage. The Free-Soilers recognized that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a bid for Southern support. Their support was necessary for its passage. Its passage was necessary to railroad development in Illinois. The South was condemned

for "a gross violation of a sacred pledge, . . . "46  
 Southern papers, such as the Charleston Mercury, saw the  
 passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act as an effort by aboli-  
 tionists to unite Northern opinion against the South. The  
 Charleston Mercury put its finger on the right spot when it  
 said:

There is no compact sectional senti-  
 ment at the South in favor of the  
 Nebraska-Kansas bill; while at the  
 North there is the most intense  
 hostility to it. What is to be done?  
 Can the South stand listlessly by and  
 see the bill repealed, when this has  
 made the direct issue against her,  
 and the bond of Union, which once se-  
 cured is to be used fiercely for her  
 ruin? If the matter ended with the  
 repeal of the Nebraska-bill, it might  
 be permitted. But when, . . . abo-  
 litionism intends to stoop to this  
 measure because it will write the  
 North against the South, and secure  
 a triumph which it can press to the  
 worst acts of aggression upon her,  
 how can she remain indifferent to  
 the result? If she prizes the citadel,  
 can she neglect the outposts? There  
 is no alternative for the South.<sup>47</sup>

The blood of Northern and Southern men was spilled in  
 Kansas as they engaged in a mini-Civil War, perhaps unaware  
 that their violence was a foretaste of things to come.  
 Violence in Kansas did not educate the Southern people as  
 fully as the election of 1856. It was this election which  
 made them realize that the social reformers in Congress were  
 seeking to break the political power of the South in order  
 to change national policy.<sup>48</sup>



In 1856 a Senator from Alabama and one from Virginia pointed out clearly the precariousness of the Southern position.

At the conclusion of peace in 1783, the states then north of Mason and Dixon's line had 164,081 square miles; and the States then south of that line had 647,202 square miles . . . The South has grown from 647,202 to 882,245 square miles, having added 235,043 square miles to her area since 1783. In the same time, the North from 164,081, has grown to 1,903,204 square miles, having added in the same time 1,738,123 square miles to her limits. The South has increased less than 50 percent, the North near the Revolution. The South commenced with more than four times the territory of the North; the North now has near  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times the territory of the South.

We are in a majority in the Senate where the States are represented; we are in a minority in the other branch where the people are represented numerically; and we are in a minority in the electoral college.

The problem of the South as a minority section was the most vital issue confronting the Southern political mind.

Let the South, then, face the reality, with such feelings as she may; that she is now in a MINORITY, in the Federal Government; in a minority which will be largely increased with the result of the approaching Federal elections (1860) . . . a minority which will be permanent and increasing year by year.<sup>49</sup>

That Federal contest saw the election of Abraham Lincoln, a member of the Republican Party, as the president of the

United States. The South regarded that party as "sectional, aggressive upon the South, and founded upon an idea to resist the triumph of which every Southern political man should be willing to sacrifice all other political issues and make common enemy."

The New Orleans Delta found itself compelled to warn fellow Southerners of their region's impending doom.

The . . . result of the election . . . and triumph of the party whose declared purpose and policy are to undermine the very foundation of the prosperity, safety, and existence of the Southern section of the Union, has thrown a pall over our city, and filled all minds with deep anxiety and gloom . . . .

Men, parties, and partisan traditions must alike be consigned to oblivion. The South must consult, deliberate and determine with the grave dignity and serious purpose of a people who stand on the brink of a great peril--who are compelled to choose between a dishonorable submission and capitulation to a haughty and uncompromising enemy, for a temporary peace and the security of certain material interests, with an ever present and increasing peril to even these, or accept all responsibility, danger, and honor of a united resistance at all costs and sacrifices, to the dishonor and eventual rein which are inevitable from our acquiescence in the Government of the fanatics and sectional demagogues to whom the Northern Masses have committed the powers of this Government. 50

It was enough. The political ties were broken. In December of 1860 South Carolina led the Southern march out of the Union. What was their justification? The passage

of personal liberty laws, the agitation against slaveholding, and the election of a sectional president were more than enough to induce and justify secession.<sup>51</sup>

The South, in 1850, watched an increasingly industrial North deny it political and economic equality. The growth of the South was dependent upon agriculture. There were neither significant seafaring nor manufacturing interest. Patrick Henry recognized this early in our history. "There is a striking difference, and great contrariety of interests, between the states. They are naturally divided into carrying and productive states. This is an actual existing distinction, which cannot be altered."<sup>52</sup>

The Southern economy was based on several things: (1) an abundance of land; (2) crop specialization; (3) a climate suited to a long growing season; and (4) slave labor.<sup>53</sup> The economic community was built on Jefferson's agricultural ideal. Hard times came, as did good ones, but the basic agricultural system remained the same. Men with wealth brought to their land their property--the slave. As smaller farmers went under or moved on to the West, the plantation owner purchased the deserted farm land. The agricultural ideal seemed to be realized. It is not to be implied, however, that small farmers were nonexistent in the system. They were present and in large numbers. They formed a class which rubbed shoulders with the plantation owners and occasionally a small farmer rose to planter status. Small



farmers and planters depended upon nature and the soil to give them their living. Some small farmers owned a few slaves and some of them did not.

Sectionalism, however, raised its head against Southern agriculture. The sectional strife cause the Southerner to rethink his position. This rethinking, this reform, was for the purpose of making the system more perfect, not abandoning its established direction.<sup>54</sup>

The South became quite different from the North in the years before the Civil War; Southerners not only thought they were different, but they were proud of it. These are the facts; to say otherwise would be fanciful. It was not slavery alone that made white Southerners different from other Americans. Based on Negro slavery and the production of money crops to a large extent, it (agriculture) brought into being a way of life which men believed was worth fighting and dying for . . . . One person, presumably a Georgian, summed up their venomous feelings with the following diatribe. "We frankly tell you that so far as we are concerned, we despise the Union, and hate the North as we do hell itself."<sup>55</sup>

By 1850 the South was beginning to recognize that Northern industry was draining Southern profit. For the South to become prosperous she had to diversify in agriculture and expand into manufacturing. Leaders could not, however, convince those Southerners whose souls were embedded in the soil. De Bow cried out:

Before heaven! We have work before us now. Who conducts our commerce, builds for us ships and navigates them on the high seas? The North. Who spins and weaves for our domestic use (and grows rich in doing it), the fabric which overruns our fields and not seldom fails to remunerate the labor that is bestowed upon it here? The North. Who supplies the material and the energies for our railroads where we have any, gives to us books and periodicals, newspapers and authors, without any limit or end? The North.<sup>56</sup>

Southerners compared their position to that of Ireland within the British Empire. If the South did not protect its rights within the Union, its people's situation would be that of the Irish. The Georgia Telegraph declared " . . . In our commerce, the southern States are nothing but colonies of the North." A Carrollton (Alabama) editor insisted that if Southerners would quit trading with the North, they would:

cease giving their dollars to fatten and enrich a set of fanatics whose sole aim and chief delight were to make war upon our institutions and rights . . . Southern money and Southern labor have indirectly established the Immigrant Aid Societies, bought the Sharpe's rifles, hired the abolition emissaries, and paid the John Browns, that have all, through their respective channels, worked for the overthrow and destruction of the peaceably disposed, easily beguiled South.



Howell Cobb of Georgia declared:

Until the general welfare is secured . . . I recommend that the planters abstain from purchasing articles of northern manufacture . . . This course, established and persisted in by the people, it is conceived, will result in bringing the northern States back to a faithful and practical observance of the Constitution and laws or demonstrate the fact that the Union cannot be preserved under the Constitution.

The Northern control of commerce and manufacturing created "a very great annual drawback on the aggregate wealth, prosperity, and progress of the Union," Southerners charged.

In consequence of its increasing their political power and thereby placing in their possession the direction of the federal government, yankee businessmen had destroyed the political power of the states, defeated the protection of person and property guaranteed by the Constitution, annulled the 'fundamental principle of our political compact,' and endangered American 'harmony, tranquility, and stability.' This was the classic expression of Southern nationalism.<sup>57</sup>

Planters' conventions began to be held in 1839. The main topic was the railroads. A growing America needed a transcontinental railroad. Local leaders saw in this a great lottery to be won by the states. Federal aid took two forms. Engineers surveyed the land at government expense. The government reduced tariff duties on iron used in railroad construction. In general Southerners were opposed to land grants. Southern railroads generally were built by



private capital, although Georgia and Virginia built railroads without private capital. Southern states built their own railroads but were unwilling to connect to the rails in neighboring states.<sup>58</sup>

Other convention topics were economic diversification and direct trade with Europe. But with the boom in cotton prices between 1850 and 1859, the cries of economic diversification were no longer heard. Yet, the desire for direct trade did not pass. It continued to be discussed even after the Civil War began.<sup>59</sup>

The Southern Rights Association of Mobile urged local shipbuilders to construct steam vessels, "with a view of promoting direct trade between Mobile and Europe." A correspondent of the Mobile Alabama Planter, "Sumter," commented: "Let us strive, as far as may be, to throw off all unnatural and unnecessary dependence. Nothing will be more effective to this end than creating a DIRECT FOREIGN TRADE." According to the invitation to the 1852 Macon Convention the association under consideration would include in its purposes the improvement of agriculture and ". . . to sponsor direct trade with Europe; . . . ." The Macon Journal and Messenger hoped that the delegates would consider establishing a Southern import-export company, saying, "Do this and the southern States will soon be independent of their northern enemies." A Savannah editor advised the convention to work for direct trade for another reason.

England has, of late years, given a good deal of aid and comfort to abolition. Her West India policy proves her antagaonism to African slavery, . . . to say nothing of the money actually remitted by her anti-slavery societies, . . . Hence, it becomes important for the South to foster the cotton manufacture of the continent of Europe, so as not to be dependent either on Old or New England.

A leading agriculturist commented:

The South loses annually on her exports from 15-20 percent of their value, in unnecessary changes and expenses . . . She pays on her exports from twenty to one hundred percent enhanced valuation, . . . (and) it is sufficient to state, that though her productions are of the very richest character, with cheap slave labor, yet her annual expenses are very near equal to the value of her produce, leaving it a very uncertain question whether, in a series of years, she is acquiring capital or becoming involved in debt with a balance of produce (in original value) in her favor, the balance of trade (indicated by exchange) is against her.<sup>60</sup>

"Against her," not only in trade balance but in general, and Southerners took a certain pride in the antagonism of the rest of the nation. The Agriculture Association of the Planting States proclaimed in 1853 that "It had been said that the 'world is against us.' Be it so. The world, we know, is dependent on us, and we glory in our position." The South had an almost ideal agricultural state. The South had no radicals. It had morals. It had no "isms". It needed no tariff. It had land and cheap labor. It had

cotton, and cotton was king. Cotton was "the monetary level of the world." Farmers declared that "cotton is the countervailing power to the schemes, the aims and objects of the Abolitionists of the North . . . , (for) when American Cotton is no longer to be had, the stillness of death would reign over one half the civilized world."

Noah B. Cloud, Southern agriculturist, proclaimed cotton's (and slavery's) supremacy.

Nature's God, with our peculiar institution of slavery has crowned us the victors in this great race for the world's prize . . . The day dawneth and will quickly be upon our children when this country will consume 2,500,000 bales of cotton annually and England and the continent of Europe will consume 5 to 8,000,000 bales manufacturing, . . . and then we shall clothe these very serfs, with whom we are not threatened as competitors in the production of cotton.

A member of the Agriculture Association claimed that "Our cotton is the most wonderful talisman in the world. By its power we are transmuting whatever we choose into whatever we want. . . ." The American Cotton Planter and Soil of the South encouraged this line of thought. In 1858 it said:

Agriculture is the substratum upon which rests the glory and prosperity of our country . . . Cornbread is the staff of life, and cotton is king over all the diversified interests of the civilized world . . . The starving millions of Europe are now begging us to make more cotton that they may be fed and clothed.



Rising in the Senate in 1858, James Henry Hammond of Georgia, placed the capstone on the argument with his famous, ringing pronouncement to his Northern enemies: "No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war upon it. Cotton is king." The South was convinced.<sup>61</sup> The reform movement in agriculture "gave the South a consciousness of its unity apart from the rest of the country, and thereby it awakened consciously at times and unconsciously at others a feeling of nationality and independence."<sup>62</sup>

One area of reform in Southern agriculture was the slave. Slavery, already a part of the sectional struggle, was an integral part of the South's economic life. When the planters of the 1850's became planters, the slaves were already there. They were part of the system. In order for the slave to be useful, regulation was necessary. It also required that a large portion of the capital be invested in the legal ownership and protection of the laborer himself. Success achieved by the care taken in protecting that investment could be enhanced "by fostering a sentiment of affection and loyalty, or by means of a system of inexpensive rewards, . . . ."

Slavery as a labor system offered both advantages and disadvantages. Masters competed with others for the possession of labor and had to pay in proportion to the demand. This required a heavy initial outlay. However, once he had built his force, his labor supply was guaranteed. Births

more than offset deaths. Any surplus was a "marketable commodity." The owner had complete control over his labor force. The slave's whole life was determined by his master's wishes. A wise master used this control to increase the efficiency of his force.

An important disadvantage to the owner was that his capital was tied up in labor. Funds that could have lessened dependence upon the hated North were frozen in his workers. His costs remained steady, regardless of his profit or lack of it. While he did not pay wages, he did provide permanent support of his workers. Overall, slavery was a profitable labor system. The invention of machines to gin, spin, and weave cotton into cloth opened the way to greater profits.<sup>63</sup>

Edmund Ruffin acknowledged that "slave labor . . . is more slow and inefficient than the labor of a free man." The slave received the same benefits regardless of his work. He worked just enough to avoid punishment but he did not work daily. In contrast, the free laborer worked very hard for short periods. For longer periods he was idle and returned nothing to his employer.

This system of slave labor was given the name of "warranteeism." Henry Hughes in "A Treatise on Sociology," claimed that it achieved "the healthy existence of all."

In the economic system production is orderly. Laborers are adapted. They are associated. They are regular. Laborers never want work. The laborer is appreciated. He is

a material product. Strikes and idleness are eliminated. Want is eliminated. There are no poor: all have competence . . . . Laborers are not consumed: they are preserved: they are treasured. The capitalists' preservation-interest in the laborer is warranted. Capital and labor, are syntagonistic.

The planter, owner of slaves and land, influenced the growth of Southern nationalism. His opinion, discussion, and planning affected the thinking of other planters, slaves, small farmers, and "landless whites," as well as professional people. It cannot be doubted that his intense Southern nationalism hastened the coming of the Civil War.<sup>64</sup>

Political and economic events were not enough to make Southerners secede. The fire-eaters used these events to inflame a Southern society. The make-up of that society was important when the agitators began to work. Within the social order were the planter, professional, small landholder, tenant, and the slave. According to the proslavery polemicist there was little difference among the white groups.

They were largely of the same racial stocks; they liked the sort of food; they thought the same things were serious or funny; they had the same general notions of what was moral and what was immoral, what constituted success and what failure; they were a people close to the soil and some among them held slaves; they could, in other words, understand each other with a reasonable certainty and count on one another's conduct and reactions to a reasonable degree.



Class restrictions were not rigid. The social interaction among the classes fostered respect. The upper class did not function without the cooperation of the middle and lower classes. Southerners held several things in common: (1) the rural environment; (2) the closeness of the family unit; and (3) the militant attitude of the people. The fire-eaters used these commonly held characteristics to convince Southerners of their region's unity.<sup>65</sup>

Southerners saw themselves as "ardent, brave, and magnanimous, more disposed to give than to accumulate, to enjoy ease rather than to labor." The Southerner was "less sensitive to immediate popular impressions" and "more accustomed to take a large and philosophic view of a subject." John A. Quitman recognized "that strong Southern characteristic (of) individual independence of thought and action." "As to the natural military spirit and predilection of the . . . people," . . . they had "a spirit within them, which once aroused, could never be conquered."<sup>66</sup> The Southern self-perception hurried secession to its fateful conclusion.

Society was not stagnant. Abundant land, cheap land, continued high prices for farm produce, and the growing democracy kept social doors unlocked. Resentment of the wealthy was a rare thing. The middle class was an important part of the Southern social order. White Southerners could always look down on the slave as his inferior. They were white and they were free, something that could not be said

for the slave. Thus, even the nonslaveholder had a stake in keeping the black in bondage. Senator Albert Gallatin Brown of Mississippi believed that the nonslaveholding white

received all the benefits of a slave society without bearing its burdens. The small farmer and the mechanic had the value of their lands and of their labor increased by the high living standards of the planter class. They had, moreover all the advantages of a white skin in a Negro-slave society. If the Negro were free, the nonslaveholder would face a tragic fate. The Negro would insist that he be treated as an equal; that he go to the white man's table, share the white man's bed, and that his son be permitted to marry the white man's daughter and his daughter the white man's son! That, of course, would produce a race war from which the rich man would flee. The poor white man would be left alone to wage the bloody battle.

J.D.B. DeBow, Editor of DeBow's Review, concurred and added

A class, conscientiously objecting to the ownership of slave property, does not exist at the South, for a all such scruples have long since been silenced by the profound and unanswerable arguments . . . (of) our statesmen, popular orators and clergy . . . The non-slaveholders, . . . are not reduced . . . to find employment in crowded cities and come into competition in close and sickly workshops and factories, with remorseless and untiring machinery. The non-slaveholder is not a subject to that competition with foreign pauper labor, which has degraded the free labor of the North . . . . 67

The themes are the superiority of any white over the Negro and the fear of racial conflict if emancipation should occur.

Edmund Ruffin argued that farmers in a free society were destined to peasantry. Only with slavery could farmers escape the "brutalizing effects of continued toil" and retain intelligence and spirit with which to define their rights. "Only in the American South could a man be both a farmer and gentleman." Others followed this up with the assertion that "a rural way of life, based on slavery, produced finer individual character and action than came out of free urban industrial society."<sup>68</sup>

Nehemiah Adams acknowledged that the streets of Southern cities were free of that rabble of the North. This rabble was controlled so that the "isms" which were becoming prevalent in the North were nonexistent in the South. Never would the ideal agricultural society open its doors to such practices as free love and atheism. John C. Calhoun, considering his section's social order, declared

I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other . . . . There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from this conflict; and which explains why it is that political condition of the slaveholding States has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North.

George Fitzhugh proclaimed that the presence of the slave class allowed Southerners to pursue a higher intellectual life. He compared Southern society to that of Greece



and Rome. All three cultures were indebted to the slave class for the leisure required for cultivating "heads and their hearts." Without the slave class, the ancient civilizations might have been like the North with "utilitarian philosophers" but would not have "produced a poet, an orator, a sculptor, or an architect; they would never have uttered a lofty sentiment, achieved a glorious feat in war, or created a single work of art . . . ."69

Fitzhugh might compare the South to Greece or Rome but the truth of the comparison was limited. Planters and professionals described the fact that Southern boys were educated in Northern schools. Southern authors used Northern publishing houses. Even magazines were printed in the North. Teachers were Northern, whether private tutors or college presidents. Textbooks were written by Northerners, published in the North, hurt the Southern image, but were used in Southern schools. Southerners even summered in the North. Was there no end to this "humiliating dependence?" Not even Southern culture was free of Northern bonds.<sup>70</sup>

As the 1850's passed Southerners saw their way of life threatened by a Northern invasion. The North had taken control of political functions for the entire country. Economic conditions were, in part, determined by Northern interests. Northerners dominated Southern society by its control of literary and educational institutions. The South was in a vise. Northerners were more and more influencing Southern events.

When Lincoln was elected in 1860 the South faced its foe with unity. This unity was created by their recognition of common dangers, problems, ideals, interests, and traditions. The unity was that of a Southern nationality that led "the people to think of themselves first as a part of the South, and only then, if at all, as a part of the Union."<sup>71</sup>

An examination of the modern propaganda system is now necessary to determine if Southern propaganda contained any of its elements.

## CHAPTER IV

## PROPAGANDA

William L. Yancy declared that his "aims and objects" were "to cast before the people of the South as great a mass of wrongs committed on them, injuries and insults," that had been done and thus "produce spirit enough . . . to call forth a Lexington, to fight a Bunker's hill, to drive the foe from the city" of Southern rights. He planned to "fire the Southern heart" in order that "at the proper moment, by one organized, concerted action" he could "precipitate the cotton States into a revolution."

William L. Yancy was an agitator, one of several men whose voices were heard throughout the South, calling for a Southern nation. The reasons for their desire for a Southern nation were as varied as their backgrounds and residence. They were united in their call for Southern nationhood. Avery Craven states that "the Southern agitator was the section's worst enemy."<sup>72</sup> At first, few in number, the agitators grew in size and influence. Eventually they succeeded in tearing away the Southern half of the nation.

Agitators called for a return to genuine American values, claiming that Northerners had abandoned the true American system, a typical agitator stance. The Southern



propagandist claimed that Southerners interpreted the Constitution as the Founding Fathers had intended. It was the North who had rejected the true American ideals. Therefore, a Southern nation would not destroy, but uphold and strengthen, America's true democracy.

In 1858, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi spoke to the question of the Constitution and slavery.

. . . the Constitution and the laws of the Union must be the rule governing within the limits of a territory. The Constitution recognizes all property and protects all property and gives equal privileges to every citizen of the States, and it would be a violation of its fundamental principles to attempt any distraction.

William Yancey, on the subject of the Constitution, declared:

. . . there is but one issue-to all sensible men but one issue with two dies to it. The slavery question is but one symbol of that issue, the commercial question is but one symbol of that issue, the Union, question is but one symbol of the issue. The only issue of the campaign is the integrity and safety of the Constitution.

Along the same line of American values was the appeal to the nonslaveholder.

If the Negro were free, the nonslaveholder would face a tragic fate. The Negro would insist that he be treated as an equal; that he go to the white man's table, share the white man's bed, and that his son be permitted to marry the white man's daughter, and his daughter the white man's son.<sup>73</sup>

The southern agitator clearly stated the discontent of the "Southron" with the way matters were going, another role of the propagandist. He recognized the frustration of Southern politicians and planters as they struggled against the Northern tide of abolitionism. And he proposed a solution--Southern independence.

The battle between the North and South has been fought, and the North is the victor . . . A few more years and the preponderance of power in the Senate and House will be so greatly in favor of the non-slaveholding interests that the Federal legislation between West and East on protective tariffs and internal improvements will bear insupportably heavy upon the cotton growing states . . . . I see no escape then but independence out of the Union.

The agitator or propagandist promoted a movement (Southern nationhood) which was capable of defeating the groups (abolitionist, tariff supporter, etc.) who were responsible for Southern problems. Agitators convinced Southerners that they were being ruled by unsympathetic outsiders and that they were exposed to "sinister manipulations."

It is easy for the North, with its majority in the millions to say they are for the union anyhow: Because with no constitution at all the people of the North can protect themselves by their predominant vote. How is it with the minority?

It is useless and impracticable to disguise the fact that the South is in a permanent minority, and that there is a sectional majority against it and a majority of different views and interests and little common sympathy.<sup>74</sup>

Both Northern and Southern agitators fit into the paranoid style as developed by Richard Hofstadter.<sup>75</sup> It is undeniable that Southerners felt persecuted and conspired against by Northern politicians and manufacturers. "Southrons" felt that they were the true upholders of the United States Constitution. They were the patriotic Americans and therefore had righteousness on their side.

You have among you politicians of a philosophic turn, who preach a high morality; a system of which they are the discoverers, . . . They say, it is true the Constitution dictates this, the Bible inculcates that, but there is a higher law than those, and they call upon you to obey that higher law of which they are the inspired givers. Men who are traitors to the compact of their fathers--men who have perjured the oaths they have themselves taken . . . these are the moral lawgivers who proclaim a higher law than the Bible, the Constitution, and the laws of the land . . . . These higher law preachers should be tarred and feathered and whipped by those they have thus instigated . . . The man who . . . preaches treason to the Constitution and the dictates of all human society, is a fit object for a Lynch law that would be higher than any he could urge.<sup>76</sup>

However, Northern abolitionists and moral reformers seem to have fitted even better into the paranoid mold.



The abolitionists could not be satisfied with anything less than complete victory. Southerners, on the other hand, showed their willingness to compromise throughout the decade. Only when it became obvious that no compromise could end the debate did Southerners become more militant.

Turning now to the propaganda itself, we find that the propaganda of the South fits the general heading of sociological propaganda. Jacques Ellul, French sociologist, defines sociological propaganda as

the existing economic, political, and sociological factors that progressively allow an ideology to penetrate individuals or masses . . . It is based on a general climate, an atmosphere that influences people imperceptibly without having the appearance of propaganda; . . . . Sociological propaganda, involuntary at first, becomes more and more deliberate, and ends up by exercising influence.

The factors were present. The ideology was slowly invading the Southern masses and leading to a Southern nation.

The collective sociological presuppositions, which Ellul defines as "a collection of feelings, beliefs, and images by which one unconsciously judges events and things without questioning them, or even noticing them," were in the South.<sup>77</sup> The situation was one in which the people shared the same common background, ate the same food, liked and disliked the same things, and viewed events with the same understanding. Anywhere in the world, if two Southerners met, they had an immediate rapport.

With the coming of the 1850's the agitators recognized that the anxiety over national events could only help their cause.

Men would begin, in the North, to feel that all Southerners held slaves and acted in certain ways because of that fact. In response, Southerners, too, began to magnify and distort the slave question. A symbol of Southern values political, social, and economic had been created. The force inherent in a great humanitarian, democratic crusade was now added to normal sectional rivalries, and the equality powerful force inherent in the defeat of an accepted social order was drawn about Southern positions. If there had been indifference and division before, there was unity of a new degree and character . . . . A fight for equality and the preservation of a way of life was something quite different from a response to an abstraction.<sup>78</sup>

Propagandists of the South had their vehicle for persuading their fellow Southerners to create a Southern nation. They made slavery the foundation of a Southern civilization, different from and better than that of the North. Their weapons were fear and pride as they sought to unite Southerners into a force "which could force concessions or, if this failed, to secede."<sup>79</sup>

Southern propagandists used the A-B-C tactic.

The Appeal is the come-on, the part of the message that strikes surely into the probable interests of the intended public. The Bond is the tie-in, the bridge between Appeal and Commodity. The Commodity is the item, idea, service, personality,

project, ideology, cause, institution, or country the propagandists is pushing.

In the context of Southern propaganda the Appeal was slavery. Slavery touched all aspects of Southern life. The plantation owner, the nonslaveholding white, the professionals, everyone was touched by the inferior race within their midst. A second part of the Appeal was the tariff, which the South considered "a bill to rob and plunder nearly one half of the Union, for the benefit of the residue."<sup>80</sup>

The Bond was the Constitution. Its conservative interpretation, the Southern interpretation, touched slavery, economic dependence, and political independence. It was simple, as Southerners saw it, to base their claims upon this readable, understandable document.

The Commodity was the Southern nation, a confederacy of equals; a nation constructed so as to protect states' rights; a nation built on a slave labor system; a State created upon the idea that men are not equal; and a nation utilizing its leisure time (given it by slavery) to develop a superior civilization.

Agitators did not have to choose the issue. Abolitionists chose the issue of slavery. Economic issues developed out of injured Southern feelings. Political issues were cultivated as a result of the South's loss of political influence. Social issues were inherent in the racial question.



Once the issues were defined, the propagandist employed "all the available arts of logic, interpretation, factual selection, and rhetoric to make the propagandist cause appear great, noble, and honorable, or at least acceptable and necessary," and to make the opposition appear uncivilized, unprincipled, or at least unnecessary.<sup>81</sup> This is known as case-making. The Southern propagandist made his case with points like these.

On the power of cotton:

No, you dare not make war on cotton.  
No power on earth dares to make war  
upon it. Cotton is king. Our cotton  
is the most wonderful talisman in the  
world. By its power we are trans-  
muting whatever we choose into what-  
ever we want . . . .

On the true interpretation of the Constitution:

The Constitution of the United States  
was not framed to enforce the will of  
a majority merely. It aims far higher  
in its pretensions. Its object is to  
enable the whole of the people of the  
United States--not a part only--to  
rule themselves.

On slavery:

Our representatives in Congress used  
the argument contained in the Scrip-  
tures and their opponents dared not  
tell them that the historical parts  
(and all that refers to slavery is  
historical) were uninspiring and  
untrue . . . .

In . . . Negro life, not a single  
civilization, . . . has existed, . . . .

On the political threat to the South:

Let the South, then, face the reality, with such feelings as she may; that she is not in a MINORITY, in the Federal Government; in a minority which will be largely increased with the result of the approaching Federal elections (1860) . . . a minority which will be permanent and increasing year by year.<sup>82</sup>

Concerning techniques of identification we can clearly see three being used by Southern agitators. The first of these, transfer, "carries the authority, sanction, and prestige of something else in order to make the latter more readily acceptable." In this way we see slavery being linked to the Constitution, economic dependence to the tariff, and loss of political clout to abolitionism.

Looking at the testimonial technique we see major figures attesting to the rightness of a Southern nation. Calhoun first developed a theory of political protection for the South. Those he left behind

in South Carolina inherited neither his devotion to the Union nor his faith that national policy could be shaped to benefit the South. Younger Carolinian radicals relished the idea of secession and older ones like Robert Barnwell Rhett had long chafed under Calhoun's tight reins. They hungered to break up the Union. The congregation of radicals in Alabama and Mississippi helped push the Democratic parties of those States toward increasingly militant sectional stands. In Alabama the great orator William Lowndes Yancey spoke for those who had concluded that

remaining in the Union was the equivalent of committing suicide. The old Calhounite, John A. Quitman, who had become a rabid seccionist, led the radical forces in Mississippi. Elected governor in 1849, Quitman held the highest office of any radical outside South Carolina. All of these men had one common goal--to dissolve the Union as soon as possible!<sup>83</sup>

The use of the nonslaveholder as a participant in Southern society and his approval of it is an example of the "plain folks" techniques, essential in a democratic culture. Planters and statesmen tried to convince their audience that the nonslaveholder, the small farmer, wanted to perpetuate the slave society.

The nonslaveholder knows that as soon as his savings will admit, he can become a slaveholder, and thus relieve his wife from the necessities of the kitchen and the laundry and his children from the labors of the field.<sup>84</sup>

Southern propagandists fell into two groups, fire-eaters and heelers. The first group included politicians William Yancey, John Quitman, and Robert Barnwell Rhett; economists Edmund Ruffin and Noah B. Cloud; and religious leaders such as J. H. Thornwell and Leonidas Polk. These agitators furnished the sustained emotional drive necessary to propel the South to secession. Heelers were people who, more or less, supported the idea of a Southern nation.

Propagandists of the South used newspapers, magazines, trade journals, and books to spread their views.



They also used the less formal mediums of gossip, leaflets, pamphlets, and speakers. The politicians and planters were the two foremost organizers of propagandists' literature.

Leaders used three tactics with organizations.<sup>85</sup> The first of these was exploitation of common interests. Southerners shared common bonds, as we have seen. They were men of the land. They shared the same religions--usually Methodist or Baptist. They fought the same enemies--the weather, Northern merchants, and unprofitable soil. Above all, they were better off than, and afraid of the potential freedom for, the Negro within their ranks.

Unconsciously, perhaps, the Southerners created front organizations. The planters' conventions came into being while trying to develop Southern routes for a national railroad. The churches began splitting in the 1850's and became voices for Southern nationhood. Southern colleges were hotbeds of agitation. No aspect of Southern society was immune to the call for a nation of Southerners.

If one considers Southern political society as an organization we can see the third tactic in use. Men like Yancey and Rhett were few in 1850. Moderate political such as Davis dominated Southern politics. But within ten years the fire-eaters had "bored from within." By this we mean that through argument and persuasion the Southern agitators had convinced moderates of the rightness of their cause. The moderates then took up the call for Southern rights publicly.<sup>86</sup>

The major (strategic) techniques used by Southerners were stalling, least-of-evils, scapegoating, appeasement, and shift of scene. Southern agitators had to stall, especially before 1859. Their numbers were few and there was little support by the masses. When opportunity arose they took advantage of it (Kansas-Nebraska Bill, Compromise of 1850, etc.); however, they readily dropped the public discussion when it became apparent that these events had ceased to matter to the general public. John Brown's raid in October of 1859 eliminated the moderate tone of the South. When Northern financial connections to Brown were uncovered and Northern approval of the raid began being voiced in Northern papers, the South united as it never had before.<sup>87</sup>

In reference to slavery, the least-of-evils technique was used. Southerners declared that being in a Christian slave system was better than going to hell. They vowed that the slave was better off than poor whites of industrial locations, "thus rendering their civil condition superior to that of any class of poor in any section of the known world."

Southerners blamed Northern politicians for the troubles which beset the nation. Abolitionists were charged with stirring up dissension. "It is merely a war of opinions and words,--a discussion upon abstract principles from which no advantage can be gained by either side, and the worst results must inevitably ensue for both."<sup>88</sup>

Until Brown's raid and the election of Lincoln,

Southerners occasionally used appeasement as a tactic. They compromised, all the while raging at Northern injustice, demanding better treatment. They hoped that their willingness of compromise would work towards a softening of Northern attitudes.

Let this question of Slavery alone.  
Take it out and keep it out of  
Congress; and respect and enforce  
the Fugitive Slave Law as it stands.  
If not, we leave you! Before God  
and man . . . if you fail in this  
simple act of justice, the bonds  
will be dissolved!<sup>89</sup>

Southerners shifted the scene of the conflict. Slavery was the first issue to cause a crack in the national unity. The disagreements over economic and political issues probably would have resolved except for the introduction of the moral issue. Abolitionists stirred Southern emotions and Southerners fought back with political and economic issues. While Southern political and economic complaints did not effect Northerners, they did penetrate the Southern mind and cause him to accept Southern propaganda.

Regardless of what lay back of developments, however, the significant thing about the sectional struggle . . . was that the Northern position was more and more shaped in the form of opposition to a great moral evil, . . . . The Southern position, on the other hand, was one of defending and securing Constitutional rights. Slavery had to be defended in the abstract as did the theory of state rights, but this was incidental to the right of an equal share in the territories and in the national life.<sup>90</sup>



Southern agitators employed modern propaganda techniques. This is easily seen. It is not so easily determined if this was a conscious effort. Probably it was not. The issues were present. The sociological atmosphere was right. The fiery temperament of the Southern agitators was ignited by Northern agitation; and, given the atmosphere of the time, the propaganda campaign was a natural result.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

After examining the evidence it seems evident that the Southern people began the decade of the 1850s as moderates in tone and action. They responded to Northern accusations with increasing emphasis. Finally, they became the agitators, forced to protect their way of life.

A second conclusion, which concerns slavery, can be drawn. The Southerners were, in 1850, only mildly enthusiastic about the institution. With abolitionist pressure growing, however, they quickly came to feel that their entire culture was under attack. Slavery became the symbol of that sectional conflict.

The sectional conflict was built upon economic, political, and social issues. The Southern mind was obsessed with Southern minority status in the political system. This obsession led Southern people to take a more conservative and militant stance in order to protect themselves.

The Southerners were propagandists in the modern sense. They blamed others for their plight and proposed a solution, a Southern nation. This was not a deliberate path but one which developed from the events, political and otherwise, of the era.

There were, within the South, some few sectionalists who were determined to force Southerners to choose between the Union and the South. These agitators, helped by events not of their making, finally overcame Southern moderation and influenced Southern politica and thought until a Southern nation became a reality.



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