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**Book Review: The Real Lincoln (2000)**

**BOOK REVIEW**

***The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War***

**by Dr. Thomas J. DiLorenzo**

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333 pages, 2002

Reviewed by Mark Dankof for *Mark Dankof’s America*

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***While I have considered the preservation of the constitutional power of the General Government to be the foundation of our peace and safety at home and abroad, I yet believe that the maintenance of the rights and authority reserved to the states and to the people, not only are essential to the adjustment and balance of the general system, but the safeguard to the continuance of a free government. I consider it as the chief source of stability to our political system, whereas the consolidation of the states into one vast republic, sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home, will be the certain precursor of that ruin which has overwhelmed all those that have preceded it.***

**–General Robert E. Lee to Lord Acton on December 15th, 1866 quoted in *The Real Lincoln* (p. 268)**



General Robert E. Lee warned of a Despotic American Empire at Home and Abroad.

            The former Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Fereydoun Hoveyda, has recently brought his considerable historical knowledge of ancient and modern Persia to the task of writing about the role of mythology in explaining facets of Iranian cultural, political, and religious life to the uninitiated in the Western world.

            Hoveyda’s invaluable contribution in this regard is matched in the American political and cultural context by Dr. Thomas DiLorenzo, professor of economics in the Sellinger School of Business and Management at Loyola College in Maryland, in the latter’s salient, prescient analysis of the Presidential reign of Abraham Lincoln and his prosecution of an American Civil War in *The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War*.



General Robert E. Lee foresaw it all.  The end of the War Between the States was the end of Republic and the beginning of Empire.

            DiLorenzo’s analysis of Lincoln, accompanied by copious historical documentation, shatters the mythology surrounding the 16th President’s motives and agenda in pursuing the War Between The States. The author provides convincing evidence for Lincoln’s overt racism as expressed in his documented views on racial supremacy as manifested in his desire to colonize all American blacks outside the continental United States (p. 4); that Lincoln’s views were matched by a palpable majority in the North who utilized such tools as state constitutional amendments to prohibit the emigration of black people into Northern states like the President’s home state of Illinois (p. 4); and that Lincoln’s war which killed 620,000 Americans [equivalent to 5 million deaths in 2002 population numbers and percentages] and destroyed 40 percent of the American economy, was a singularly terrible, unjustified conflict given the proven success in the 19th century of the peaceful end to slavery through the policy of compensated emancipation (p. 4). DiLorenzo duly notes that, “Between 1800 and 1860, dozens of countries, including the entire British Empire, ended slavery peacefully; only in the United States was a war involved (p. 4).”



            What then, does *The Real Lincoln* lay out as the actual road map for understanding the war and the accompanying strategy and psyche of Abraham Lincoln in resorting to armed force against the Southern states? In his tome, DiLorenzo underscores the mythological President’s political and moral failure in pursuing the bloodshed of fellow countrymen with an evil, unnecessary, coercive methodology. The author insists that the prevailing world-wide trends between 1800-1860 would have resulted in the irenic end to the institution of slavery by; 1) compensated emancipation; 2) an encouraged advance of the industrial revolution in the South with capital-intensive agriculture and manufacturing (p. 277); and 3) the inevitable furtherance of Enlightenment philosophy in the American mind and culture, a philosophy which in the end game would have been ideologically incompatible with the continuation of the institution, as had been the case throughout the British empire (pp. 276-277). For the Loyola College Professor of Economics, the real Lincoln agenda in the War Between the States is located in the fact that:



*. . .the War Between the States so fundamentally transformed the nature of American government. Before the war, government in America was the highly decentralized, limited government established by the founding fathers. The war created the highly centralized state that Americans labor under today. The purpose of American government was transformed from the defense of individual liberty to the quest for empire. . . . Lincoln thought of himself as the heir to the Hamiltonian political tradition, which sought a much more centralized governmental system, one that would plan economic development with corporate subsidies financed by protectionist tariffs and the printing of money by the central government. . . . It was Lincoln’s real agenda. . . . Henry Clay’s “American System.” For his entire political life Lincoln was devoted to Clay and Clay’s economic agenda. The debate over this economic agenda was arguably the most important political debate during the first seventy years of the nation’s existence. It involved the nation’s most prominent statesmen and pitted the states’ rights Jeffersonians against the centralizing Hamiltonians (who became Whigs and, later, Republicans). The violence of war finally ended the debate in 1861. . . . A war was not necessary to free the slaves, but it was necessary to destroy the most significant check on the powers of the central government: the right of secession*. (Introduction)



Robert E. Lee foresaw the ravages of an American Empire based on a pack of lies, militarism, and a despotic domestic police state.

            Chapter 5 demonstrates that this right of secession was rooted in the proper understanding of the Declaration of Independence as a “Declaration of Secession” from England, with the New England Federalists attempting to secede from the Union after Jefferson’s election in 1800, for more than a decade. DiLorenzo documents the pre-1861 assumption of most commentators in both North and South that states had the inherent right to secede from the Union as a last check on the excesses of an arbitrary, centralized Federal government, buttressing his case with telling quotations from Jefferson, John Quincy Adams (a Unionist), de Tocqueville, and even Alexander Hamilton. It was Lincoln, however, who invented the preposterous theory that the Federal government created the states, which were therefore not sovereign entities, subsequently waging a war to establish his deliberate inversion of the Constitutional intent of the founders. The Federal government became by force of the sword an involuntary Union, “the master, rather than the servant, of the people–especially once it imposed military conscription and income taxation on the population (p. 264).” Thus, the “American System” of Henry Clay began its implementation in earnest with Abraham Lincoln, creating a Leviathan Central State of oppressive taxation and regulation at home, and imperialistic expansion abroad, that has been unchecked ever since.



“Democracy” in the American Empire, Abe Lincoln Style.

            *The Real Lincoln* also underscores the importance of the individual tenets of the Clay/Lincoln program of economic centralization in the destruction of a Constitutionally informed American Federalism, especially in protectionism; government control of the money supply through a nationalized banking system; and government subsidies for railroad, shipping, and canal-building enterprises (p. 54). DiLorenzo summarizes the economic agenda end game of the “American System” by quoting Murray Rothbard’s classic equation of the former with:

*. . . namely, mercantilism. . . . ‘which reached its height in the Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,’ [and] was ‘a system of statism which employed economic fallacy to build up a structure of imperial state power, as well as special subsidy and monopolistic privilege to individuals or groups favored by the state.’*(56)



            This economic system, presided over by the man William Lloyd Garrison tagged as the “President of African Colonization,” (p. 19) dovetailed perfectly with the rest of the 16th President’s statist agenda, implemented with a methodology that effectively mixed duplicity with coercion. Seen with these lenses, the “liberator of the slaves” becomes the manipulative issuer of an Emancipation Proclamation which liberated blacks only in *rebel-held* territories after Lee’s defeat of Burnside at Fredericksburg in December of 1862. Lincoln’s Proclamation issued exemptions for a list of enumerated states, and was designed to liberate only those slaves which could be utilized for servile insurrection on isolated plantations (pp. 42-43), while concurrently discouraging European trade and political support for the Confederacy (pp. 37-38). The Great Economic Centralizer may also be fully credited for:

*. . .launching a military invasion without the consent of Congress; suspending habeas corpus; imprisoning thousands of Northern citizens without trial for merely opposing his policies; censoring all telegraph communication and imprisoning dozens of opposition newspaper publishers; nationalizing the railroads; using Federal troops to interfere with elections; confiscating firearms; and deporting an opposition member of Congress, Clement L. Vallandigham, after he opposed Lincoln’s income tax proposal during a Democratic Party rally in Ohio. . . . In addition to abandoning the Constitution, the Lincoln administration established another ominous precedent by deciding to abandon international law and the accepted moral code of civilized societies and wage war on civilians.*(6)

            In this latter regard, DiLorenzo reminds the reader of the scorched earth policies of Sheridan, Grant, and William Tecumseh Sherman, not only in the War Between the States but in the post-war eradication of the Plains Indians in acts of mass murder designed to pave the way for the government’s transcontinental railroads; the exploitative policies of Lincoln’s successors in the Reconstructionist South of 1865-77; and the subsequent imperialistic policies abroad of McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and their successors in the furtherance of American Empire. In each case, *The Real Lincoln* makes a compelling case that in an epochal sense, it all began with the methods and motives of America’s 16th President.



If You’re for Republic, not Empire, You Certainly Are.

            Finally, the informed reader of *The Real Lincoln* will be duly impressed with the ominous parallels between the Republican 16th President and the Republican 43rd Chief Executive of the United States. It is George W. Bush who has gone beyond Lincoln’s national centralized banking in facilitating globalist financial structures like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, The North American Free Trade Agreement the World Trade Organization, GATT, and the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (managed trade, not free trade). It is Mr. Bush who has increased Federal spending beyond that of his predecessor for a variety of agencies, including new monies for the Federal Department of Education. It is Mr. Bush who has prosecuted an offensive war against a foreign power without the necessary consent and authorization of Congress according to Article 1, Section 8. Similarly, it is Mr. Bush whose Administration seeks, through the USA Patriot Act and the Domestic Security Enhancement Act (DSEA), the broadest authority ever given the Executive Branch of the Federal government to conduct warrantless searches and seizures of homes and businesses; to hold citizen suspects in custody without legal representation for unspecified periods of time; and to pursue the broadest expansion of electronic surveillance operations in the history of the United States. And where 19th century British mercantilism is concerned, Murray Rothbard’s textbook definition of it as *government’s* *special subsidy and monopolistic privilege to individuals or groups favored by the state*, must be applied in spades to the monarchial reign of King George W. Bush and his cabal of advisers influenced by international bankers, oil and natural gas consortiums, insurance and media conglomerates, and the much vaunted Israeli Lobby. The 19th century Credit Mobilier and Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads are now the domain of UNOCAL; Halliburton Oil; Kellogg, Brown, and Root; Trieme Partners; Exxon/Mobil; Chevron; Paladin Capital; the Carlyle Group; and the American Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC). And in this merger of the denizens of the Central State with multinational economic conglomerates and globalist structures of impending World Government, the American military in most Lincolnesque fashion now serves as the janissaries of coercive interests totally at odds with historic American Federalism and those the latter was designed to protect.



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