

Why did America have a civil war?

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Version 2011-11-18

Content from Philip Bitar, *Why? In Pursuit of the Ultimate Answer: Abridged* (2008)

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◆ Declaration of independence

- ◇ The right of a people to institute and change their government
- ◇ 1776 – United States seceded from Great Britain
- ◇ 1861 – Confederate States seceded from United States

◆ Lincoln first inaugural address

- ◇ 1861 March 4
- ◇ Slavery

Lincoln did not challenge slavery in the slave states and even supported a constitutional amendment to make slavery permanent in those states.

But what was Lincoln famous for saying in 1858?

A nation can't survive half slave and half free since (quoting Jesus) a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Note that Lincoln was committed to preventing the spread of slavery to free states and to territories.

- ◇ Secession

Lincoln argued that secession is illegal but that revolution is legal.

Does this make sense? Why did he argue that revolution is legal? But if revolution is legal, why didn't he argue that secession is legal? Do you think that the southern states were justified in declaring independence?

- ◇ The constitution is silent about the legality of withdrawing from the union.

Why do you think the constitution is silent? Do you think it should have made a statement? If so, what statement? Do you think this would have prevented the civil war?

◆ Core defect of representative democracy

- ◇ Control of legislature by interest groups
- ◇ Cause of civil war and fiscal irresponsibility
- ◇ Need to augment representative democracy with direct democracy via initiatives
- ◇ Legislature vote is public, making legislature subject to divide and conquer
- ◇ Popular vote is private, making people immune to divide and conquer