APUSH

Mr. Bedar

Eric Foner, “The New View of Reconstruction”

1. What was the traditional interpretation of Reconstruction until the 1960s, and what accounted for its "remarkable staying power"?
2. What were the “commendable achievements” of Reconstruction (368)?
3. How were the "different actors in the Reconstruction drama" reevaluated by the Revisionist historians? (consider the Radical Republicans, Carpetbaggers/Scalawags, and the KKK)
4. How does Foner define Reconstruction? To the extent that it was a failure, in his mind, what made it a failure? What reasons does he give to explain why the South and the black population suffered poverty for decades after the Civil War?
5. Explain Foner's overall thesis of Reconstruction as a "Splendid Failure" - what do you make of this thesis?
6. An historian, Leon Litwick said about Reconstruction, "It didn't fail for the reasons people expected it would fail," Litwack contends. "It failed because Radical Reconstruction tested the limits of what was possible, the limits for egalitarian reform in the United States. The challenge of racial equality overwhelmed the American imagination." How do you think Foner would respond to this assertion, and why?