



LINCOLN

“little”

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LEHRMAN

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*Wilberforce F  
Gould*

## INTRODUCTION

William Wilberforce could not be indifferent to slavery. For twenty years, the wealthy heir to a merchant fortune worked unceasingly to end slavery in the British Empire. His labor bore fruit when Parliament acted in 1807 to abolish the slave trade. Abraham Lincoln admired the Herculean efforts exerted by Wilberforce. Like his English counterpart, Lincoln could not be indifferent to the immorality of slavery. Lincoln and Wilberforce embraced the natural law principle of the equality of all men. Wilberforce drew upon the words of St. Paul: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." Lincoln found his text in the "self-evident equality principle of the Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal."

In a speech fragment that Lincoln wrote in the late 1850s, he joined high principle to an honorable ambition, observing that "in the republican cause there is a higher aim than that of mere office." The self-tutored lawyer from Illinois could not understand those "dout care" politicians, such as Senator Stephen A. Douglas, who pretended indifference to involuntary servitude. Such men reminded Lincoln of Wilberforce's opponents who "blazed," "flickered," and "died," whereas the memory of Wilberforce endured.

Well-remembered for his first major, printed, antislavery speech of 1854 at Peoria, Lincoln would thereafter campaign tirelessly against the spread of slavery. He often predicted that slavery might not be extinguished in the United States "within the term of my natural life." On January 31, 1865 — only a few months before his assassination — Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to abolish slavery. Lincoln himself had contributed more than his "humble mite to that glorious consummation."

Mr. Lincoln's attitudes toward slavery were unmistakably rooted in the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson. Mr. Lincoln's nationalist economics were unmistakably the policies of

*Lincoln, Dec of Ind, Jefferson*



Abraham Lincoln, November 8, 1863

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Hamilton - Economics

Jeffersonian  
liberals

Jefferson's rival, Alexander Hamilton. But we still hear in Mr. Lincoln's speeches the echoes of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence when on his way to Washington in early 1861, the president-elect declared in Philadelphia, "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence." Lincoln observed: "Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of the equal rights of men... our began, by affirming those rights." But only free labor can exercise equal rights. Lincoln's re-affirmation of this equality principle at Gettysburg in 1863 evoked "a new birth of freedom." At Gettysburg the President insisted that America - despite the flaw of slavery, accepted by the Constitutional Convention in order to establish the Constitution and the Union of 1789 - had been "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

level playing field

Bringing together the central ideas of the great adversaries of the early republic, Hamilton and Jefferson, President Lincoln in 1864 explained to Ohio soldiers visiting the White House that the Civil War itself was a struggle to create an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life... From the war issued the Emancipation Amendments - the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. This Lincoln patrimony is the authentic Republican party heritage.

From time immemorial, America has been different from other nations. Bound together neither by race and blood, nor by ancestral territory, Americans inherit but a single legacy - equality under the law and equality of opportunity. That Mr. Lincoln's equality was equality of opportunity cannot be denied. "I think the authors of that notable instrument [The Declaration of Independence] intended to include all men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal - equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is what the emancipator said; and this

equal protection under the law

Introduction

opportunity

is what he meant. "We proposed to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser, and all better, and happier together."

And so, to be stronger and wiser, Americans have ever been ambitious, at home and abroad, for their liberal democracy. Mr. Lincoln was no exception; he, too, was ambitious for American liberal democracy. Indeed, he was history's most ambitious nation builder, presiding as he did over our most profound war and the preservation of the American Union - the future hope of all liberal democracies. In an unforgettable phrase, Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, said Lincoln's ambition was "a little engine that knew no rest." So, too, may it be said of America.

AMERICAN

Government

as L. P. W.

Mr. Lincoln was ambitious to use government to good effect. Government, he said, should enable men and women to do the things they cannot do, or do so well, for themselves - in order to develop their freedom, their future, and their country. In his earliest political years, as a state legislator, Lincoln urged that government should be pro-labor and pro-business. During the decades before his presidency, he advocated government support in creating canals, railroads, banks, turnpikes, a national bank - all needed to integrate a national market to the end of increasing opportunity, social mobility, and productivity. Like the first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, and Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, Lincoln sponsored an "American System."

As an economic nationalist, he advocated a modest tariff to give the competitive advantage to American workers, to American firms, and to enhance American independence. The tariff would, as a source of federal revenue, make the income tax unnecessary. As a sophisticated student of banking and monetary policy, Mr. Lincoln argued throughout his political career for a sound and uniform national currency.

His economic philosophy rejected the idea of necessary conflict between labor and capital, believing them to be cooperative in nature. Cooperation could, in a society of free labor, lead to economic growth and increasing opportunity for all. In fact, Lincoln argued that capital

NOT LABOR vs. CAPITAL

It is not  
Laissez-faire

LINCOLN "BY LITTLE'S"

GREENMAN  
SOUNDING STATEMENTS  
PEOPLE ARE  
BEST RESOURCE



ARTICLE CANNOT COME W/O LARGE SAVING.

was, itself, the result of the savings of free labor. Wrought by the mind and muscle of men, the products of labor yield savings which are then deployed as capital. Thus, it follows that people are the most important resource, not wealth. This proposition was so important that President Lincoln argued in his first annual message of 1861 to Congress that labor is prior to, and independent of capital. Capital is the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed." The 19th century echoes of Lincoln's speeches roll down like thunder in the 20th century voice of Martin Luther King. For it was Mr. Lincoln who defined the essence of the American dream. "There is not, of necessity, [Mr. Lincoln declared], any such thing as the free hired laborer being fixed to that condition for life... The prudent, penniless beginner in the world labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself; then labors on his own account for awhile, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way to all - gives hope to all, and... energy and progress, and improvement of conditions to all. His right to rise is today the hope of a winning Republican majority.

From hard struggle for success, Mr. Lincoln had developed tenacious convictions. Born poor, Mr. Lincoln was probably the greatest of truly self-made men, believing as he said that "work, work, work is the main thing". His economic policy was designed not only "to clear the path for all" but to spell out incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to create new jobs, new products, new wealth. Mr. Lincoln's America was, in principle, a color-blind America. "I want every man to have the chance," Lincoln announced in New Haven in March 1860. "And I believe a black man is entitled to it... when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him! That is the true system."

In Lincoln's American system, government fosters economic growth. Equal opportunity leads to social mobility. Intelligence and free labor lead to savings and entrepreneurship. Such a color-blind economic system was the counterpart of the Declaration's color-blind equality

But under this is anyone self made?

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principle. The great black abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, saw this clearly, pronouncing the fitting tribute when he said of President Lincoln that he was "the first great man that I talked with in the United States freely, who in no single instance reminded me of the difference of color." He attributed Lincoln's attitude to the fact that he and Lincoln were, in Douglass' phrase, self-made men. President Lincoln's political and wartime legacy has transformed world history. As a last resort, he had accepted war to preserve the Union, and with war to free the slaves: "It is an issue which can only be tried by war, and decided by unconditional victory." Even after four years and 725,000 deaths, his grim determination on victory was, he said, not imprudent. "The national resources are unexhausted, and, we believe, inexhaustible." Without the leadership and resolve of our 16th president, separate slave and free states might today compete on the same continent; and the emergence of American liberal democracy, we know it, would have been stillborn. Thus there would have been no integrated, peerless, American economy based on free labor without continental American industrial power - which Lincoln consistently advocated - the industrial means would not have been available to contain Imperial Germany as it reached for European primacy in 1914. Neither would there have been a national power strong enough to destroy its successor, Hitler's Nazi Reich, nor to crush aggressions of Imperial Japan. WWI, WWII, CUBAN and, in the end, there would have been no unified, continental, American power to oppose and overcome the Communist empire of the second half of the 20th century. Empires based on the invidious distinctions of race and class - the defining characteristics of the 19th century world, powers of our era - were preempted by the force and leadership of the United States of America. "We made the experiment," Lincoln declared; and the fruit is before us. Look at it. Think of it. Think of it, in its aggregate grandeur, of extent of country, and numbers of population, of ship, and steamboat, and rail."

The Great Experiment... of the  
by the 1/3 for the People

World leveling  
Long Term  
Effect

HENRY CLAY IV