

What does the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln mean to the people of the United States?

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What is Lincoln for modern America? It is difficult enough to argue on this subject for an ordinary Russian. In general our knowledge is based on axiomatic sources. Basically they are textbooks of history. But I will try to state my understanding of this issue.

To start with I would like to give you two opinions about Abraham Lincoln.

Estimating the merits of Lincoln Leo Tolstoy said: «He was what Beethoven was in music, Dante in poetry, Raphael in painting, the Christ in the philosophy of life».

But there is also another point of view. Michael A. de Budyon: «Lincoln, as well as Caesar, were the first to whom a certain similarity of a cult was arranged. And in both cases cults were obviously of an "imperial" character». So who is right?

Millions of Americans admire Lincoln for his statesmanship, yet some on the extreme left and right accuse him of hypocrisy, offences against the Constitution and even tyranny. The opinion of Lincoln's opponents is based on some results of the war of the North and the South. The war lasted four years, resulting in the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery. Its importance in American history is immense. But it failed to resolve many old problems and created countless new ones. Neither did it secure for the Negro a full participation in a free society. Yes, of course, it is necessary to agree on it undoubtedly. But the results of such scale historical events are necessary to consider the more extended historical period. Having received freedom a person finds self-esteem and possibility for him to realize this creative beginning. So the former slaves had a chance to realize the huge potential put in them. From the point of view of Physics it looks like this: the potential energy, which was put and not realized, could pass in the qualitative energy which was directed on the development of the American economy and all the state as a whole.

Lincoln contended that slavery was wrong because it denied the fundamental rights of human beings, and that its expansion ultimately threatened the rights of whites no less than blacks. Color may have been an excuse but it hardly limited the desires of slave masters.

Abraham Lincoln was no usurper, but he did not hesitate to use his powers to preserve the Union. As political philosopher V. Jaffa has written, President Lincoln in dealing with rebellion used extra constitutional power to protect freedom.

Therefore statements given above by me have the right to existence. Just such polar points of view also allow us to assert rightfully that Lincoln is a person, and the person on the scale of the world history. Any person who has achieved certain results in his work gets at once supporters and opponents. It is just a distinctive feature which shows that a man has become the personality. (The category good and bad will not be considered here.)

I think it is necessary to ask myself a question: Whether do I have the right to condemn Lincoln for principles of his governing or not? Lincoln, as a matter of fact, determined the destiny of all the state, changing a political system, changing out-of-date foundations. For only 4 years of his presidency he managed to unite the state and this state exists and thriven till this day. For all American people this form of the government is unique and correct. There have been no any serious attempts for changing something in a democratic political system of the USA for the past since that moment time.

Surprisingly, how much in a due time there was a Lincoln occurrence in a political sky of the USA. This person appeared in a due time and in a proper place with the necessary ideas in his head. There is a sensation that the occurrence of such people during the certain moments of the development of mankind is predetermined from above, that all their life is to execute the mission for changing the destinies of millions of people.

Americans has always thought very much about the history of the country, appreciate and respect democratic principles and freedom. And just in the present crisis time, which is difficult for the country and the entire world, a figure of Lincoln is very significant for them. I think all America waits the unique correct actions from new president Barak Obama which will lead the country to the economic lifting and political stability in the world.

«...This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and government of people, by people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.»

Lincoln
Gettysburg Address
1863

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