

Pragmatic war mod 5 disc 2

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The American civil War and Democracy The American war was the greatest crisis to face America in its history. The four year war from 1861-1864 had a big impact not just on the economy but also on the views of Americans concerning democracy. The causes of the war were many ranging primarily from the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, economical problems, discrimination, slavery, abolitionist movements and western expansion. It is highly believed that the major cause of the civil war was the election of Abraham Lincoln who defeated Steve Douglas, this is because Lincoln was seen by the southerners as a threat to their way of life as they mainly supported slavery which Lincoln was against. The election was followed the immediate secession of South Carolina on December 20, 1860. Other states that had the same perception of Carolina followed suit and these included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas (James M. McPherson, 2009).

The American's perceptions at the time of the civil war were different as compared to what they think today. This is because the effects of the civil war made them change their minds about what is democracy and what is not. As much as the north wanted to free the slaves and end slavery, Lincoln had to go against democracy in order to succeed in his mission. The rights and freedoms of individuals and the press were suspended in order win the civil war. Democracy at that time was seen as an impediment to the success of this mission. The impact of suppressing democracy was both positive and negative as it led to the end of the slave trade which was positive but the rights and freedoms of individuals were neglected. After the war people began to advocate for democracy as lack of it had led to the suffering of many people (James M. McPherson, 2009).

The impact was lasting as is evident today. There are many things that changed in the American way of life and have continued to promote democracy. America has been on the fore front advocating for the abolition of all forms of slave trade and campaigning for the respect of all humans. It has also gone way ahead by trying to advocate for democracy in foreign nations and this has been part of its foreign policies. There are established systems in the United States that promote citizen participation, the constitution recognizes the importance of freedom and therefore it has been extended from the human freedom to other areas including the press.

Democracy at times is not also seen as good because some institutions still discriminate people, there is no equity and participation. It is most of the time used to win strategies just as it was used in the civil war.

I strongly agree that the prime reason for the confederacy defeat was democracy. From Donald's views the confederate states promoted the rights and freedoms of individuals especially that of expression and therefore had a rough time controlling the soldiers. In the north President Lincoln did not want to hear any of this and went ahead to impair the rights and freedom of the press by shutting down a number of newspapers that showed any sign of opposition towards the civil war. The north also moved fast to squash any kind of disloyalty or rebellion suspended the habeas corpus and arrested any of the citizens that seemed to be traitors. Therefore we can see that the democracy in the south actually led to their defeat in the civil war (Donald, 1996).

References

Donald, D. H. (1996). *Why the North Won the Civil War*. London, UK: Touchstone Books.

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James M. McPherson, J. K. (2009). *Ordeals by Fire: the civil War and Reconstruction*. New York: MacGraw-Hill.