

History 225

Re: Boritt Essays

Gallagher, "Upon Their Success . . ."

Using McPherson's taxonomy about why the South lost where does Gallagher come down? On the side of internal or external factors?

Answer is in the topic he writes about: the importance of the generalship in this war. Gallagher picks the three most accomplished general officers of the Civil War: Grant, Sherman, and Lee.

McPherson cautions that ranking the generals is like treading through a minefield. It is risky business, etc.

Gallagher plows ahead nevertheless. He is pretty safe with his Union selections of Grant and Sherman. In outline he shows that their's was a unique partnership that was responsible for devising the strategy (strategy of raids we will discuss in a little detail later) that finally brings military victory to the Union.

More than any other generals on both sides they forged an unyielding bond of personal trust and deep friendship and selfless collaboration, devising the implementing a fresh concept of warfare that used the North's superior manpower pool and abundant resources with maximum effectiveness that culminated in Union victory.

Gallagher then turns to Lee.

Over the last 2 or 3 decades the saintly Lee (This Christ figure in Civil War historiography/ Freeman sets the pace where Lee can do no wrong) has come under criticism.

Gallagher reviews this revision of Marse Robert. What are some of the criticisms?

Gallagher then goes on to revise the revisionists. For Gallagher Lee was the Confederacy's only hope. The CSA had neither the manpower nor the leadership to win in the West and only Lee held out any promise that they could win in the East.

Had Lee won in the East at Antietam or at Gettysburg (which was very close), a victory in either campaign might have meant a Confederate victory. He is referring to the possibility of British recognition and ultimate intervention.

Even as late as 1864 Lee recognized that a determined defense of the eastern theatre costing the Union heavily in casualties might still turn the trick if Northern will collapse under the heavy cost in casualties and money. (By 1864 the war was costing the Union \$4 million a day to fight). Lee hoped to swing the sentiment in the North toward the peace faction w/ a determined defense against Grant's advance.

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Re: Summaries Boritt Essays

McPherson "American Victory, American Defeat"

His taxonomy: Question of Southern defeat two major explanations:

1. Internal: That the home front played the critical role in the sapping of Confederacy paralyzing the will of the Southerners and thereby bringing on the collapse of the CSA.

@. External: That the defeat was connected directly to the battlefield. Ultimately, the Union was able via leadership and the generalship of Grant and Sherman under the direction of Lincoln to mobilize the North's superior assests in manpower and industrial superiority to bring off the victory.

McPherson does not dismiss the factor of internal alienation but he attributes this home front decline to the Union victories on the battlefield.

Plays with the "fallacy of reversability":

He also notes that the North never had a lock on victory. That it could have gone either way depending on an infinite number of contingencies.

(See this contingency idea in McPherson's Text when he talks about turning points of the war. Implication is that these turning points he identifies could have turned differently--against the North, etc).