

History 225

Re: Notes w/ Mobilizing the CSA

[Check w/ Con. Constitution for emphasis on the states]

While Northerners regarded freedom as something that institutions of govt. protected, Southerners viewed liberty was the freedom from the dictates and imposed will of pointy-headed bureaucrats speaking for the central authority.

In 1861 the average citizen--North and South--contact with the national govt. was minimal. Perhaps the most common exposure to the central govt. was a trip to the Post Office. The governmental perspective of most Americans was decidedly local. But for the Southerners localism or provincialism was a passion as deeply held as traditional religious beliefs.

So. Carolinian's explanation of his heirarchy of loyalties: "I go first for Greenville, then for the Greenville District, then for the up-country, then for So. Carolina, then for the South, then for the United States, . . . and after that everyone else can go to hell.

This emphasis on localism and strong identity leveling off at the state level was true in both sections. In the reading in McPherson he recounts how the Union and CSA recruitment of troops centered around the states and not the national government in the beginning of the war. In both sections right after Sumter the states sent forth more troops than either govt. was prepared to utilize.

*Cancelled
States
Americans
Provincialism
Localism
Approximate*

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2. Making a Nation In the Midst of War

Note: The basic issue here was whether Southern leaders of the CSA (esp. Jeff Davis) would be able to forge a sense of nationhood out of a section whose political culture certainly since the post-War of 1812 period was more and more given over to the doctrine of states rights over the authority of the national power.

For a generation or more Southern politicians had grown up in the mold, not of policy makers, but of policy critics. Instead of initiating policy--at the national level (in the House and Senate), they stood as obstructionists against the policies of northern majorities in Congress. After so many years of being on the defensive, of forming voting blocs to kill national legislation, it was almost instinctive w/ Southern pols to assail those in authority, to attack and tear down, too often without concern for the ultimate effects of their actions.

These were the same men who came to power in the new CSA. As long as Confederate armies in the field were bringing home victories all was satisfactory. But by 1862 after a series of severe setbacks (Antietam, Shiloh, Fts. Henry and Donelson, etc). they turned their animosity toward Richmond--toward the central govt.

need be changed to platform, purpose, etc.

What made this more complicated was that the Govt. under the CSA never developed political parties in which factiousness, political criticism and their individual wrath. My point is: Prior to the Civil War the only thing that united these now Confederate politicians was their regional hostility to the Old Union with a Northern majority in Congress. After secession they were no longer united by a common negative purpose--to bloc these Northern majorities in Congress. Now they had to find a common cause to rally around and they never accomplished this.

Instead they all went off on what one Southerner called "Big-man-me-ism"--they fell into a chronic individualism. How could the CSA serve their own individual ends and to hell with the the common goals of the Confederacy.

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3. The Myth of The CSA Epitaph: Died of States Rights

The great irony here is that Jeff Davis, a prewar spokesman of localism, emerges as the leading champion in the Confederacy of nationalism. Davis, for all his flaws, seemed to be the only southerner who was driven by a passion for nationhood. He recognized the need to build a strong central government ~~from~~ an army, and navy, to one that could manage the economy. He did not allow the ideas of limited government to thwart his goal. He would build an ambitious central administration. Compared to the Union bureaucracy that grew up during the war under Lincoln, the CSA was considerably larger in proportion to the population.

Davis would get the suspension of habeus corpus. Richmond, before the Union, would introduce the draft or conscription in spring of 1862. Davis would get through Congress legislation to allow the central govt. to impress slave labor for war-related projects. The Con. Congress and the states' g overnors would howl but Richmond would have its way.

His one marked failure was to bring the railroad system under the control of the central power--to nationalize the railroads.

~~See addendum notes for CSA mobilization for war.~~

~~See addendum notes for mobilization of southern manpower.~~

4. Jefferson Davis as President--An Evaluation.

~~Layout the outline and fill in w/ lecture on the Rise and Fall of the CSA.~~

make notes here.

refer. class to

McPherson

CSA's financing of the War

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4. Jeff Davis as President--An Evaluation

Davis' readiness for the job (compared favorably on the surface w/ Lincoln):

He received the best education that money could buy in his day. He attended college in Mississippi and in his home state of Kentucky. Transylvania College was the best higher education institution west of the Appalachians (The Harvard of the West). He then went on to graduate from West Point, the best school for engineering and military science. He received excellent training in the classics, rhetoric, logic, literature, and science.

Davis had first-hand military experience in the Mexican War. He served in the US Senate and was the Secretary of War under ^{Pierce} James Buchanan. And was regarded as imminently qualified in both of these positions. (Had he not become president of the CSA he would have been the subject for only modest historic interest).

The touchstone of Davis' presidency was whether he was able to create the internal unity and spirit of sacrifice essential for the growth of Confederate nationalism in order for the Confederacy to achieve its dual goals: (1) independence (2) preservation of her peculiar policy (slavery).

Make point that the Confederacy was not monolithic from the outset:

a. Suspicion of Davis by the fire-eaters. There were influential Southern secessionists who opposed Davis from the outset as President of the CSA because he was not a fire-eating secessionist. (Especially true in the ranks of the So. Carolina secessionists).

b. Suspicion by the Deep South of the Johnny-come-lately in the Confederacy. (Speaking of those states which did not secede until after Sumter).

d. The question of the plain folk or the non-slaveholding population (a majority of southerners), especially those located in the parts of the South not conducive to slavery.

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4. Jeff Davis as President(cont.)

GA. Hill country was an enclave of Unionists or lukewarm secessionists;

Virginia--western part of the state that eventually broke and joined the Union as West Virginia,

Tenn.--Eastern part of the state was a hot bed of Unionist sentiment. While Tennessee seceded the entire state was never loyal to the Confederacy. (Sen. Johnson)

No. Carolina--Blue Ridge part of the state was similar to east Tennessee.

Alabama--in the northern wiregrass country of this state opposition to secession was deep-seated. Ultimately, Unionists from this part of Alabama for the First Alabama Cavalry, USA. A regiment that served w/ Sherman when he marched through Georgia in 1864.

Not all southerners were loyal to this experiment in Southern independence. There were significant enclaves of pro-Unionist sentiment inside the CSA.

Other fault lines in southern society. Could Davis and the CSA govt. deal with these potential weaknesses?:

1. The loyalty of the slave population. Planters bet that they would remain loyal while most of the men folk went off to war. The war would prove that the loyal slave was a planter myth.

2. Class lines in the South. Would the plain folk, the poorer class who were the rank-and-file of the military arm of the CSA, remain faithful to the cause? Did Davis and the CSA leadership do everything possible to see that the sacrifices of the war were spread as evenly as possible among the haves and the have notes, that is, among the poor(nonslaveholders and the planter class). Were they sensitive to the needs of the poor and those driven into desperate condition by the demands of war? Did Davis work to keep southern morale up?

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Instead of forming parties and channelling their opposition into platforms, agendas, and alternative courses of action they took a perverse delight in attacking Jeff Davis - the personification of the Govt. at Richmond.

Playing the states rights card of the strict constuction-ists in opposing the will of the central authority.