

The Civil War**Lesson 5****The Politics of War****Key Terms and People**

Emancipation Proclamation Order issued by Lincoln freeing slaves behind Confederate lines

habeas corpus Court order that says that a person who is jailed has to appear before the court to determine why he or she is being jailed

Copperhead northern Democrat who advocated making peace with the Confederacy during the Civil War

conscription Drafting of civilians to serve in the army

Fort Pillow Site of Confederate massacre of more than 200 African American war prisoners

Before You Read

In the last lesson you read about the early battles of the Civil War. In this lesson you will learn about the political issues that arose during the Civil War.

As You Read

Use a chart to take notes on the causes and effects of different situations related to the Civil War.

BRITAIN REMAINS NEUTRAL**Why did Britain remain neutral?**

For many years, the South had supplied England with much of its cotton. When the Civil War broke out, the South hoped that Britain would lend its support and recognize it as an independent nation. But by the time the war broke out, Britain had a large supply of cotton and thus no longer depended on the South. Britain decided to remain neutral.

In 1861 an incident, better known as the Trent Affair, tested that neutrality. A Union warship stopped the British merchant ship *Trent* on the high seas. The captain removed two Confederate diplomats traveling to Britain. The

British threatened war against the Union and sent troops to Canada. Lincoln freed the prisoners and stated that the captain had acted without orders, thereby finding a peaceful solution to the crisis.

1. Why did Britain remain neutral?

PROCLAIMING EMANCIPATION**What led Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation?**

As the war dragged on, a growing number of people in the North felt that slavery should be abolished. At first,

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Lincoln hesitated to act on this issue. He did not feel he had the constitutional right to end slavery where it already existed.

But pressure to free the slaves steadily increased. As a result, Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** on January 1, 1863. The proclamation freed all slaves behind Confederate lines. The proclamation was a military policy. Lincoln reasoned that the slaves were enemy resources that contributed to the war effort. By declaring them free, they would no longer have to work for the southern cause. The proclamation did not apply to slave states still in the Union.

In the North, the Emancipation Proclamation gave the war a high moral purpose. Free blacks cheered the fact that they could now enlist in the Union army. However, the proclamation did not please everyone in the North. The Democrats claimed it would only prolong the war by antagonizing the South. Many Union soldiers accepted the proclamation grudgingly. They said they had no love for abolitionists or African Americans. However, they insisted they would support emancipation if that was what it took to reunify the nation.

Confederates reacted to the proclamation with fury. As northern Democrats had predicted, the proclamation made the Confederacy more determined than ever to fight to preserve its way of life.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, compromise was no longer possible. The Confederacy knew that if it lost, its slave-holding society would perish. The Union knew that it now could win only by completely defeating the Confederacy. From January 1863 on, it was a war to the death.

2. Name two reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation.

BOTH SIDES FACE POLITICAL PROBLEMS

What political problems did both leaders face?

Neither side in the Civil War was completely unified. Some northerners sided with the Confederates. Some southerners sympathized with the Union.

Both governments had to figure out what to do about dissent. Both presidents Davis and Lincoln expanded their presidential power to keep order and to put down opposition. Both presidents suspended the right of **habeas corpus**. This is a court order that says that a person who is jailed has to appear before the court to determine why he or she is being jailed. Suspending this right allowed police to arrest and hold dissenters without trial. This is what Lincoln did in Maryland when a crowd attacked a Union regiment. He did the same in other states, too. Among those arrested were **Copperhead** politicians. These were northern Democrats who urged peace with the South.

As the war continued, it claimed the lives of many soldiers. Soldiers on both sides deserted. Volunteers no longer provided enough soldiers. So both the North and South turned to **conscription**, or the drafting of civilians to serve in the army. Both armies allowed draftees to hire substitutes to serve in their places. Poor southerners complained. About 90 percent of eligible southern men served in the Confederate army. In the Union, in addition to hiring

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substitutes, draftees could pay a \$300 fee to get out of serving. Only 46,000 draftees served, while 87,000 paid to avoid service. About 2 million soldiers served in the Union army. About 92 percent were volunteers.

In parts of the North, workers who opposed conscription started several riots. The worst riot, in New York City, lasted four days. Poor white workers resented having to fight a war to free slaves, who, the whites believed, would move North and take their jobs. Rioters attacked well-dressed men on the street and African Americans. By the time federal troops ended the riot, more than 100 people were dead.

3. How did presidents Davis and Lincoln deal with political opposition to the war?

AFRICAN AMERICANS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

What discrimination did African Americans face?

At the beginning of the Civil War, neither side officially accepted African Americans as soldiers. Then, in 1862 Congress allowed African Americans to serve in the Union army. After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, many African Americans enlisted. While the North's total population consisted of only 1 percent African Americans, by the end of the war, African Americans made up 10 percent of the Union army. Many were former slaves from Virginia and other slave states, both Confederate and Union.

African American soldiers, however, faced discrimination. They served in separate regiments and could not have a rank above captain. They were usually paid less than whites, too. Some African American privates complained and refused to take less pay. Congress finally made the pay equal in 1864.

Some African American units were praised for their service, such as the African American 54th Massachusetts Infantry. Although the attack the group launched failed, the bravery of the soldiers paved the way for future black regiments.

African American soldiers who were captured by the Confederacy were returned to slavery or executed on the spot. At **Fort Pillow**, Tennessee, Confederate troops murdered more than 200 captured African Americans.

Ironically, the Confederacy considered drafting slaves and free blacks to fight in 1863, and again in 1864. One planter thought they should be drafted since they were the reasons for the war. However, a general thought that if slaves would make good soldiers, then the idea of slavery was incorrect.

Meanwhile, as the war dragged on, slaves in the South resisted their condition. Some refused to work or destroyed property. Others ran away to Union armies. By 1864 the plantation system and the institution of slavery were crumbling.

4. What kind of discrimination did African American soldiers in the Union army face?

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Fill in the missing causes or effects for each situation.

Causes		Effects
1. Britain had little need for southern cotton, since it had found other sources.	→	
2.	→	Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
3.	→	Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus in the state of Maryland and other states.
4.	→	Both the Union and Confederate governments passed draft laws.
5. A draft law favoring and protecting the wealthy. Lower-class white workers were angered about having to fight a war to free slaves who, they believed, would then take over their jobs.	→	
6.	→	Many African Americans enlisted in the Union army.