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Was American Civil War to Emancipate The Slaves

I think it is in the interest of the readers to critically review the story that the American Civil War was fought to emancipate the slaves. It is a myth, having no relation with reality. I propose to quote here from chapter 22 of *Lincoln, the Unknown* written by the famous author Dale Carnegie.[1] He begins with these words:-

“Ask the average American citizen today why the Civil War was fought, and the chances are that he will reply, 'To free the slaves'.

“Was it?”

“Let's see. Here is a sentence taken from Lincoln's first inaugural address: 'I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it now exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.'

“The fact is that the cannon had been booming and the wounded groaning for almost eighteen months before Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. During all that time the Radicals and the Abolitionists had urged him to act at once, storming at him through the press and denouncing him from the public platforms.

“Once a delegation of Chicago ministers appeared at the White House with what they declared was a direct command from Almighty God to free the slaves immediately. Lincoln told them that he imagined that if the Almighty had any advice to offer He would come direct to headquarters with it, instead of sending it around via Chicago.”

Further on, Dale Carnegie quotes from Lincoln's reply to Greedy's article 'The Prayer of Twenty Million':

“My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the

slaves I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving the others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the coloured race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union, and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause."

To explain that reply, Dale Carnegie writes:

"Four slave States had remained with the North, and Lincoln realised that if he issued his Emancipation Proclamation too early in the conflict he would drive them into the Confederacy, strengthen the South, and perhaps destroy the Union forever. There was a saying at the time that Lincoln would like to have God Almighty on his side, but he must have Kentucky.

"So he bided his time, and moved cautiously.

"He himself had married into a slave-owning, border State family. Part of the money that his wife received from the settlement of her father's estate had come from the sale of slaves. And the only really intimate friend that he ever had, Joshua Speed was a member of a slave-owning family. Lincoln sympathised with the Southern point of view. Besides, he had the attorney's traditional respect for the Constitution and for law and property. He wanted to work no hardship on any one.

"He believed that the North was much to blame for the existence of slavery in the United States as was the South; and that in getting rid of it, both sections should bear the burden equally. So he finally worked out a plan that was very near to his heart. According to this, the slave-owners in the loyal border States were to receive four hundred dollars for each of their Negroes. The slaves were to be emancipated gradually, very gradually. The process was not to be entirely completed until January 1, 1900. Calling the representatives of the border States to the White House, he pleaded with them to accept his proposal.

"The change it contemplates, Lincoln argued, would come gently as the dews of heaven, not rending or wrecking anything. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done, by one effort, in all past time; as in the providence of God' it is now your high privilege to do. May the vast future not have to lament that you have neglected it."

The reader would remember that this plan of emancipation "that was very near his Lincoln's heart" was the same which had already been effected and practised 1300 years ago in Islam and which had produced wonderful results in the Islamic world. Had that plan been accepted by Lincoln's compatriots, there would not have been so much racial hatred, internal strife, social upheaval and emotional instability which is still persisting in the USA a century after the so called "emancipation of Negroes" there.

Unfortunately, the representatives of those border-states rejected that plan. Carnegie says, "Lincoln was immediately disappointed. I must save this Government, if possible, he said, and it may as well be understood, once for all, that I shall not surrender this game, leaving any available card unplayed... I

believe that freeing the slaves and arming the blacks has now become an indispensable military necessity. I have been driven to the alternative of either doing that or surrendering the Union.

“He had to act at once, for both France and England were on the verge of recognising the Confederacy. Why? The reasons were very simple. Take France's case first.”

Napoleon III was on the throne of France. “He longed to cover himself with glory, as his renowned uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte, had done. So when he saw the States slashing and shooting at one another, and knew they were much too occupied to bother about enforcing the Monroe Doctrine, he ordered an army to Mexico, shot a few thousand natives, conquered the country, called Mexico a French empire, and put the Archduke Maximilian on the throne.

“Napoleon believed, and not without reason, that if the Confederates won they would favour his new empire; but that if the Federals won, the United States would immediately take steps to put the French out of Mexico. It was Napoleon's wish, therefore, that the South would make good its secession, and he wanted to help it as much as he conveniently could.

“At the outset of the war, the Northern navy closed all Southern ports, guarded 189 harbours and patrolled 9,614 miles of coast-line, sounds, bayous and rivers. It was the most gigantic blockade the world had ever seen. The Confederates were desperate. They couldn't sell their cotton; neither could they buy guns, ammunition, shoes, medical supplies, or food. They boiled chestnuts and cotton-seed to make a substitute for coffee, and brewed a decoction of blackberry leaves and sassafras roots to take the place of tea. Newspapers were printed on wall-paper. The ear-then floors of smoke-houses, saturated with the drippings of bacon, were dug up and boiled to get salt. Church bells were melted and cast into cannon. Street-car rails in Richmond were torn up to be made into gunboat armour.

“The Confederates couldn't repair their rail-roads or buy new equipment, so transportation was almost at a standstill; corn that could be purchased for two dollars a bushel in Georgia, brought fifteen dollars in Richmond. People in Virginia were going hungry.

“Something had to be done at once. So the South offered to give Napoleon III twelve million dollars’ worth of cotton if he would recognise the Confederacy and use the French fleet to lift the blockade. Besides, they promised to overwhelm him with orders that would start smoke rolling out of every factory chimney in France night and day.

“Napoleon therefore urged Russia and England to join him in recognising the Confederacy. The aristocracy that ruled England adjusted their monocles, poured a few drinks of Scotch Whisky, and listened eagerly to Napoleon's overtures. The United States was getting too rich and powerful to please them. They wanted to see the nation divided, the Union broken. Besides, they needed the South's cotton. Scores of England's factories had closed, and a million people were not only idle but destitute and reduced to actual pauperism.

Children were crying for food, hundreds of people were dying of starvation. Public subscriptions to buy food for British workmen were taken up in the remotest corners of the earth: even in far off India and poverty-stricken China. There was one way, and only one way, that England could get cotton, and that was to join Napoleon III in recognising the Confederacy and lifting the blockade.

"If that were done, what would happen in America? The South would get guns, powder, credit, food, railway equipment, and a tremendous lift in confidence and morale.

"And what would the North get? Two new and powerful enemies. The situation, bad enough now, would be hopeless then.

"Nobody knew this better than Abraham Lincoln. 'We have about played our last card,' he confessed in 1862. 'We must either change our tactics now or lose the game.'

"As England saw it, all the colonies had originally seceded from her. Now the Southern colonies had, in turn, seceded from the Northern ones; and the North was fighting to coerce and subdue them. What difference did it make to a peer in London or a prince in Paris whether Tennessee and Texas were ruled from Washington or Richmond? None. To them, the fighting was meaningless and fraught with no high purpose.

"'No war ever raging in my times,' wrote Carlyle, 'was to be more profoundly foolish looking.'

"Lincoln saw that Europe's attitude towards the war must be changed, and he knew how to do it. A million people in Europe had read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – had read it and wept and learned to abhor the heartaches and injustice of slavery. So Abraham Lincoln knew that if he issued his Proclamation of Emancipation, Europeans would see the war in a different light. It would no longer be a bloody quarrel over the preservation of a Union that meant nothing to them. Instead, it would be exalted into a holy crusade to destroy slavery. European Governments would then not dare to recognise the South. Public opinion wouldn't tolerate the aiding of a people supposed to be fighting to perpetuate human bondage.

"Finally, therefore, in July 1862 Lincoln determined to issue his proclamation, but McClellan and Pope had recently led the army to humiliating defeats. Seward told the President that the time was not auspicious, that he ought to wait and launch the proclamation on the crest of a wave of victory.

"That sounded sensible. So Lincoln waited; and two months later the victory came."

And so, to further the cause of Union War, the Proclamation of Emancipation was published in September 1862, which was to be effective on 1st January, 1863.

I have highest respect for Abraham Lincoln and he has been one of my favourite heroes since childhood. But that respect is based upon the facts and reality; not upon myths. He was a humanitarian and he, from the depth of heart, was against slavery. But it does not mean that we should glorify him by false propaganda. The reality was that he did not fight civil war to emancipate the slaves; rather he

emancipated the slaves to win the civil war and save the Union.

1. Carnegie, Dale, Lincoln: the Unknown (Surrey, U.K.:The Word Work Ltd, 1948) chp. 22.

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