

## People's Contest: The Union & Civil War, 1861-1865

Philip S. Paludan, "A People's Contest:" (1988)

### 1. Communities Go to War

Discussion of the tremendous outpouring of support for the Union by the states after the firing on Sumter. When Lincoln called on 75,000 volunteers, the states produced hundreds of thousands. Competition between states was very keen on who sent the most. Washington was far behind the states when it came to organizing for war. Lincoln's 75,000 was a drop in the bucket.

Explanation was partly the panic in D.C. Lincoln and Union officials fearful of being overrun by Confeds. before Union troops reached the capitol. Problems w. transport via Baltimore. Also, the feeling that the Southern Unionists were the majority and would reestablish go sense into the Confederacy. Failure of Lincoln et al to believe that war was certain.

### 2. Forging Foreign and Domestic Weapons

Deals with sticky relations w/ Britain and France. Good use of the Trent affair and the Alabama claims.

Discusses West Point/ leads into the question of a war by professionals or a war that, for the North, would be a people's contest. Suggests here that West P. training on basis of Jomimi and the strategy of attack was lethally outmoded by weapons' technology. During the CW 80% of all frontal assaults ended in defeat.

### 3. Ways of Making War

McClellan makes an army. Comes to McClellan's rescue in one respect as an organizer:

His job was to create an army to conquer a population larger than most nations' in the world at that time; of defeating a gathering of enemy soldiers larger than any American general had ever faced; to teach them how to fight in a war w/ weapons more deadly than any ever seen on battlefields before including the Napoleonic Wars.

Rest of chpt deals with the battles on 1861/62 in the East and West. Rise of Grant and the defeat and humiliation of all Union generals in the East up to Antietam.

4. The Dialogue of Politics, 1861/2

Discussion of political life in North. The position of the Democratic party in opposition.

The 1862 election and Republican reverses. Paludan attributes this political set back more fundamentally the result not of the E.P. but the military situation as of the fall of '62. Victories in the West were offset by Rebel victories in the East (second Bull Run and failure of McClellan and the Peninsular campaign. Antietam was not a makeweight for boosting Union spirits because of the slaughter that did not end w/ the destruction of Lee's army. The North was reacting to the glowering reality that the CW was a stalemated contest w/ rivers of blood that defied any prediction as to the end.

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Chpts. on the Second "American Revolution" are most useful

5. Congress and Capitalists

Stats for bean counting:

128,000 industrial firms in the US before secession. All but 18,000 were housed in the North. New England alone had more industry than the entire Confederacy w/ over 19,000, so did Penna. w/ 21,000, and NY with 23,000. Northern states produced 96% of all locomotives

Firearms--more firearms were made in one Connecticut county than in the entire South.

There were over ten times more industrial workers in the North than in the South.

Of the more than 31,000 miles of rr network in the old Union, the South had only 33%.

All the economic power in the North still had to be mobilized to fight the war. Capacity was useless without overall direction and purpose.

For example, the national govt. in 1861 spent only \$67 million. By June of 1862 that expenditure soared by 700%. By the last year of the war the Union was spending \$ 4 million/day; in 2 1/2 weeks in 1865 it was spending the entire yearly outgo of 1861.

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Discusses how the Union financed the war effort. Greebacks, taxation, and borrowing were the main sources. . .

## 6. Congress and the Second "American Revolution"

In addition to financial manipulation and new programming the Congress enacted programs of internal improvements.

With secession and the whittling away of the opposition of the Democratic party, Republican majorities were able to get passed legislation that was advertised as beneficial to the war effort and, in fact, found great favor with much of the prominent big business sector.

1. Morrill Tariff (1862). Set in place the beginning of uniformly high tariff rates.

2. Morrill College Land Grant Act (1862). Provided each state w/ 30,000 acres of public land for every senator and rep. in Congress. With sale and use of this landfall states were able to expand their systems of higher education. Some states gave funds to already ongoing universities and colleges. Other states used it as starter funds for new colleges-- universities of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and California.

College/universities and patriotism.

Harvard sent 56% of graduates in 1861 to service in the Union army. Yale 42%, Dartmouth and Brown sent 35% and 50% respectively. Overall Harvard sent 24% of graduates for the 4 years of the war and Yale was represented by 23%. These figures were higher than the % of those from the larger population who fought for the Union. [Compare w/ South's representation of its planter elite].

The overall figure in North w/ population of service age pool of 14.7 million, about 2.6 million or 17.6% served in Union army.

92 Harvards died in the war.

The war demonstrated the awesome wealth and power of the North. The Union could send 2,000,000 workers away to war and still increase its productivity in practically every area in national wealth.

The next two chpts. deal w/ the advantages(wartime) to the farmers and a chpt. on the disadvantages of urban workers.

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9. The Meaning of Emancipation

10. Dialogue of Politics: Loyalty and Unity, 1863/4

Raises the question of Union and Liberty. Was Lincoln's administration despotic in terms of illegal intrusion upon civil liberties during the war?

P uses Neely's work and numbers on this issue. Neely's figures shows that about 60% of the people arrested by the army were in Confederate territory. The remaining 33% included those taken in the border states for a range of reasons having nothing to do w/ dissents against the government.

Good summary of the Vallandigham case

The ongoing dialogue over the civil liberties question revealed the health of a political system that existed because of the guarantees of those liberties. Free speech, press, and assembly meant that politics would thrive. One sign of the importance of the political vitality in the North was the fact that the presidential election of '64 was not cancelled and no one ever expected it would be aborted. The war was about constitutional union and its benefits. Especially adumbrated in the right of soldiers to vote in state and national elections.

11. World Images of War

Notes that by 1863 (Vicksburg/Gettysburg) the major crisis in foreign policy had been settled. No nation in Europe wanted to tangle with this military/economic giant.

Deals w/ England's varied view of the war. Paludan is good here in blowing away part of the c.v. about the English aristocracy being monolithically pro-South and British workers being in favor of the Union.

12. Frankenstein and Everyman

Discusses Grant, Sherman and modern war. Grant was the right general for the latter part of the war. All of the balderdash about Napoleonic uniforms and gaudy braid, etc. were washed away in the previous sea of blood. Grant did not look the hero. He was 5' 8" and weighed only about 135 pounds. He was lighter than his wife. He walked w/ a slight slouch and looked smaller than he was. His dress was at best casual and he was not a glutton for attention and recognition. When called to Washington to assume command of all the Union armies he registered in the hotel as "U S. Grant, Chattanooga." He walked to the White House without an entourage and waited in the lobby waiting to be seen by the president.

Grant played on the theme that common, ordinary, hardworking, persevering people could achieve success.

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In election of '64 Lincoln got over 75% of the soldier vote. McClellan only received 29%. Symbolizing the army's support for the Union war aims and leadership.

### 13. The S cars of War

An estimated 623, 000 men died in the CV. This war took more American lives than were lost in almost all subsequent wars(right up to Korea). There were almost 500,000 wounded. In the North 360,000 died and over 275,000 were wounded. One out of every 9 men in service in Union army died in the war.

Individual battles killed more men than whole wars had done. At Antietam in a single day an estimated 4,800 Americans died. The entire Revolutionary War killed perhaps 4,000. The War of 1812 , killed less than 50% of the men who died at Antietam. In the three days of Gettysburg 7,058 died, a larger number of battlfied deaths tha had ocured in the Rev. War and the War of 1812 combined. Shiloh(April '62)was up to that time[3,400 dead; 2,000 died of wounds after battle]was the bloodiest(three days)battel ever to take place in the Western Hemisphere at that time. By the end of the war Shiloh was reduced to 7th place among CW battles.

Wars impact on communities. . .