

Senior Honors Project

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**The Role of Confederate Nationalism and
Popular Will in the Outcome of the Civil War**

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Abstract

This project is a review essay focusing on the role of Confederate nationalism in the outcome of the American Civil War. A historical review essay's purpose is to focus on a theme by reviewing several books that touch upon that theme. The books are reviewed in turn, placed in context, and compared and contrasted before the author makes his or her own conclusions about the theme of the books and the essay.

I have read five books dealing with the underlying reasons for the Confederacy's defeat, with a special focus on nationalism and the will to fight. These books include:

- After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism by Paul D. Escott, which argues that Confederate nationalism was crippled by economic disparity and Jefferson Davis's inability to meet the needs of the common people of the South.
- The Confederate War by Gary W. Gallagher. This book contends that the Southern people displayed remarkable will and fortitude and were simply defeated on the battlefield.
- Why the South Lost the Civil War by Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr., which identifies weak nationalism as the "proximate cause" of defeat.
- Why the Confederacy Lost, a collection of essays edited by Gabor S. Boritt that focuses on the military aspect of the war and the contingent nature of events.
- Behind the Lines of the Southern Confederacy by Charles W. Ramsdell. This study emphasizes economic difficulties and their effect on Confederate society.

Having read and analyzed the arguments set forth by these authors; I have come to the conclusion that an inadequate sense of Confederate nationalism was indeed the deciding factor in the war. Although this was the direct cause, it is also important to acknowledge the role of the Union in sapping Confederate will and making the war more costly than they were willing to endure. Federal military success and political maneuvering made the Confederate war goals (independence and the preservation of slavery) seem less valuable and the cost to achieve them seem too high. It was the weakness of Confederate nationalism, however, that made it possible for the Union war effort to reach the level of success that it did. A lack of distinction from the Union, religious doubts, and moral questions about slavery created a weak sense of nationalism among Confederates, which made it all the easier for their will to fight to be eroded. The lack of commitment by the majority of the people to the idea of a Southern nation created an attitude of acceptance toward reconstruction. If defeat is acceptable, then the will to continue fighting is undermined. This is what happened to the Confederacy and is the principal reason for its defeat.

The Role of Confederate Nationalism and Popular Will in the Outcome of the Civil War

Beringer, Richard E., Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr. Why the South Lost the Civil War (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986). Pp. 582.

Boritt, Gabor S., editor. Why the Confederacy Lost (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Pp. 209.

Escott, Paul D. After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978). Pp. 295.

Gallagher, Gary W. The Confederate War (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997). Pp. 218.

Ramsdell, Charles W. Behind the Lines of the Southern Confederacy. The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History at Louisiana State University, 1937 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943). Pp. 136.

To fully comprehend the significance of the Civil War, the most important event in the history of the United States, it is necessary to understand its outcome. Such an understanding will allow one to more fully appreciate the monumental changes that the war brought about: the remaking of the Southern social and economic structure, the strengthening of the Federal government, and the elimination of the major sectional distinctions in this country. Confederate nationalism and popular will were clearly major parts of the Confederate war effort, but there is not a historical consensus as to how decisive these factors were. To gain perspective on the influence of nationalism and will on Confederate defeat, it is necessary to look at what historians have said about these issues as well as the other ideas put forth as explanations.

The reasons put forward to explain the Confederacy's¹ defeat can be broadly grouped into two categories, internal and external. James M. McPherson defines internal explanations as those that "focus mainly or entirely on the Confederacy and usually phrase the question as 'Why the

South Lost,” (Boritt, 18). McPherson identifies three categories of internal explanations: internal conflict, internal alienation, and lack of will (ibid., 23-34). A fourth not stated by McPherson is economic inadequacy. External explanations, again according to McPherson, “look at both the Union and Confederacy, and often phrase it as ‘Why the North Won’” (ibid., 18). McPherson identifies two major forms of external interpretation, the numbers and resources theory and a theory of leadership (ibid., 19-23 and 35-39).

Internal conflict was provoked by adherence to the principles of state rights, democracy, and individualism. These are inter-related because they all stem from political beliefs close to the hearts of antebellum Southerners. The state rights explanation holds that the relentless centralization employed by Jefferson Davis’s administration angered a number of Southerners who believed in the supremacy and independence of the individual states. These conservatives saw Davis’s centralization programs as the same kind of tyranny that they had seceded to avoid, and therefore sought to obstruct what they saw as Davis’s despotism. Southerners also held democracy and individual liberty in high esteem. Centralizing policies such as the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, military conscription, and the impressment of personal property flew in the face of these traditional political values and created further resentment and obstruction among the civilian population.

The internal alienation idea focuses on class conflict within the Confederacy. According to this theory, the great majority of the Southern population came to resent the behavior and actions of the planter class and did not consider the establishment of a Confederate nation as an imperative goal. One disaffected class was made up of non-slaveholding whites, two-thirds of the white Southern population (Boritt, 26) of five-and-one-half million. The view that the Confederacy was a government founded to protect slavery, the livelihood of the planters, would naturally lead many of this class to believe that they were fighting for the interests of the rich. Conscription, impressment, and the behavior of the planter class as the war progressed encouraged such feelings. The other disaffected class was the slaves themselves, three-and-one-

half million of the seceded states' total population of nine million. After the Emancipation Proclamation made the destruction of slavery a war goal of the North, many slaves saw no reason to aid the Confederates and every reason to run away and support the Union effort. Slaves near the front and the occupied coastal areas frequently ran to Federal lines, sapping the Confederate labor force and augmenting that of the Union, as well as the Federal armies. In the interior, slaves unable to run away often resorted to sabotage and unruliness to hamper the Confederate war effort.

The lack-of-will hypothesis has three major components. First, its proponents argue that the Confederacy never had a true sense of nationalism, defined as "the emotional bonds between citizens of the would-be nation" (Beringer et al., 66) and "that almost mystical sense of nationhood" (ibid., 64). Because the South shared its history, language, and religion with the North and because it lacked one universal motive for fighting the war, it never established itself as a nation distinct from the Union states. Second, the theory alleges that a sense of guilt about the institution of slavery sapped Confederate morale. Confederates had difficulty reconciling the practice of slavery with the humanitarian teachings central of their Christian religion. Also, the idea of fighting a war ostensibly to protect their liberty while they continued to deny it to the vast majority of the black population created dissonance in the mind of the average Confederate. Finally, the religious beliefs of most Confederates contributed to undermining the will to fight. "Evangelical Christianity had taught them that God operated in human affairs" (ibid., 268), so the majority of Southerners believed that the course of events reflected the will of God. When they perceived that the military struggle was going against them (as was so often the case beginning in July 1863), the Confederates came to the conclusion that they had earned God's disfavor. This was interpreted as either a sign that they must purify their behavior or that God did not favor their cause. As the military situation deteriorated in the second half of 1864, more and more Confederates came to the latter conclusion. The effect of this on a religious people is obvious; if God did not favor their cause, they must abandon it.

The explanation of economic inadequacy holds that the Confederate economy was incapable of meeting the challenge of sustaining the country in the face of a massive war. These economic shortcomings include lack of industry and transportation infrastructure, weak finances, and the restriction of trade, both with the North and with Europe.

Perhaps the oldest explanation for Confederate defeat is what Robert E. Lee termed the “overwhelming numbers and resources” of the North. This idea holds simply that the North’s enormous advantages in men and materiel were irresistible once they were properly applied.

Finally, there is the leadership explanation. McPherson divides leadership into three categories: military, logistic, and executive. In terms of military leadership, by the last year of the war, the North’s armies were in the hands of the best generals, men who had the ability to apply the power of the Northern war machine to maximum effect. The logistical aspect of the theory argues that the Union was more proficient than the Confederacy in supplying its military and in maximizing the productive power of its industry and transportation. Finally, the leadership theory contends that Abraham Lincoln was more flexible and visionary and better able to deal with the concerns of his civilian population than was Davis.

In addition to the internal and external explanations for the war’s outcome, there is another important distinction among the various interpretations of the Confederacy’s defeat. This is the question of inevitability. Was the North destined to win no matter what or was there a degree of contingency to events? Shelby Foote has been quoted as saying that “I don’t think the South ever had a chance to win that war” (Boritt, 21). The British historian Paul Johnson entitled a section of his History of the American People “Why the South was virtually bound to lose” (Johnson, 459).

Paul D. Escott’s After Secession is primarily concerned with the relationship between the Confederate central government and its various constituencies, including the planter class, the Southern yeomanry, and the state governments. Escott is a proponent of the lack-of-will theory, principally in regard to nationalism. He concludes that this lack of nationalism can be traced in

large degree to the inability of the Davis government to adequately address the economic and social disparity between the classes. "The greatest failure of Jefferson Davis's leadership lay in the domestic arena, in his inability to create the internal unity and spirit essential for the growth of Confederate nationalism" (272). Although it is not a focus of the book, he also favors a contingent view of the war's outcome, noting that "1864 was a crucial year in which both the North and the South had a chance to attain their goals...the South could win the Civil War" (196).

The planter class played a role in the lack of Confederate nationalism. "Many planters...revealed that their primary interest was in maintaining the status quo in a more narrowly conceived war" (90). "Many seemed devoted only to the protection of privilege and slavery. They wanted to keep their way of life as it had been...unaltered in a world that was being transformed" (273). The planters had brought on the war to insure the preservation of slavery, their economic life's blood. When the war effort demanded sacrifices from them, the planters proved unwilling to infringe in any way upon their personal interests. From secession to the end of the war, the planter class in general acted out of their own financial interest, and this lack of flexibility weakened Confederate nationalism.

The yeomanry were initially disaffected by the perception that they were fighting to protect the interests of the rich. Even as the South seceded in 1860-61, "some men from nonslaveholding regions of the South refused to welcome the advent of the Confederacy or to contribute their energies to the establishment of a southern nation" (94). This disaffection was minimal at first, but grew in part because of failures of the central government. "Yeomen farmers reached [their limit] when they felt that the war only served the interest of the slaveholder while it injured their own. ... Only the knowledge that the wealthy classes were making sacrifices equal to [their own] might have been able to avert [this]." (104). Soon, it became clear that the wealthy were not making these sacrifices. The conscription laws left many of the poorer families without their primary provider and countless small towns without essential services such as tanners and smiths. Escott recites a litany of complaints to the government describing the resulting

conditions. The exemptions to conscription infuriated the common people. The rich, through connections or sheer bribery, were often able to obtain exemptions, medical certificates, and assignments far from the firing line. The practice of substitution, by which a draftee could buy a replacement, was clearly an option open only to the rich. Impressment, the practice of requisitioning food and supplies from citizens, made life very difficult for many families struggling to get by on what they had even before government officers took their share. Worse, it was improperly administered. Officers were often corrupt, failing to pay prescribed prices or to pay at all and taking a cut for their own profit. Those citizens nearest major railroads and the front bore a disproportionate burden. Escott offers this summary:

Without the support of the common people the Confederacy could not survive, and it became increasingly apparent as the war progressed that the government was not meeting the needs of its poorer citizens. Occasionally Davis's administration displayed its concern, but more often government measures made the economic position of the yeomen even more precarious than it already was. The Davis administration labored under severe restraints, but its failure to relieve the suffering of the poor cannot be explained wholly by the pressures of war. There was also a failure of imagination on the part of the government. Measures to aid the common people usually came as an afterthought if at all. Never did the administration adopt a major policy based on the need to win the affections and loyalty of the yeomen on whom the Confederacy ultimately depended. (151)

Clearly, Escott lays the lion's share of the blame for what he called "the quiet rebellion of the common people" at the door of Jefferson Davis.

Escott disagrees with the state rights explanation for defeat. First and foremost, he argues that the words and actions of the obstructionists failed to prevent effective centralization and, what is more, there were many who welcomed the efforts of the central government. Escott remarks that "a powerful and extensive central government came into being" in the South (54-

55). He points out that Davis quickly and completely asserted control over the military by not allowing individual states to determine how their troops would be used (57). Davis oversaw the construction of two railroads (an explicitly unconstitutional enterprise) and urged the passing of laws to “stimulate...vital industries” such as mining and manufacturing of essentials. With the approval of Congress, Davis instituted the first conscription law in North American history in April 1862. Despite vocal opposition from Gov. Joseph E. Brown of Georgia and the *Charleston Mercury*, every state supreme court in which conscription was challenged upheld it (88).

However loud the opponents of centralization were, they did not prevent the Davis administration’s policies from being effective. “On the whole, people accepted [Davis’s] leadership and the government’s assumption of major new powers” (136). The vocal attacks on Davis’s centralization policies by state leaders (such as Brown and Zebulon Vance of Georgia and North Carolina, respectively) and newspapers (for example, the *Charleston Mercury* and the *Richmond Examiner* and *Whig*) give the impression of widespread opposition to the concentration of power in Richmond. While it is certainly true that this opposition existed, it was often merely “a useful tool for any politician who wanted to rise on the falling fortunes of the South” (92). Escott points out that the state rights argument “focused unspecific resentments and fed on disappointments” and that the “ambitious politician saw that the states’ rights issue could concentrate this *general malaise* and yield political dividends” (ibid., emphasis added). This general malaise arose from other factors (the progress of the war, the economic situation of individuals) and the dissenters were often or in part only using the traditional doctrine of state rights as a vehicle to attack the Davis administration. Again, when state rights became a major issue late in the war, Escott notes “this resurgence had its origin in the poverty and suffering that gripped the South rather than in the differences over constitutional theory” (209).

The two major conclusions of Escott’s study are that the doctrine of state rights did not seriously inhibit the Confederate war effort and that Davis failed to adequately meet the needs and understand the feelings of the common people. Escott successfully makes his case on both

counts. Given the size of the military and the authority exercised over it, the Confederate government's deep involvement in the economy, and the fact that war measures like conscription and impressment were upheld by the states, it is abundantly clear that Davis achieved a great degree of centralization despite the ruckus raised by the state rights traditionalists. It is also clear that Davis did not go far enough to support the middle and lower classes of the Confederacy. Trade with the enemy, pledges of loyalty to the Union, desertion, and the citizens' protests over privation among the citizenry are all measures of Davis's failure. What is more, what efforts the central government did make to help the citizenry were often dwarfed by those of the state governments, especially that of Georgia. Had Davis been able to support the common people as well as Gov. Brown and others did, it might have engendered more loyalty to the Confederate government.

Gary W. Gallagher's The Confederate War contends that the Confederate people exhibited a great degree of popular will and a strong sense of nationalism. He also argues that the Confederate military strategy was about the best that could have been adopted. In the end, the Confederacy lost not for lack of effort or poor strategy, but because "the Confederate military [was] unable to win enough victories at crucial times to [achieve] independence" (11). Gallagher clearly endorses the contingency theory, stating explicitly "I contend that the Confederacy could have won the war" (12).

In assessing the popular will of the Confederacy, Gallagher asserts that asking why the Confederacy fell apart is the wrong question; the question should be why it held together for so long. He notes the immense cost of the conflict to the South and compares it to other war efforts in American history. The death rate of Confederate soldiers (from both battle and sickness) came to roughly one third of men in uniform, compared to 17.5 percent for the North, and 7.7 percent in Vietnam, the highest rate of any other American war (29). The war also cost the Confederacy "two-thirds of its assessed wealth" (30). It is obvious that the Confederates lost more in blood and treasure than any other white people in American history. Gallagher refers to a statement

from Why the South Lost the Civil War, which clearly favors the lack-of-will theory, as “unintentionally ironic” because it admits that the trials endured by the Confederates were unequalled in American history (28). This is a false accusation, because it simplistically assumes that any positive display of will is inconsistent with the lack-of-will theory. In truth, this is not necessarily so. The popular will of the Confederacy may have been great, as evidenced by the people’s endurance of four years of war, but it still may not have been *great enough*. Finally, Gallagher writes that “many thousands of Confederate citizens had long since lost heart, their society showing the strains of disaffection, desertion, and class tension...but most [citizens] had continued to support Confederate resistance well into 1864 and beyond” (53). Here Gallagher admits that Confederate will give out, albeit under intense pressure from the North, and the war ended soon thereafter. He seems to say that although popular will did eventually falter, it only did so after great distress, therefore the Confederacy demonstrated great popular will. Again, this does not eliminate lack of popular will as a cause for Confederate defeat, it merely illustrates that popular will endured until very late in the conflict.

Gallagher next seeks to establish that the Confederates exhibited a strong sense of nationalism. One interesting point made is the historian David Potter’s theory that “the attribution of nationality...involves...a sanction for the exercise of autonomy for self-determination” and that the historian is thus loathe to bestow a sense of nationalism on a group “of whom he morally disapproves” (70). Gallagher then applies this theory to Civil War historiography, because historians are bound to disapprove of a nation founded to defend chattel slavery. A twentieth century example is at direct odds with this contention. Nationalism is frequently cited as a major force in the origin of the Second World War. Germany, Italy, and Japan all felt slighted by the establishment of the peace in 1919, and a sense of national pride developed that demanded revenge. If historians will attribute nationalism to genocidal Nazism, why would they deny it to racist Confederates? Gallagher makes odd points after detailing the historiography of the lack-of-nationalism theory. He claims that these historians overlook the fact

that "Confederates by the thousands...exhibited a strong identification with their country" and that "these people accepted defeat because Union armies had overrun their territory and compelled...military forces to surrender" (71). These statements are all that Gallagher offers in the way of an argument; he is "assuming that strong national identity existed in the Confederacy" and attempting to describe its character (72), but never convincingly explains what led to this assumption. He says that "the conclusions in this book were drawn from the letters...of more than three hundred men and women" (ibid.), which is hardly a definitive sample. Gallagher also "judged expressions such as 'our country' ...to be evidence of Confederate nationalism" (73). This is flimsy reasoning. It is impossible to know how strongly they felt or if they were just speaking in a technical sense. It is easy for a person to profess nationalism in a letter, but what did they do when the situation became difficult? Relying on these letters and diaries so heavily fails to capture behavior, which is more important in discovering the population's true feelings. The best example of this problem is a female diarist who wrote that "slaveholders...will not tacitly yield their property & their hopes & allow a degraded race to be placed at one stroke on a level with them" but also that she was sustained by "faith in the *country*. Faith in the *Cause*...we cannot be defeated" (84-85, emphasis hers). She professed nationalism, but when self-sacrifice was demanded, she would not *act* by supporting emancipation. The one area in which Gallagher makes an extensively documented case for Confederate nationalism applies only to a small segment of the population, "slaveholding officers who had reached maturity during the 1850s" (96). To what extent this group's feelings can be extrapolated to the entire population is debatable.

Gallagher believes that a tendency to "[work] back from Appomattox" leads historians to the conclusion that Confederate strategy was flawed, simply because they did not win (117). He makes a strong point here; the only way to judge Confederate strategy is to compare the methods used with the alternatives. The principal alternatives were a more purely defensive strategy, avoiding bloody offensive battles, and guerilla warfare. Gallagher astutely points out that an

important facet of strategy is that it would have to meet the expectations of the public to be successful; neither of these alternatives did so. With Napoleon as the model great captain, most people saw war in terms of the battle and expected their armies to march forward, engage the enemy, and win Austerlitz and Friedlands that forced the enemy to sue for peace. They were unable to appreciate military results not crowned with enemy retreats after a confrontation. If the Confederates had relied purely on the defensive and maneuver, the citizens would have viewed the military situation unfavorably, severely undercutting morale. Gallagher dismisses the possibility of guerilla warfare because it did not fit the people's "martial tradition" and because it would "risk of disrupting their social and economic control over...black people" (141).

Gallagher argues for three main points: that the Confederacy maintained strong popular will, that it possessed a strong sense of nationalism, and that it adopted the most reasonable military strategy. He is successful on the first point, but fails in that establishing the existence of popular will does not negate the lack-of-will theory. On the second point Gallagher is less successful, as the evidence is anecdotal in nature and cannot be confidently applied to the entire South. On the third point, Gallagher makes his strongest case, pointing out that strategic alternatives did not meet the expectations of the public and that the failure to meet expectations would be disastrous for citizen morale. Gallagher's conclusion is that the popular internal explanation of lack-of-will is not the primary cause of Confederate defeat. He decides that the Confederate military simply did not produce victories at the optimum times and that, by implication, the Federals did; the Confederacy was crushed from the outside, it did not crumble from within. This is not an endorsement of the resources or leadership theories, necessarily. The Northern economic and population advantages played a role, but were not decisive. Gallagher also does not say that the Federal leadership was superior, only that its success came at more opportune times. The conclusion is that the military contest was very close and the timing of Union victories made the difference. In fact, this is essentially the same explanation given by McPherson in his essay; McPherson terms it contingency. This is closely in line with the idea of

contingency as simply the opposite of inevitability, and Gallagher explicitly endorses that concept.

The authors² of Why the South Lost the Civil War take more or less the opposite stance from Gallagher. They identify the “weakness of southern nationalism as...the proximate cause of Confederate defeat” (3). Specifically, they subscribe to the lack-of-will thesis as defined by McPherson, with its three pillars of weak nationalism, guilt, and religion. In stark contrast to Gallagher’s conclusion that the Confederacy’s defeat can be explained by military means, the authors argue that the military struggle was essentially a strategic stalemate. In closing in on the lack-of-will hypothesis as the true cause of Confederate defeat they utilize a process of elimination that removes the other possibilities. They do specifically “reject monocausation” and assert that, “doubtless all [of these hypotheses] played some role” (5). It is important to understand that the authors are not being reductionist in focusing on the lack of will, but are only identifying it as the primary source of defeat.

The authors downplay the role of economic inadequacy in Confederate defeat. “No Confederate army lost a crucial battle or campaign because of a lack of ammunition, guns, or even shoes and food” (13). This being true, then it stands to reason that however dire the economic situation was, it did not cripple the war effort. The authors also point out that the blockade, though it may have restricted supply, was not decisive. The figures for blockade-running success are indicative of this. The lowest success rate was 62 percent in 1863; it was 87 percent in the dark year of 1864 (57). “Clearly, Confederates could get whatever they wanted or needed through the blockade” (62). The primary impact of economic difficulties lay in its “debilitating effect on public will.” There was no economic collapse, but economic hardship contributed to the lack of will.

The authors of this study follow the lead of Escott in deciding that state rights were not the primary cause of defeat. Escott’s arguments and points are re-stated here as the authors stress the doctrine’s role as a cover for more general problems (207), the Confederacy’s “carefully

managed and assertively created” “forced industrialization” (216), and the fact that “the greatest support for conscription came from...state courts” (225).

The related issues of democracy and individual liberty are eliminated as a primary cause, but are shown to contribute to the weakening of Confederate willpower. The authors note that “internal dissent...did not always do harm” (289). This is analogous to the often contentious political climate of the United States today. Despite the conflict between parties and the polarizing nature of issues like abortion and gun control, no one would suggest that the United States is on the verge of collapsing because of internal dissent. In the midst of a war, however, the dissent creates disunity in both purpose and feeling. This is most starkly seen in the feeling among many Southerners that Davis had become what they feared Lincoln to be because of centralizing policies like conscription and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. If Davis too was perceived as a threat to democracy, then the choice between Davis and Lincoln was less clear and the need to resist Lincoln less imperative.

Turning to military strategy and external factors, the authors are in agreement with Gallagher as to the proper choice of strategy. They agree that a guerilla strategy would not have been feasible because the Confederate people had a conventional view of war (106). The authors are also in accord with Gallagher in recognizing the wisdom of the offensive-defensive strategy and the certain failure of a purely defensive strategy. Quoting the great Prussian theorist Karl von Clausewitz, the authors agree that “once the defender has gained an important advantage, defense as such has done its work. While he is enjoying this advantage he must strike back, or he will court destruction” (259). Faulty strategy, then, could not be the source of Confederate defeat. Nor could the primary source be military defeat, as Gallagher contends. The authors argue that the Confederacy maintained sufficient military power at the end of the war to continue the struggle, as illustrated by the findings of a joint House-Senate committee in January 1865. Williamson C. Oldham, a member of that committee, recalled “that we [the Confederacy] were in possession of resources, sufficient to enable us to carry on the war for an indefinite period of

time” (33). Even at this late date, the Confederate military was substantial. The defeat of a single army, that of Lee, would not have been significant enough to cause all Confederate forces to capitulate in rapid succession, as they did, if the considerations of their commanders were purely military.

Having argued against the decisiveness of economic factors, military strategy, external factors, and the doctrines of state rights and individual liberty, the authors have eliminated all but one possible primary cause for Confederate: lack of will. They subscribe to each part of the theory: weak nationalism, guilt, and religion. They argue that the weakness of nationalism was a product of many factors. First, the institution of slavery was the only effective distinction between North and South; shared history, language, and religion served to create a sentimental bond between the sections. Also, the variety of reasons for fighting made it difficult to maintain a unified front. Many people who would otherwise have been Unionists were galvanized by Lincoln’s call for troops, for it meant that peace within the Union was no longer possible. Some fought to defend their homes from invasion, others to preserve slavery as a way of life, and still others for constitutional reasons. When one of these reasons was subordinated or done away with, it created resentment. This occurred when the Confederacy debated emancipation, voiding the principal impetus for founding the Confederacy and going to war. “What of those...who left the Union for no other reason than to preserve slavery? Would they not feel a particular sense of betrayal?” (384).

The guilt and religious aspects of the lack-of-will hypothesis are intertwined. Many historians argue that a substantial number of slaveholders felt guilt over the institution of slavery. Much of this stems from their cherishing of liberty. The authors paraphrase Charles G. Sellers, Jr.: “when white southerners demanded freedom for themselves without acknowledging that others had similar rights, they engaged in ‘a disguised protest against...the South’s daily betrayal of its liberal self’” (358). This feeling was exacerbated, first by the Emancipation Proclamation, which turned world opinion in favor of the Union, and then because the slaveholders’ own

religion taught them that, "all men were equally degraded...and...equal before God" (359). In addition to reinforcing guilt about slavery, Southerners' religion also led them to question the worthiness of their cause. "If...God controlled events and victory was a sign of God's favor, then...if the South began to lose battles, it could only mean that God did not side with the Confederacy" (98). This "religious fatalism" created a vicious circle. Military defeat (or the perception thereof) made Southerners believe that they had earned God's disfavor, which weakened their morale. The weakened morale contributed to other defeats, and so on. When major military disasters came in late 1864, it was hard for religious Confederates to deny that God did not seem to favor their cause, and who was willing to defy God?

In response to the question of how the Confederacy lasted so long despite its weaknesses, the authors offer up the perceptive concept of cognitive dissonance.

"After being exposed to evidence of one's senses which unequivocally demonstrates a belief system to be wrong," notes Leon Festinger, "people tend to prosely[tize] more vigorously for the belief system." They ignore new and incompatible information: hard-line Confederates, for example, who were firmly committed to the decision for secession and war, reduced dissonance by changing information – claiming that they fought the war for independence...- rather than by changing behavior and giving up the fight. (285)

This passage applies the concept of dissonance to Southerners who were forced to give up slavery to continue the struggle for independence, but it can apply to any Confederate who was confronted with evidence that he or she made the wrong choice (i.e., secession). This was dangerous for the state of Confederate will: "a determination to fight on based on the product of dissonance resolution provided a very feeble substitute for a will based on strong nationalism" (ibid.).

On the whole, the authors of this study provide a convincing argument in favor of the lack-of-will thesis. For a variety of reasons, the Confederates came to see surrender as an option.

The centralization of the Confederate government made seem it little different from the Federal government that the South had seceded from. The combination of the Emancipation Proclamation and the realization late in the war that emancipation and arming of slaves would be necessary to stave off defeat meant that the impetus for the founding of the Confederacy, the protection of slavery, was gone. Virginia senator R.M.T. Hunter concluded that “if the Confederacy had abandoned the [original] war goal of preservation of slavery, how could it justify the loss of so many lives to save it?” (391). What was more, many Southerners felt “that ‘there is no humiliation in our position after such a struggle’ ” (382). Surrender with honor and the lack of a better alternative within the Confederacy made defeat palatable, which naturally sapped will severely. A shortcoming of the book, however, is how it handles external factors. Approaching their subject from an almost strictly Confederate viewpoint, the authors oversimplify the Northern effort, making it seem a constant exertion of force. The authors thus fail to appreciate how the evolving Union effort influenced the level of will within the Confederacy. Also, the idea that there was a military stalemate does not seem to hold up. Grant’s raiding strategy of 1864-65 effectively destroyed the Confederacy’s logistic infrastructure, making it impossible to continue the war by conventional means. Finally, the book makes no explicit statements about inevitability. McPherson, in his essay in Why the Confederacy Lost, seems to implicitly include the authors among the inevitability school. There does not seem to be evidence for one or the other viewpoint in the book.

Why the Confederacy Lost, a collection of essays edited by Gabor S. Boritt, focuses on the military side of the war, which Boritt contends has been neglected in recent times. “[The essay writers] agree with Lincoln’s judgment...that upon ‘the progress of our arms...all else chiefly’ depended” (7). Boritt, however, goes on to contend that both the internal and the external groups of explanations “seem to assume Confederate defeat to be inevitable” (ibid.). He puts forth contingency as a separate conclusion. Although this is in agreement with both Gallagher and McPherson, it is not necessarily true that internal (or external) explanations lead to

inevitability. Escott, for one, certainly diagnoses Confederate defeat as resulting from internal problems, but he explicitly admitted the existence of contingency and argues that if Davis had been more attuned to the common people, the outcome may have been different. Aside from such distinctions, all five essays in the book subscribe to contingency in some respect, whether as an explanation unto itself or an accepted element of the war. Two of the essays, Gary W. Gallagher's "'Upon Their Success Hangs Momentous Interests': Generals" and Joseph Glatthaar's "Black Glory: The African-American Role in Union Victory" are not directly related to a fundamental explanation for Confederate defeat. James M. McPherson's "American Victory, American Defeat" examines most of the major explanations discussed in the other books under review and finds them all lacking to varying degrees. Archer Jones's "Military Means, Political Ends: Strategy" is essentially a synopsis of the strategic analysis from Why the South Lost the Civil War and How the North Won, books that Jones co-authored. As before, Jones contends that, "military strategy had a neutral effect in the war" (76). Finally, Reid Mitchell's "The Perseverance of the Soldiers" concentrates on the willpower displayed by the common soldiers in both armies.

McPherson's essay is an analysis of the prominent explanations for the war's outcome. He first examines the "overwhelming numbers and resources" hypothesis. McPherson notes several examples of nations that won their independence against longer odds than the Confederacy, and concludes that, "northern superiority in manpower and resources was a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* cause of victory" (23, McPherson's emphasis). McPherson dismisses the state rights, democracy, and internal alienation theories for reasons noted by Escott and the authors of Why the South Lost the Civil War. McPherson next attacks the pillars of the lack-of-will theory. His defense of Confederate nationalism falters for the same reasons that Gallagher's did. He says that Southern diarists expressed a "fiercer patriotism" than Northerners, which is merely an arbitrary value judgment. Like Gallagher, McPherson is too willing to accept the words of the Confederates without critically analyzing their actions. He dismisses the guilt

aspect on two points. First, guilt over slavery did not cripple the Revolution; McPherson fails to note that half of the colonies had little to no slavery. Second, most Confederates thought they were fighting for independence. In this he seems a little naïve and too willing to accept the protestations of Confederate apologists. Certainly the Confederates fought for independence, but they sought independence in order to preserve slavery. McPherson skips the religious aspect, but does note an important distinction. He contends that what many lack-of-will theorists are arguing for is a *loss* of will. This introduces “external agency” and reveals that, “military defeat caused loss of will” (34). Beringer and his co-authors acknowledge this cause-and-effect relationship when they write that desertion began to escalate after the fall of Atlanta and Sheridan’s campaign in the Shenandoah Valley. McPherson finally moves on to the leadership theory. Although he agrees with it in part, McPherson ultimately finds it inadequate. Instead, he looks to “the contingency that hung over...each decision” (42) as an explanation unto itself. McPherson’s most useful ideas are the distinction between loss and lack-of-will and the emphasis on contingency.

Jones’s essay highlights ideas such as the logistical focus of the Federal strategy and the public’s perception that war was made up of battles. Jones’s conclusion is almost contradictory. He writes that “if the Union had used [raids] a year or more earlier, it is easy to speculate that their military and political effectiveness would have ended the war sooner” (78). In the very next paragraph, however, Jones contends that, “in that neither belligerent outshone the other in its strategy, military strategy had a neutral effect on the war” (ibid.). Clearly both of these statements cannot be true. If Grant’s raiding strategy could have ended the war a year early if first employed in 1863, then the war might have lasted until 1866 if it was applied a year later. Grant’s strategy during the fall and winter of 1864-65 resulted in immense damage to the logistical infrastructure of the South. It was no longer possible for the Confederacy to maintain and supply large conventional armies in the field. Since the Southern people were not willing to fight an unconventional war, Grant’s strategy *did* have an effect on the war’s outcome.

Mitchell's essay is most interesting in the contrasts it illuminates between the Northern and Southern common soldier. Mitchell describes some of the factors that engendered the will to make war: community pressure, ideology, and later, loyalty to fellow soldiers (a surrogate family) and a responsibility to those who had died. All of these are common to both sides. The foremost difference is the nature of the ideologies. The Confederates "suffer[ed] from ideological and structural weakness...the fact that the Confederacy was created as a means to defend racial slavery" (124). Mitchell points to two effects of this weakness. The first is that it burdened the South with a divided population. Slaves frequently wrought havoc in the interior, ran away, and sapped manpower by requiring overseers. This is a valid point. The second is that the presence of the slave population prevented the Confederacy from undertaking a guerilla war, the most likely strategy for success. While this is certainly true, it is hardly the only reason. The perception of war and the martial ideals held by the public probably meant that a conventional strategy had to be adopted to meet public expectations, even if the socio-economic order was not threatened by guerilla war. Mitchell next turns to the reasons for the demoralization of soldiers. Reasons such as the risk of death and war weariness were common to both. The Confederates, however, had fears of slave rebellion and the invasion of their homes by Federal troops. They felt the "tug of home," which was not unique, but their situation was different from that of the Federals because the situation on the Southern homefront was desperate and dangerous. These factors unique to the demoralization of the Confederate soldier were caused by the encroachment of Federal forces.

Charles W. Ramsdell's Behind the Lines of the Southern Confederacy concentrates on the economic situation of the South. Ramsdell concludes that the Confederacy possessed inadequate economic resources to accomplish the task at hand. Ramsdell thus adopts an internal explanation. He is also decidedly in the camp of inevitability.

The seceding state governments and then the Confederate government quickly exhausted their supply of gold. It was used early in the war to make purchases outside the Confederacy.

Gradually, the gold supply worked its way out of the South (9). Because of the war, it would never return and the Confederacy had a permanent gold deficiency. To raise money, all Southern governments resorted to heavy bond issues and irredeemable paper currency (12), which fed rapid inflation.

The weakness of the government's finances eventually led to the ruin of private manufacturers. In the second half of the war, the Confederate currency was all but worthless (\$0.04 to the dollar in January 1864), so trade was reduced to the barter system in many areas, including factory pay. Manufacturers would have preferred more profitable private customers, but the central government monopolized their business by threatening conscription and impressment. This forced the factories to accept government business and payment in nearly worthless currency, which they could not pay out as wages.

A variety of factors combined to reduce many common people to privation. Inflation and scarcity drove the price of essentials to ridiculous levels (salt was \$0.65 for a 210 lb. sack in May 1861, \$20.00 a year later) (19). Unemployment rose in port cities that could no longer trade with the North and whose access to Europe and Mexico was somewhat restricted by the blockade (23). The service of adult males in the army hampered food production both directly and indirectly because slaves could not be controlled. The inadequate system of transportation in the Confederacy created a situation in which many people went without supplies when they were available elsewhere. "Goods frequently piled up in warehouses" at terminal points because of differences in railroad gauges (96). The common people had fewer funds to pursue scarcer necessities, and they called for government support.

There are numerous instances of state governments acting to alleviate the difficulties of the poor. During the winter of 1862-63, Georgia appropriated \$2.5 million for direct relief and an additional \$600,000 for supplies. North Carolina and Mississippi set aside \$500,000 each. Louisiana appropriated \$5 million in aid (62-63). In December 1863, Georgia instituted a progressive income tax. These actions continued through the remainder of the war. Meanwhile,

the Confederate central government's actions did more to exacerbate the common people's situation than to alleviate it. The most troublesome programs were exemptions from conscription "which seemed to small farmers to cover everybody except themselves" (52) and impressment. Impressment officers "took what they wanted without permitting a local board of arbitration to adjudicate the price, as was required by law, and either failed to pay for the articles seized or gave no certificates or false ones" (93). These findings are in agreement with Escott in that they point to a failure of the central government to meet the needs of the common people.

Ramsdell confines his explanation of defeat to the economic and internal alienation spheres. He dismisses the state rights explanation because, he says, the Southern people welcomed "a remarkable development of political authority over [their] ordinary activities" (81). Nor does Ramsdell seem to subscribe to the lack-of-will idea. He ends the book with a tribute to the "gallant and courageous people" who upheld the Lost Cause "until their whole economic and social order collapsed about them" (121-122). Ramsdell was also a believer in the idea of inevitable Confederate defeat. With regard to finance, he argues that "under the conditions existing at the beginning, the resort to paper currency was unavoidable. And there was no turning back when once that course was taken" (87). In regard to the overall picture, Ramsdell writes "that it would have required a miracle of statesmanship to solve these difficulties. And we cannot expect miracles" (3).

The failure of Confederate nationalism and will was vastly important in the outcome of the Civil War. More specifically, it was truly the "proximate cause" of defeat. No other explanation can adequately explain the sudden collapse and acceptance of surrender by a government and people that still controlled the majority of its territory and continued to field large armies until the final weeks of the war.

Stating that the primary cause of Confederate defeat was a shortcoming of will implies that in purely material terms the Confederates were capable of continuing and eventually winning the war. How could this have been done? Although the armies of the Confederacy were still

being supplied at the war's end, it was clear that Grant's raiding strategy was working. With powerful, mobile, well-equipped Federal forces moving at will through the Confederacy, it would be impossible to maintain the logistical infrastructure indefinitely. If conventional warfare were still possible for the South in April 1865, it would not be for long. The alternative was unconventional or guerilla war. Both Mitchell (Boritt, 125) and the authors of Why the South Lost the Civil War (Beringer et al., 171) are of the opinion that the Union could not have reconquered the South if the Confederates resorted to guerilla war. The reasons why this did not occur have been discussed above to a degree. A primary reason is that the Confederates did not want to risk destroying the socio-economic order of their region through a guerilla war. If they had dispersed into the interior in small bands, the central government would have become powerless and a state of quasi-anarchy would have reigned. Under such an arrangement, it would no longer have been possible to enslave or otherwise oppress the black population. Slavery and any practical form of white supremacy would be lost and perhaps forever. Another reason is that guerilla warfare brought about "consequences...so terrible that for the sake of humanity we ought to hope never to see it" according to the Swiss veteran of the Peninsular War, Antoine-Henri Jomini (ibid., 341). The Confederates may simply have not had the stomach and lack of humanity necessary to wage such a horrific style of war. Nevertheless, if they had, as Spain had under the heel of France in 1808, then it would have been virtually impossible for the Union to impose its will on the Confederate states. That the Confederates did not undertake this final, drastic step when it was a possibility³ is an indication that they were not willing to do everything in their power to establish a Confederate nation. That can be construed as nothing else than a level of will inadequate for the task.

The dilemma of guerilla warfare highlights another interesting question, because it forced the Confederates to choose between nationhood and the socio-economic order (which was maintained to a degree after Reconstruction with illegal oppressive policies in the place of slavery). What were the Confederate war goals? The authors of Why the South Lost the Civil

War contend that, as way to reduce the dissonance created by fighting a war for liberty while enslaving human beings, many Confederates “were willing to surrender slavery if to do so would help attain independence; more and more southerners claimed that they had sought independence all along. They substituted war goals” (285). Treating the goal of independence as a new idea born in the middle of the war is wrong. The goal of independence is inherent in the act of secession. The foundation of the Confederacy was an act of creating a new independent government. When the Union demanded that the disloyal states return or face military coercion, the Confederacy prepared to fight to preserve its newly asserted independence. The question of slavery was not a bone of contention between the Union and Confederacy in the spring of 1861, yet the Confederate states refused to return to the Union. All of this is not to say that slavery had nothing to do with secession or the Confederacy’s decision to fight. Preserving the institution of slavery was the sole significant reason for the formation of the Confederacy. It was the only one of their constitutional rights that the Southern states would fight to defend. The point is that slavery and independence were *both* war goals from the beginning, even if the latter was simply a means to safeguard the former. If the Confederacy had considered only slavery to be a war goal in 1861, it would not have bothered to secede. The act of secession was an explicit statement of the goal of independence and, what is more, it remained the technical and legal goal of the Confederacy throughout the war. The question of war goals becomes important in determining what it was exactly that the Confederacy was trying to achieve. Because independence was the Confederacy’s technical goal and because after the Emancipation Proclamation it was the only means to the end of maintaining slavery, the goal of nationhood is the benchmark for measuring the level of will exerted during the war. In other words, the Confederate popular will to continue the war was the will the population as a whole held to become an independent nation.

Near the end of their book, the authors of Why the South Lost the Civil War devote a chapter to the South’s postwar claims of success, specifically in the areas of white supremacy (which they maintained illegally after Reconstruction), honor (from enduring such a monumental

struggle), and state rights (preserved through Reconstruction itself). It is an interesting viewpoint because it illustrates that the Confederates could claim a not unsubstantial element of success despite their complete subjugation. They had not won their primary goals, slavery and independence, but had achieved lesser ones and much weaker forms of the greater. Still, what does Southern rationalization about the outcome of the war tell us about the cause of defeat? The authors finally shed some light on that question with their brief description of the War of the Triple Alliance in South America from 1865 to 1870. The difference in resources between the Triple Alliance and Paraguay was far greater than that between the Union and Confederacy. Nevertheless, the Paraguayans held out for as long as and at far greater cost than the Confederates, as their population was reduced to 44 percent of its antebellum level. Of the survivors, only 13 percent were adult men (441). The difference is in the post-war outlook of the defeated peoples. "Paraguayans...have no need to find victory in defeat or to conjure up a rationale for salvaging their honor. Paraguayans' genuine and enduring nationalism...requires no further justification than resentment of past arrogance and foreign intrusion" (442). Had the Confederates possessed the strong nationalism of Paraguay, they would have had no need for constitutional legalism and concepts of honor; simply defending their country would have been enough.

If a lack of will was the proximate cause of Confederate defeat, what was the exact mechanism at work in the sudden collapse of the Confederacy in the spring of 1865? A slow decline in national will would seem to lead to a slow, intermittent flickering out of military resistance. Instead, every significant body of Confederate troops under arms capitulated within five weeks after the fall of Richmond. Beringer and his co-authors argue that ever since the crushing defeats at Atlanta and Cedar Creek in the fall of 1864 (and the re-election of Lincoln that they presumably insured in the minds of Northerners and Southerners alike) the desertion rate had been escalating rapidly. The spring collapse could then be the culmination of a winter-long decline in morale, but this still does not seem to explain the rapid collapse that followed

Appomattox. One of Gallagher's principal ideas may offer insight into this question.

"Lee's...victories...made the Army of Northern Virginia a highly visible symbol of Confederate nationalism. Civilians and soldiers alike rallied to that symbol" (140). Gallagher documents this idea of Lee's army as a pre-eminent symbol of the Confederacy very strongly; it seems to have been true even of soldiers in other departments. When Lee was forced to capitulate at Appomattox, many citizens, soldiers, and even generals probably considered it be the de facto end of the Confederacy. The news of the Confederacy's premier army and general surrendering, compounded by the already crushing war weariness, no doubt hastened the surrenders of Johnston, Taylor, and Smith beyond what would have been necessary if left to purely military means. What is more, the evidence that the Confederate population placed so much faith and hope in one man, Lee, can be viewed as symptomatic of weak nationalism. The rapid collapse testifies to the fact that many Confederates identified more with a single general than with the nation as a whole by April 1865.

An interesting concept is the idea of contingency and what it entails. On the face of it, it seems only to be the opposite of inevitability; it is the belief that the war may have had some other outcome. Of this there seems little doubt. Two military operations (the fall of Atlanta and Sheridan's three victories over Early) may have turned certain defeat in the presidential election for Lincoln in August 1864 into a resounding victory for the war party. In the absence of those victories, the election of McClellan may have drastically altered the outcome of the war. Boritt, however, considers contingency to be an explanation itself. As noted above, both Gallagher and McPherson identify contingency as the primary explanation of Confederate defeat. In giving this explanation, McPherson writes "we must turn from large generalizations that imply inevitability and study instead the contingency that hung over each military campaign, each battle, each election, each decision during the war" (42). This is not a sufficient explanation by itself. Contingency only implies that each event may have had a different outcome, it cannot explain why. Indeed, for most campaigns and battles, the reason for the outcome is military leadership,

which McPherson considers a flawed explanation for Confederate defeat. In addition, looking only at the contingency of events fails to consider the broader make-up of the Confederacy (and the Union for that matter). Class divisions, economic hardship, and the popular will and sense of nationalism felt by the citizenry are what determine how well a nation is able to support its military establishment and therefore its operations. To dismiss these things as broad generalizations is to swing the pendulum too far back to a purely political and military reading of history. The proper method for getting at the root source of Confederate defeat is to discover how all of these factors, social, economic, political, and military, relate to one another.

Understanding of these relationships reveals that lack-of-will and nationalism was the primary cause of Confederate defeat. To imply that this was the only cause or that the causes of Confederate defeat were strictly internal would be narrow-minded and wrong. Beringer and his co-authors write that “the Confederacy succumbed to internal rather than external causes. An insufficient nationalism failed to survive the *strains imposed by the lengthy hostilities*” (439, emphasis added). One cannot ignore the fact that the Union was constantly applying pressure to the Confederacy and undertaking maneuvers both political and military to undermine the Confederate war effort. The South’s evangelical Christianity worked against it by encouraging doubt about God’s favor in time of defeat. It was this kind of doubt that sapped the will of the Confederates and brought about ultimate defeat, but it would not have been possible without Federal military victories in the first place. The Emancipation Proclamation crushed Confederate hopes of foreign recognition, turned the weight of world opinion against the South, and amplified the doubts about the institution among slaveholders. All of these will-weakening factors were instigated by a document issued by the Federal president. Finally, it was Federal military strategy that, by destroying the Confederacy’s logistical capacity, was rapidly rendering conventional warfare unfeasible for the Confederates in the spring of 1865. The authors of Why the South Lost the Civil War argue that the effects of military strategy were neutral, but they fail to acknowledge explicitly that the public perception of military events is as important as their actual military

impact when it comes to the maintenance of will. When Bragg retreated from a drawn battle at Murfreesboro, the North viewed it as a victory and its morale was boosted. Similarly, even if the succession of Federal victories in the fall of 1864 (Mobile Bay, Atlanta, Winchester, Cedar Creek) did not fundamentally break the military stalemate, the Confederate citizens and soldiers believed that they did, and their will to continue the war plummeted as a result – a direct result of Federal military operations. The same applies to the lesser internal issues. State rights doctrine did not inhibit the war effort materially, but the vocal obstructionism and vilification of Davis helped to sour the common people on the central government. The same can be said for the individual liberty explanation. The Confederacy had not collapsed economically by the spring of 1865; according to Ramsdell there was sufficient food but a lack of transportation (113), most likely a result of Grant's raids into the interior. While economic collapse had not happened, the privation and dire straits that affected particular areas created a war weariness that was a major drag on the will to continue fighting.

It is not hard to come to the conclusion that most wars are decided principally by the will of the contenders to continue the struggle. As shown above, all other factors both internal and external ultimately contribute to the popular will in some way; it is ultimately the level of willpower maintained that decides the outcome. Unless there is a marked difference in resources, technology, population, or a combination thereof between the belligerents, a nation cannot be conquered unless it allows itself to be, which Revolutionary America, Napoleonic Spain, and modern North Vietnam, among others, did not allow to happen. The level of a belligerent's will can be illustrated with the equation V/C , in which V equals the aggregate value attached by the population to the merit of war goals and C equals the population's perceived cost of the war at time X . Both variables are measured in the same unit, utility perhaps. The ratio measures the population's will to fight the war. As long as V is larger than C , then the resistance will be maintained on the whole because the goal is considered more valuable than the cost. V would remain unchanged unless the population comes to a new understanding about the nature of their

goals. In the Civil War South, the goals were the preservation of slavery and independence. Several things eventually affected the value of these goals in a substantial way: the various threats to slavery (because if slavery is not preserved then the goal is automatically less valuable), centralization (because a centralized government would be considered less valuable to most Southerners), religion (if God does not favor this goal, many Southerners would downgrade its value), and guilt (if slavery is wrong, then its preservation is less valuable). C is mostly determined by the vigor of the enemy's war effort; it would probably be measured in blood and treasure by most nations. The more casualties produced by Northern onslaughts, the greater the perceived cost of the war. Other factors affecting C would include economic hardship and any personal expenses and sacrifices. During the war, V was gradually devalued in the Confederacy by the factors mentioned above, while the relentless war effort of the Union insured that C rose until the ratio fell below one. When that happened, "Confederates, by thousands of individual decisions, abandoned the struggle" (Beringer et al, 439).

George W. Randolph wrote that, "there is no instance in history, of a people as numerous as we are inhabiting a country so extensive as ours being subjected if true to themselves" (ibid., 52). Randolph was probably correct, leaving one to conclude that the Confederates were not true to themselves or, more accurately, to the goal of nationhood implied by the acts of secession and the founding the Confederacy.

Notes

1 – Several of the books and essays under review make it a point to refer to the Confederacy and Confederates only by those names and not South or Southerner because of the lack of unanimity on secession. While that is a valid point, I think it is to a great degree semantic. I will use “Confederacy” and its various forms most often, as it is more accurate, but I will also use “South” when it is applicable and to “improve (my) style,” as Boritt admits in his introduction to Why the Confederacy Lost.

2 – Because I find it clumsy to refer to the authors of this book as “Beringer and his co-authors,” “Beringer and company,” or “Beringer, et al,” I will be referring to the group as simply “the authors” throughout the portion of the paper that reviews Why the South Lost the Civil War in particular. Elsewhere it is necessary to be more specific, but here it is the least cumbersome and stylistically easy way to refer to the group as a whole.

3 – Gallagher cites the same reasons for why the Confederacy did not undertake a large-scale guerilla war as Mitchell and the Beringer group did, but Gallagher stops short of saying that it could succeed. He insists that guerilla warfare was in such conflict with the Confederate ideals of “soldierly duty” that the Confederate would never have accepted it as a viable alternative. The operations in Missouri and conquered Tennessee would seem to belie this. Sherman said that “every house is a nest of secret, bitter enemies” and though “armies pass through the land, the war closes in and leaves the same enemy behind” (Beringer et al., 246-47), a description of effective guerilla war on a small-scale. Gallagher also notes the fallacy of applying twentieth-century lessons to a nineteenth-century example. He neglects to consider the example of Spain during the Napoleonic Wars and the Paraguayan example included in the Beringer group’s book. If guerilla warfare was successfully applied both before and after the Civil War, and on a small scale during it, then it stands to reason that it was a practicable alternative if the people were willing to make the sacrifice.

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UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Brad H. Buchanan

College: Business Administration Department: Finance

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Stephen V. Ash

PROJECT TITLE: The Role of Confederate Nationalism
and Popular Will in the Outcome of the
Civil War

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Stephen V. Ash, Faculty Mentor

Date: 5/7/01

Comments (Optional):

A fine piece of work - thorough + insightful,

SVA