

A civil matter

(31 December 2023)

- A. On Wednesday, Nikki Haley, the runner-up for the Republican nomination, was asked during an event in New Hampshire what had caused the U.S. Civil War.

In response to the question, she said: *"I think the cause of the Civil War was basically how the government was going to run, the freedoms and what people could and couldn't do."*

Following heated criticism, Ms. Haley declared on Thursday morning that slavery was the cause of the U.S. Civil War.

However, although both of Ms. Haley's statements were somewhat correct, and the former indeed quite insensitive, the latter was probably not as she meant it.

- B. There seems to be a general reluctance to recognize that the actual reasons for the Civil War were rather:

1. Slavery was deemed by Northern labor to be utterly unfair competition in the new States of the Union;
2. The Union was not prepared to readily accept the confiscation without compensation of large tracts of federal property in and by the eleven Confederate States.

- C. It seems to be universal lore that, somehow, the population of the Northern States was so gentle in nature as to be devoid of any trace of melanophobia, whereas historical records before, during, and after the Civil War have profusely demonstrated that the North was at least as melanophobic as the South, if not more, including during the Civil War and afterwards. To wit, the infamous 1930 lynching in Marion, Indiana, which inspired the famous [poem and song](#).

Furthermore, the high rate at which Northern volunteers joined the armies of the Union is often mentioned by high-minded commentators as irrefutable evidence of the North's high ideals, according to which mothers in the Northern States were more than delighted to send their sons to the slaughterhouse one thousand miles away, just for the sake of the African man.

However, it so happens that the principal motivation for individual enrolment was rather the "*Bounty*", a one-time disbursement paid by the government upon enrolment, which amounted to between \$2,000 and \$20,000 per capita in today's currency.

There is apparently no limit to the absurd but always self-serving disfiguration of History whenever one wants to feel good morally at the expense of some other.

Incidentally, and to refer to earlier events, which of the two would you say was more of a hero: Revolutionary George Washington, or Loyalist Harry Washington?