

Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 23, 1928

LINCOLN EULOGIES MERELY "FACET OF HERD PSYCHOLOGY"

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir:

It would be interesting to read a logical statement of the facts which lead Southerners to join in the unthinking adulation of Abraham Lincoln. We praise others for accomplishments and for fixing policies: Washington, Monroe, Jefferson, Mason—each left us something formative and definite. Lincoln left nothing.

He was not an abolitionist. He said in Congress that any State or group of States had an inalienable right to secede from the Union and set up separate government. He said that if he were a Southerner he would not liberate his slaves, and that if they were liberated they would soon be exterminated. In his first inaugural address he stated with grave emphasis that he did not intend to interfere with slavery in the slave States and added, "I believe I have no right to do so and I know that I have no intention of doing so." In the same speech he said that to send armed forces into any State "upon **any** pretext whatever, is **among the gravest of crimes.**" Notwithstanding these pledges, **he sent armed troops into Virginia while it was still within the Union**, invading its neutral soil; and within a year after he made the pledges he interfered with the institution of slavery.

But, while he is called "The Great Emancipator," he did not liberate the slaves. He pretended to free them on soil engaged in "treason and rebellion," on which soil he had no authority to do this or anything else, but in his emancipation proclamation he excluded all other States, and specially named one-half of Louisiana, all of West Virginia and seven counties in Virginia, including "the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth," as places where slavery could and did still lawfully exist. Slavery continued to exist **legally in this country until after Lincoln's death.**

"Liberty," a Northern magazine, surfeited with the stories of Lincoln's sweet humanitarianism, is forced to tell us that all this is exaggerated, that Lincoln approved the "bloodiest campaigns of the war," that he backed Sherman's march to the sea, "one of the most relentless military movements in history," and that **the terms of surrender he imposed on Lee were harsh and severe.**

We are told that if Lincoln had lived, reconstruction would have been less bitter. There is proof that it would have been otherwise. Mr. Lincoln (U. S. Official Records) twice telegraphed to General Burnside, asking him if he would bombard Fredericksburg at night with the "new incendiary shells" which he had on hand, and in his last telegram he urged Burnside to do so and said he would like to come down and see the spectacle. But Burnside refused. Lincoln approved the bombardment of the town with women and children in it and refused to punish the officers who shelled a refugee train in the depot loaded with women and children.

Abraham Lincoln was a man of power or he would not have gotten to the Presidency. He may have been a great man, one among the first American twenty or thirty, but to compare him to men like Washington, Jefferson and Monroe, to laud him as Southern papers and Southern people do, without reason, is merely a facet of herd psychology. It is following a lead set by irrational partisans immediately after the war. Lincoln was a man forced into a center of a storm that beat him about and drove him from one opinion to another; that forced him to speak one thing and

act its opposite. If he is great, then why does not some one tell us precisely what policies he instituted or what things he did that entitle him to the present hymns of praise?

JOHN T. GOOLRICK.

Fredericksburg, Va.

Copy

Copy of letter sent by air mail to Senator Robinson, care U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C., February 14, 1928.

February 14, 1928.

Senator Robinson,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Robinson:

I cannot tell you just how surprised I was when I saw in the night's paper that the leader of the **Democratic** party was among the "Dixie Senators Honor Lincoln."

Just why a Democrat should be praising Lincoln, the black Republican, is more than I have ever been able to understand; and why a Southerner should do such a thing is far beyond my comprehension.

The only thing that I can find as an excuse is ignorance, and I have found so much of that among our Southern people that it makes me at times almost ashamed to say that I am a Southerner.

You certainly are not acquainted with the history of that man or his times. When all the efforts of the Southern Statesmen and **Democratic Statesmen of the North** were trying to pass some measures through Congress to prevent the Union being ripped wide open, these measures were being defeated by Abraham Lincoln. When Senator Crittenden, of Kentucky, "than whom do anti-Republican in the country was better entitled to the respect and deference of the Republicans," was proposing his resolutions that would prevent the withdrawal of the Southern States, it was Abraham Lincoln's influence that was defeating them.

When the border States, as a last resort, had called a convention of **all** the States to try and devise some plan of settling matters, it was Abraham Lincoln that would have no compromise and brought about the defeat of the purposes for which this convention was gathered—the **convention that came more nearly representing the people of the whole country** perhaps than any other body that tried to do anything at that most critical of all times.

It was those speeches that Lincoln made in his triumphal procession from Springfield to Washington, couched in ambiguous language, that gave the final touches to the war that followed. "Such playing with double-edged words—and words that flung fire among the flax—would have been ridiculed in a debating society, and they were unpardonable in one whose words must affect the actions of governments, the motion of armies, and the temper of nations."

When all had been attempted by the South and her friends to avert further secession and the border States had remained in the Union, it was Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to wage war against their brothers of the Southern States that

drove Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and your State, Arkansas, from the Union, rather than bear arms against their brothers and thus compel them to bow their heads to as bloody a tyrant as ever ruled in any republic throughout the history of the world.

With the oath upon his lips still fresh from swearing to heaven that he would administer the laws and uphold the Constitution, he went forth to sign orders that set in motion the sinews of a war that drenched this land of ours in the most bloody of all wars up to that time. And this is the man that you, as a leader of the South—in whom she has placed her confidence—stand up in the Senate and tell the world that you regard as “immortal”—“whose courage and charity excel that which has been exemplified by the leadership of armed forces, at any time in the annals of human history.”

I would sooner expect the Belgians to stand in their market places and thusly laud the German Kaiser and his troops, as to hear you stand, in what should be considered the most consecrated place in our nation and laud the man who caused as much sorrow in America as Kaiser Bill ever caused in Belgium.

I would as soon expect to hear the Christians of Armenia stand in the high places and laud the Turks as to hear you stand before the world and say that the man who appointed such generals as Sherman and Sheridan and Grant to power, in order to crush and wreak vengeance upon our fair Southland—tearing women in the throes of childbirth from their beds and devastating the country far and wide with their German hordes—was the one to excel in “charity and courage” for all time!

How long will the ignorance of the leaders that we have sent to lead us into the hands of those who care not for us be endured? And when will we get men **who know their history and have the courage to stand up and tell the world that a spade is a spade**, and the Abraham Lincoln is **not** what the Republican party for all these years has claimed him to be, and that they only use him as a smoke screen to cover up their schemes for the ruin of other sections?

If you will read Horton's *Youth's History of the Great War*, or Bledsoe's *War Between the States*, or Gregg's *History of the United States*, or President Buchanan's *Administration on the Eve of Rebellion*, or Davis' *Rise and Fall of the Confederacy*, you will at least get some conception of what you are saying when you stand as our representative and declare that Lincoln was the sum total of all courage and charity.

If this does not serve to open your eyes, go study Lincoln's records as to stirring up servile insurrections, turning the slaves loose upon the helpless women and children of the South, when he issued his Emancipation Proclamation; how he made medicines contraband of war, which resulted in the South being blamed for the “horrors of Andersonville Prison,” and refused to let the English people administer to the wants of our Southern soldiers in the Northern prisons. Finally, have you not read in the Congressional Records, the record of the Republican party led by Lincoln, which culminated in the blackest of black days for **democracy**, known as the “Reconstruction Days,” and which was so graphically described in the House of Representatives March 23, 1872, by Dan. Vorhees, for many years Representative and later Senator from Indiana, under the caption, “The Plunder of Eleven States.”

What act that Lincoln ever performed would lead you to believe that had he lived things would have been different **after** the war, from what they actually were **during** the war? The same leaders that Lincoln had placed at the helm when he became President were the leaders that took the bits in their mouths and ran riot

over the Southern States during the days of Reconstruction, and all the Republican party wants now is for the **Democratic leaders of the South to O. K. all these actions of Lincoln**, for by endorsing the actions of the hated leader of their party **the Republican party itself is endorsed. Lincoln's party rejoiced at his death, and his posthumous glorification was simply a vote-getting proposition.**

Believing that in an unguarded moment you have been swept off your feet, and in order to carry your point later, as Shakespeare says, you have "done a little wrong to do a great right," you have unwittingly stumbled into a very great wrong, out of which I hope you may be some day able to extricate yourself, I am,

Very truly yours,

M. D. BOLAND.

The Evening World.

New York, August 1, 1927.

Dear Miss Carter:

Many thanks for the material you so kindly sent me. I want to use the picture of the S. C. Legislature. It will interest you to know that the picture of Moses, "the Robber Governor," I shall use will be taken from the Rogues Gallery of the Police Department here. I have uncovered an enormous amount of valuable material. Some in the form of a diary by one of the radical leaders in Congress which has never before seen the light shows that **the Republicans were greatly relieved when Lincoln was killed. They hated him like poison and only began to "love him" when it was needful to get the negro vote in the South in 1868 and afterwards.**

I should like any information you may turn up on the bond question, The period is the darkest and most savage I have ever heard of in any country, I hope to make it a vivid picture. It will be a complete vindication of the South in Reconstruction, and will also give more credit than is customarily given to some of the Democrat leaders of the North, like Hendricks and Voorhees.

With many thanks,

Sincerely,

(Signed) CLAUDE G. BOWERS.

Mary D. Carter,
"The Maples,"
Upperville, Va.

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