**Abdelhafid Boussouf Mila University**

**Level: Third Year/ English**

**Module: Etude de Textes de Civilisation**

**Tutor: Boudjerida Messaouda**

**Lecture four: The Civil War**

North and South went to war in April 1861. The

Southern states had claimed the right to secede and

had formed their own Confederacy. Their forces fi red

the fi rst shots. The Northern states, under the leadership of

President Lincoln, were determined to stop the rebellion and

preserve the Union.

The North had more than twice as many states and twice

as many people. It had abundant facilities for producing war

supplies, as well as a superior railway network. The South had

more experienced military leaders and had the advantage of

fi ghting mostly on its own territory.

For four years, ground battles involving tens of thousands

of soldiers and horses were fought in Virginia, Maryland,

Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Georgia. Naval battles were

fought off the Atlantic coast and on the Mississippi River. In

that area, Union forces won an almost uninterrupted series of

victories. In Virginia, by contrast, they met defeat after defeat in

their attempts to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital.

The single bloodiest day of the war was on September 17,

1862, when the two armies met at Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg,

Maryland. Confederate troops led by General Robert E. Lee failed to

force back the Union troops led by General George McClellan, and

Lee escaped with his army intact. McClellan was fi red. Although

the battle was inconclusive in military terms, its consequences

were enormous. Britain and France had been planning to

recognize the Confederacy. They delayed their decisions, and

the South never received the aid it desperately needed.

Several months later, President Lincoln issued a preliminary

Emancipation Proclamation. It freed all slaves living in

Confederate states and authorized the recruitment of African

Americans into the Union army. Now the North was no longer

fighting just to preserve the Union. It was fighting to end slavery.

Union forces gained momentum in 1863 with victories

at Vicksburg in Mississippi and Gettysburg in Pennsylvania,

and then with the scorched-earth policy of General William T.

Sherman as he marched across Georgia and into South Carolina

in 1864. By April 1865, huge Union armies under the command

of General Ulysses S. Grant had surrounded Robert E. Lee in

Virginia. Lee surrendered, and the American Civil War was over.

The terms of surrender were generous. “The rebels are our

countrymen again,” Grant reminded his troops. In Washington,

President Lincoln was ready to begin the process of reconciliation.

He never got the chance. Less than a week after

the South surrendered, he was assassinated by a Southerner

embittered by the defeat. The task would fall to Lincoln’s vice

president, Andrew Johnson, a Southerner who favored quick

and easy “Reconstruction.”

Johnson issued pardons that restored the political rights

of many Southerners. By the end of 1865, almost all former

Confederate states had held conventions to repeal the acts of

secession and to abolish slavery, but all except Tennessee refused

to ratify a constitutional amendment giving full citizenship to

African Americans. As a result, Republicans in Congress decided

to implement their own version of Reconstruction. They

enacted punitive measures against former rebels and prevented

former Confederate leaders from holding offi ce. They divided

the South into fi ve military districts administered by Union

generals. They denied voting rights to anyone who refused to

take a loyalty oath to the Union. And they strongly supported

the rights of African Americans. President Johnson tried to

block many of these policies and was impeached. The vote fell

short, and he remained in offi ce, but Congress would continue

to wield enormous power for the next 30 years.

The divisions and hatreds that had led to the Civil War did

not disappear after the fi ghting stopped. As Southern whites

regained political power, Southern blacks suff ered. They had

gained their freedom but were prevented from enjoying it by local laws denying them access to many public facilities. They

had gained the right to vote but were intimidated at the polls.

The South had become segregated and would remain so for

100 years. The postwar Reconstruction process had begun

with high ideals but collapsed into a sinkhole of corruption and

racism. Its failure deferred the struggle for equality for African

Americans until the 20th century, when it would become a

national, not just a Southern, issue.