Nashville union and American, March 26, 1870 (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85033699/1870-03-26/ed-1/seq-2/)

See http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85033699/ for information about the political leanings of this publication.

When the present Legislature assembled the members found on the statute books a large number of laws which discriminate in favor of the blacks against the white population, and which had been enacted solely in the interest of the Radical party. These laws were passed to prevent the anti-Radical element from getting control of the State, as well as to harass and annoy those who it might be supposed would resist the discriminating and vindictive policy of the men who controlled the State government. Many of these laws were a disgrace to a civilized State, and the Radicals themselves expected them to be repealed upon their losing the Legislature. This was one of their strongest appeals to the colored voters in the canvass preceding the election of last August. These laws were specially directed to the degradation of the white men of the State; to alienating, not to making us one people; to imposing heavy burdens upon classes proscribed solely on account of their politics, such as no Legislature had dared enact before the war, and to so framing the laws that none but Radicals could get office. These were the laws which were repealed by the present Legislature. No judicious, wholesome law passed by “the previous Legislatures” has been touched. Nor has the present Legislature passed any such vindictive, oppressive laws, which properly came under the head of class legislation, as did “the previous Legislatures.”

With all their carping, the Radicals can only complain that their laws have been repealed. They cannot say that the laws as they stand are hurtful, or that they bear more heavily upon Radicals than upon Democrats and Conservatives, or that the ballot-box and the offices of the States are not equally open to all of every hue. As to the “taking all departments of the State government completely out of the hands” of the Radicals, that is the issue they made in the canvass. They charged that this result would follow if the opposition to their party elected the majority of the Legislature, and they fought the contest on that issue and lost. But the offices are open to them still, and if they can elect their men there will not be the slightest opposition to their being inducted into office. There is no unscrupulous Governor now to set himself up above the law and “throw out” votes enough to “elect” his partisans. It is well known that all the offices in the State
The Union flag (Jonesborough), April 1, 1870 (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038553/1870-04-01/ed-1/seq-1/)

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who are falsely personated. But another and more significant step is taken. This unlawful legislature, is a doubly unlawful sense, convene what purports to be a “Constitutional Convention.” Its members, to a large extent, disqualified under the Fifteenth Amendment; nine-tents of them, according to Senator Fowler—their apologist—were from the rebel army, are elected by those disqualified under our State Constitution and laws; and when the body is organized, it makes its highest rank—a Major General—chairman. Without noticing the action of the body in detail (which is well in accord with the character of the body) I will only refer to the fact that the Convention in publishing its work does not profess to have amended the old Constitution, but to have made a new and independent one; and by its express terms abolishing the old, together with its authority, ordinances and schedules; and, by an assumed act of conventional sovereignty, displaces the old government, vacating all civil and judicial officers, except the Acting Governor and Legislature. This exception is made for the sole reason that the excepted officers are the special creatures of the first edition of the rebellious revolution which was performed in August last. Now, it is but natural that the power should thoroughly wipe away the constitution and form of government which is so murderously assailed in the first bold onset. If, under the form presented, this new constitution and new form of government be ratified and established, so far as the act of the State is concerned and can make it, the State will, by open revolution, have seceded and withdrawn from the Union—the old charter having been wholly vacated and left behind; and, if Congress acquiesces, we will have the “Independent Aristocracy of Tennessee.”