
II. The Idea of the American Revolution

Hail Columbia, Happy Land!

by Robert Ingraham

A CONTRIBUTION TO
AN ONGOING DISCUSSION
Part II of Two Parts

[Part I](#) was published in EIR, Oct. 20, 2017.

V. The Revolution Betrayed

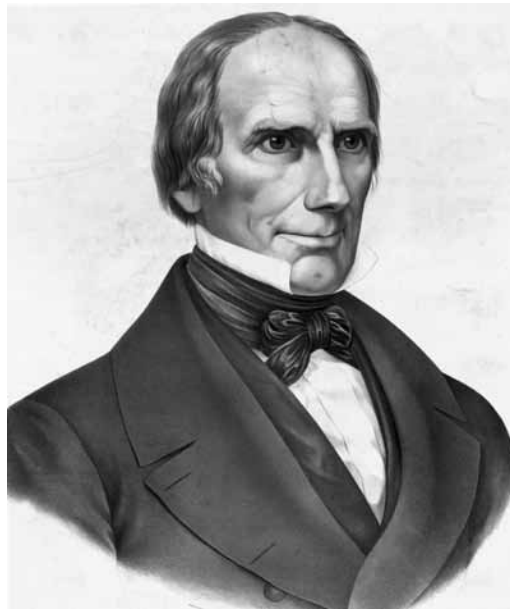
Oct. 13—The Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America (American Colonization Society) was founded on Dec. 21, 1816, only one year after the conclusion of the disastrous War of 1812. Henry Clay presided over the founding meeting, and later served as president of the Society from 1836 to 1849. Other founding members included (president-elect) James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Francis Scott Key, John Randolph, and Richard Bland Lee. James Madison served as its president in the 1830s and Thomas Jefferson was an avid supporter. These men were all slave-owners.

The Society was formed for one reason only: to preserve and strengthen slavery in the United States. Some of its supporters may have been taken in by phony humanitarian rhetoric, but the intention, as stated openly by its leaders, was to secure and spread the slave system.

In his opening speech to the ACS convention, Henry Clay declared, “Can there be a nobler cause than that which . . . proposes to rid our country of *a useless and pernicious, if not dangerous portion of its population?*”

The plan, as envisioned by the Society, was not to send black Americans back to Africa, but to deport only *free blacks*, i.e., American citizens. The slaves would all be kept in America. By sending free blacks to Africa, two related aims would be served. On the one hand, the free blacks in the North who wanted full citizenship and voting rights could be gotten rid of. At the same time the problem of having free blacks living side by side with slaves in the South could be solved. It may come as a surprise to some, but between 1776 and 1861 there

were always more free blacks in the South than in the North, even after the northern states had emancipated their slaves. Having these free men and women living in the same communities, and intermingling with slaves in Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina, was very dangerous for the slave owners. A slave would look at a free black and ask the obvious question: “Why am I not free”? The ACS wanted to eliminate the free blacks, and thus more easily control the slaves—to enforce total subservience. A foretaste of this had already been seen in 1806 when Virginia enacted a law forcing all newly manumitted slaves to leave the state



Henry Clay

within a year or be re-enslaved.

Support for the Society was widespread among some of the most powerful figures and political leaders in the nation, Democrat and Whig alike. In 1819, the ACS received \$100,000 from Congress,¹ and on Feb. 6,

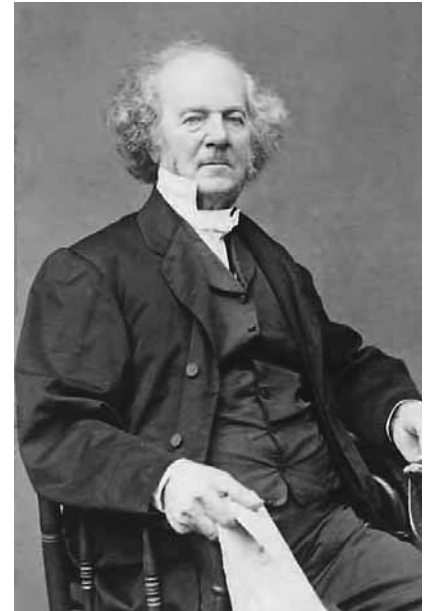
1. That same year, Henry Clay would cast the tie-breaking decisive vote forcing slavery on the newly organized Arkansas territory, the first time



Arthur Tappan



Rev. Joshua Leavitt



Lewis Tappan

1820, the first ship, the *Elizabeth*, sailed from New York for West Africa with three white ACS agents and 88 black “emigrants” aboard.² Not only Congress, but individual states funded the ACS. In 1829, the Pennsylvania Assembly endorsed the American Colonization Society and agreed that black removal would be “highly auspicious to the best interests of our country,” and as late as 1850, Virginia set aside \$30,000 annually to fund the ACS.

The Moral Decline of the Nation

For sixty consecutive years, with the brief interlude of the four-year Quincy Adams Presidency, America was led by Presidents who either advocated or acquiesced to the enslavement or subjugation of human beings. This included the twenty-four year domination of the Virginians Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, as well as the twelve years of Jackson and Van Buren. Not surprisingly, those five Presidents were also the most hostile to Hamilton’s economic thinking and to his vision, as to the future and purpose of the American Republic.

Some might argue that the creation of the Second National Bank or the imposition of high tariffs sig-

naled a return to the principles of 1776 and 1787, but is this really the case? Is such an argument morally sound? Will your conscience allow it? Fundamentally—and emphatically—the paradigmatic issue in America has always been about the People, or more precisely, about the true nature of Man. This was the driving, passionate issue of the Revolution. This is what Hamilton understood. With the election of Jefferson in 1800, the nation began to lose its way; the mission that had been defined by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution weakened and ebbed. From 1801 forward, the acceptance and promotion of slavery doomed the nation, precisely because it was a *profound betrayal* of the Revolution itself. Gouverneur Morris understood this.

A case could be made that many of the supporters of the ACS were otherwise decent people. Some were what we would call today “canal builders,” individuals who supported economic development and other worthy causes. But the hard core of the ACS were all racists, and they agreed with Thomas Jefferson that blacks were an intellectually inferior sub-species. The truth is that after the murder of Hamilton, and during the twenty-four year uninterrupted rule by slave owners from 1801 to 1825, the nation’s commitment to the intention of the Revolution was nearly annihilated. There were good people who did good things,

slavery had been officially allowed in the greater Louisiana Territory.

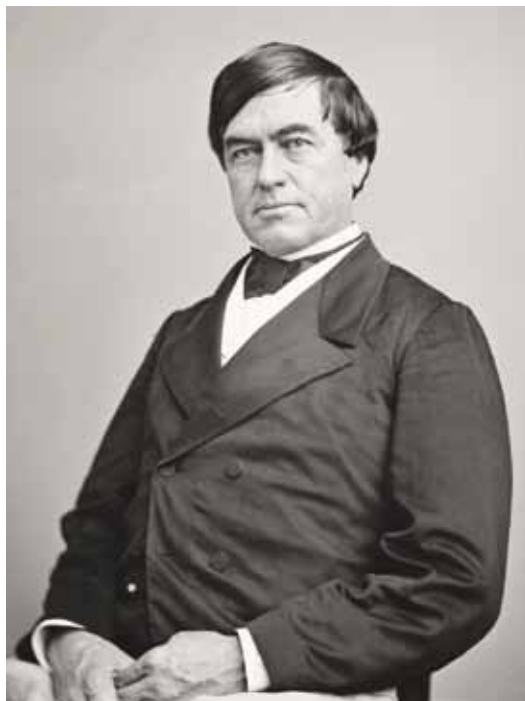
2. The year of Clay’s “Missouri Compromise,” which gave official national recognition to slavery.

but a fatal moral disease had been injected into the nation's culture.

The Assault

Beginning in 1801, the previously-anticipated full citizenship rights for emancipated blacks in the North were delayed or halted, and in some cases existing rights were rolled back. In the South, voluntary manumissions were outlawed in most states, slave codes were strengthened, and slavery was spread—first into the deep South, then the Louisiana Territory, and ultimately into Texas. Physical attacks against abolitionists became common; some abolitionists were murdered outright. Attacks like the one on Brown's New York Theater, were repeated against many targets throughout the North.

In 1834, a series of anti-abolition riots, lasting four days, took place in New York City. This began when Arthur Tappan, a white abolitionist, attended a religious service and sat in a pew next to the black Samuel Cornish. James Watson Webb,³ the publisher of the *Courier and Enquirer*, printed lurid scare stories of impending inter-racial marriages, black ministers with white mistresses, and other filth to fan the flames. The home of Lewis Tappan, who in 1839 would help organize the *Amistad* defense, was destroyed and burned to the ground. The home of Reverend Joshua Leavitt, editor of *The Evangelist* and a manager of the American Anti-Slavery Society, was attacked. The home of Reverend Peter Williams, Jr. was attacked, and the St. Philip's Episcopal Church was demolished. All told, the mob targeted the homes, businesses, churches, and other buildings associated with the abolitionists, particularly black religious leaders.



Cassius Marcellus Clay

In the decades leading up to the Civil War, these scenes were repeated in city after city throughout the North and Midwest including in Boston, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. One of the worst riots took place in Cincinnati, Ohio. One black abolitionist, Elijah P. Lovejoy of Alton, Illinois, who published a religious journal *Observer*, was shot and killed in November 1837, as he emerged from a building that a white mob had set on fire.

By 1836, the ACS had succeeded in even prohibiting the mere discussion of slavery on the floor of Congress with the infamous Gag Rule.⁴

This all led into the horrors and near death of the American Republic in the 1850s, with the passage of Henry Clay's Fugitive Slave Law, the expansion of slavery into the territories, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the Dred Scott decision. The hour of destiny was fast approaching for America.

Clay versus Clay

As a young man, Henry Clay was tutored by George Wythe, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Wythe, a Virginia planter, freed all of his slaves, because he found slave-owning to be incompatible with that Declaration to which he and the other signers had pledged "our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." Perhaps due to a lasting influence from Wythe's earlier instructions, at a 1799 convention to revise the state constitution of Kentucky, Clay put forward a proposal for the gradual abolition of slavery in Kentucky, and at that time he gave several anti-slavery speeches. Clay's 1799 proposal was defeated, and he never again raised the issue of emancipation for the remainder of his life. Instead, the adult Clay bought a 600-acre plan-

3. Webb was a New York leader of the American Colonization Society. Earlier, he had been a supporter of Andrew Jackson, but by the 1830s he had become a close friend and ally of Henry Clay. In fact, Webb claimed to have coined the name for their new party, the Whigs, in a column he wrote in the *Courier and Enquirer*.

4. Here again, it was John Quincy Adams, as in the *Amistad* case, who rose to defend freedom and Constitutional government. Bear in mind, however, that the Gag Rule was imposed against the anti-slavery petition campaign, organized primarily by black abolitionist leaders.

tation, owned 60 slaves, and engaged in the buying and selling of human beings until his death.

Contrast the downward progression of Henry Clay, with the dynamic which governed the life of his second cousin, Cassius Marcellus Clay. Cassius Clay, nicknamed the “Lion of White Hall,” was the son of one of the wealthiest planters and slaveholders in Kentucky. Initially, he was a plantation owner, and a member of the Kentucky elite. However, after attending several abolitionist meetings in Boston, he began to question the morality of his chosen path. He freed all his slaves and began to speak out against slavery. An influential member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, he lost re-election, and his political career was destroyed.

During a political debate over slavery in 1843, Cassius Clay survived an assassination attempt. Despite being shot in the chest, he drew his knife and cut out the eyes of his assailant. Again, in 1849, while making a speech supporting abolition, Clay was attacked by six men, who beat, stabbed and tried to shoot him. Clay fought off all of them, using his knife to kill the leader.

In 1845, Clay began publishing an anti-slavery newspaper, the *True American*, in Lexington, Kentucky. Within a month he received death threats. Shortly thereafter, a mob of sixty men broke into his office and destroyed his printing equipment. Clay then moved his newspaper to Cincinnati, Ohio, and continued to publish.

Clay became one of the founding members of the Republican Party, and in 1861 Abraham Lincoln appointed Clay as Minister to Russia. In St. Petersburg, Clay secured Russian support for the Union during the Civil War, which led to the deployment of the Russian fleet to New York and San Francisco to protect those harbors against the British navy.

In 1862, when Lincoln appointed Cassius Clay a major general with the Union Army, Clay publicly refused to accept the appointment unless Lincoln would agree to emancipate the slaves under Confederate control. Clay was then deployed by Lincoln to assess the mood for emancipation in the border states in the months preceding the Emancipation Proclamation.

Every individual makes choices, and those choices determine specific paths, specific trajectories. The choices made by the cousins Clay are very instructive. The one led step-by-inevitable step to the near destruction of the nation; the other, beset by sacrifice,

violence and political banishment, led to the glorious victory of 1865.

VI. The Revolution Affirmed

By the late 1830s, the white abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips began to argue for the dismemberment of the United States. By so doing, the two of them, together with their followers, became pawns in a British Empire plot to destroy this nation. Beginning with their Act of Abolition in 1834, the British, incredibly, began to put themselves forward as the premier anti-slavery nation in the world—a stunning gymnastic feat, since the British Empire had been the controller of the world slave traffic for the previous 150 years, and had been responsible for the deaths of millions of Africans. The British, who also controlled the purse-strings of the slave-owning South due to their hegemony in global cotton trade, backed the Garrisonites and egged on both sides—creating what modern sociologists call a “gang/counter-gang” dynamic, intended to split and ruin the United States.

Garrison’s argument was that America, its Constitution, and all of its political institutions had been racist and pro-slavery from the start, and that the only way to purify the nation was to secede from the slave-owning states and to form a new nation free of America’s pro-slavery origins. Garrison condemned both electoral activity and other political initiatives as a futile effort to save a nation that did not deserve to be saved.

The most damning and influential rebuttal to Garrison’s argument came in 1845 with the publication of a pamphlet titled *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery*, authored by a man named Lysander Spooner. More will be said about Spooner later, but it is important to note that—although Spooner’s pamphlet had great influence—he was not the first to lead the charge against Garrison’s treasonous schemes.

Between 1833 and 1840, the American Anti-Slavery Society, led by Garrison and based in Boston, was the leading abolitionist organization in the country. In 1840, angered by Garrison’s attacks on the Constitution, almost all of the black leaders of the Anti-Slavery Society split off, and together with white allies, founded the New York-based American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The split was led by Samuel Cornish, Theodore S. Wright, Samuel Ringgold Ward, Charles B. Ray, and Amos Beman, and they were joined by white

allies, including Arthur and Lewis Tappan, William Jay (John Jay's son), and Gerrit Smith.

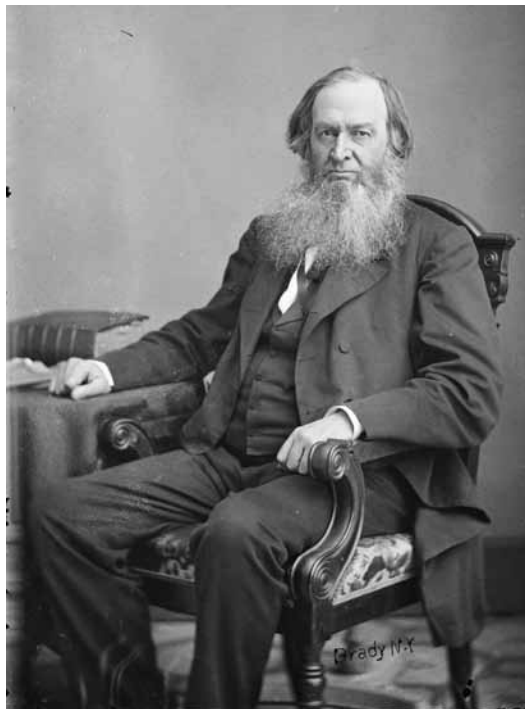
Many of these individuals went one step further, founding the Liberty Party as a new political party. In 1844, the Liberty Party's presidential candidate James Birney received 62,103 votes (2.3%) nationwide, but almost 17,000 of those votes came from New York, which cost Henry Clay the electoral votes of New York and thus the Presidency. The Liberty Party platform of 1844 declared that it would treat the fugitive slave clause of the U.S. Constitution "as utterly null and void, and consequently forming no part of the Constitution of the United States," on grounds of "natural right" (natural law). It also contained a plank demanding "the absolute and unqualified divorce of the general government from slavery...."

During the brief decade of its existence, it was the leadership of the Liberty Party who insisted, who demanded, that America must honor the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. They refused to abandon the battle. In 1854, many Liberty Party members played important roles in the founding of the Republican Party.

Interlude—a Shifting Battlefield

In looking at these developments, which evolved over a 20 to 30 year time-span, one must abandon the academic armchair and recognize the ongoing degeneration of the nation during those years, and the courage displayed in the face of murderous opposition by those who defended America's revolutionary heritage. By the 1840s and 50s this seemed an impossible challenge.

There was a great moral erosion among many of the white abolitionists. Some went over to Garrison and his pleas for dis-unity. An even larger number succumbed to the American Colonization Society. The American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the national convention of anti-slavery societies, stopped opposing colonization in 1821 and openly endorsed it



Gerrit Smith

in 1828. By 1829, many of the leaders of the New York Manumission Society were backing colonization.⁵

Among black leaders, a parallel change is also apparent. By 1840, the giddy days of 1808, when thousands paraded in the streets to celebrate the end of the African slave trade and the dawn of a new era, were long gone. Decades of broken promises and oppression had taken their toll. If one looks at the writings, sermons, and speeches of black abolitionists, from say 1775 to 1855, a great change is observable, beginning after 1815/1820, but then becoming very pronounced by 1840. The change in character is essentially one of a people betrayed. Anger and desperation

begin to be heard. This is seen as early as 1829 in David Walker's "Appeal To the Coloured Citizens of the World." It is also seen in the writings and speeches of Theodore S. Wright and Henry Highland Garnet, both of whom, by the late 1840s, began calling for armed slave uprisings.

By the 1850s, seeing no way out, a number of black leaders, such as Garnet and Abraham Shadd, even began to support emigration, although the preferred destinations were Canada or the Caribbean, not Africa.

The general desperation was further fueled by the failed slave uprisings—and the brutal revenge which followed them—of 1800, 1811, 1822, and 1831. It is easy—looking back almost two hundred years—to academically dismiss these uprisings, but consider the words of Gabriel, the leader of the 1800 revolt. After being caught, tried, and condemned to death, Gabriel made a final statement before he was hanged, in which he said, "I have nothing more to offer than what General Washington would have had to offer, had he been

5. While many white leaders waffled on colonization, it was the black abolitionists who took the lead, rejected colonization, and demanded full citizenship rights. Indicative is a declaration by a black woman named Maria Stewart, who in a speech in Boston rejecting colonization, stated that before she would be driven back to Africa, "the bayonet shall pierce me through."

taken by the British and put on trial. I have adventured my life in endeavoring to obtain the liberty of my countrymen.”

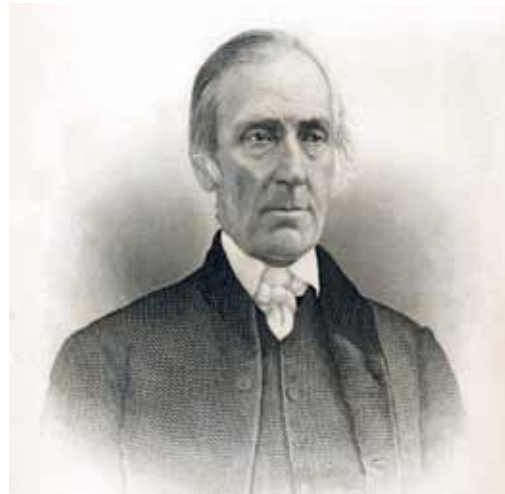
Yet, the fight was never abandoned. The overwhelming majority of the people involved in running the Underground Railroad were black. The same is true for the Vigilance Committees, the organizations which protected runaway slaves and fought the Fugitive Slave Law. Many of the people involved were, themselves, former slaves.

Essentially, by the 1850s, many northern blacks and their white allies were engaged in what only can be called classic guerilla warfare against the slavocracy.

The White Abolitionists

It is important to mention here a handful among the white abolitionists. There is great courage to be found among their ranks. The Tappan brothers played a key role in recruiting John Quincy Adams into the *Amistad* defense. Gerrit Smith was the great ally of Frederick Douglass. Others, not mentioned here, were important participants in the Underground Railroad and other activities. Admittedly, mistakes were made by some of these people. Yet, whatever errors of judgement occurred, they were made under conditions of constant warfare; the moral intention was always steadfast:

Arthur and Lewis Tappan: In 1833 Arthur Tappan was a cofounder of the American Anti-Slavery Society, serving as its first president. He split with Garrison in 1840 to found the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. In New York he was perhaps the most steadfast white ally of Samuel Cornish, Charles Ray and other black leaders. His home was targeted during the 1834 anti-abolition riots. After the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was passed, Tappan refused to comply with the new law and donated money to the Underground Railroad. Arthur’s brother Lewis Tappan played a paramount role in the *Amistad* case, and in recruiting former President John Quincy Adams to represent the kidnapped Africans. In 1846, Lewis founded the American Missionary Association, which built more than 100 anti-slavery Congregational churches. After the Civil



Levi Coffin



Harriet Beecher Stowe

War, Lewis founded numerous schools and colleges to aid in the education of freedmen.

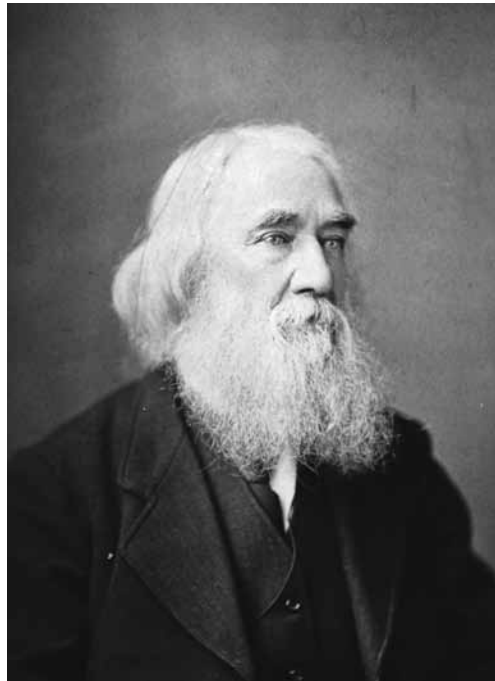
Gerrit Smith: a wealthy New Yorker, Smith was, without question, the leading funder of the Underground Railroad, the Liberty Party, and resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law. Smith was the Liberty Party candidate for President in 1848. He was also a friend of Lysander Spooner, and he became one of the leading advocates of the view that the United States Constitution is an anti-slavery document. He was instrumental in winning his friend Frederick Douglass to that view. In 1852, he was elected to Congress from the Free Soil Party, but he resigned his seat in protest of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Levi Coffin: Coffin was a Quaker, as were many of the early abolitionists. He became one of the most prominent leaders of the Underground Railroad, leading more than 3,000 fugitive slaves to freedom. He was given the name of “President of the Underground Railroad” by his contemporaries, and reports he conveyed to Harriet Beecher Stowe became the basis for *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

Rev. Joshua Leavitt: a Congregationalist minister, Leavitt became a prominent writer, editor and publisher of abolitionist literature. He was also a spokesman for the Liberty Party. In 1841, Leavitt published his “Financial Power of Slavery,” in which he argued that the slave system of the South was destroying the economy of the nation.

The Beecher Family: Henry Ward Beecher was the first pastor of Congregationalist Plymouth Church in Brooklyn. His church became an important Under-

ground Railroad station, through which slaves from the South were secretly transported to Canada. Beecher's sister was Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Union Address is today famous, but what many people don't know is that it was Beecher, in October, 1859, who invited Lincoln to New York and offered him \$200 to speak at the Plymouth Church. Lincoln accepted the invitation, traveled to Brooklyn and participated in church service on Sunday, Feb. 26, 1860. When it became apparent that the church was not large enough to hold the anticipated audience, the venue for Lincoln's address was changed to the Cooper Union, where he spoke before a capacity crowd of 1,500 the following day.



Lysander Spooner

Human Slavery Is Unconstitutional

In 1845, Lysander Spooner published *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery*, a work that would come to have a powerful impact on the Liberty Party, Frederick Douglass, and ultimately on Douglass' relationship with Abraham Lincoln. Spooner was a rather erratic personality. His career is punctuated by several initiatives of a somewhat dubious nature. Yet, there is no arguing with the powerful effect unleashed by the publication of his work on slavery.

The text of *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery* pursues three parallel themes. First, an exhaustively researched and documented record of the United States in regard to the legality of slavery, including an examination of the constitutions and laws of the pre-revolutionary colonies, the Articles of Confederation, the post-revolutionary state constitutions, and the U.S. Constitution.

In the course of presenting his evidence, Spooner demonstrates that at no time was slavery actually legal in pre or post-Revolution America. This may seem, to today's Americans, an incredible statement, but Spooner is very meticulous in his research. None of the charters or constitutions in the pre or post-Revolution

colonies and states, including in the South, actually contained wording which legalized slavery; none of them even defined slavery, or who was subject to being enslaved; none of them contained wording restricting slavery to individuals with black skin. Spooner demonstrates that slavery was an "accepted social practice," but never a legal institution. It was simply imposed on the colonies—with no legal basis—by the policies of the British Empire.

Spoooner's second subject is a scrupulous examination of the text of the U.S. Constitution, and the proceedings of the 1787 Constitutional Convention. He takes the Constitution apart, clause by clause, and shows that nowhere is there to be found a legal endorse-

ment or establishment of slavery—that slavery was never constitutional as a national institution. On the contrary, the wording of the Constitution itself is specifically and clearly anti-slavery in its content. Some, today, might howl at this analysis, pointing to the three-fifths clause and the fugitive slave provision, but Spooner deals with all of this in the course of his examination. His arguments are far too lengthy to reproduce here, but his pamphlet is now in the public domain and readily available to those who wish to read it.⁶

Spoooner's final and most powerful theme is that slavery is unconstitutional because it violates Natural Law. He argues that slavery is contrary to the nature of Man and contrary to the recognition of that nature in the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the United States. Spooner's argument is that the American Revolution was fought on behalf of this Natural Law conception, to which slavery is profoundly contradictory. The Declaration of Independence created the new nation based on this understanding of the human identity; thus, all subsequent laws enacted by states are invalid if they contradict it. He says:

The people of this country—in the very instru-

6. <https://www.amazon.com/Unconstitutionality-Slavery-Lysander-Spooner/dp/1508601704>

ment by which they first announced their independent political existence, and first asserted their right to establish governments of their own—declared that the natural and inalienable right of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, was a “self-evident truth.”

VII. Douglass and Lincoln

In this section, the words of Frederick Douglass will do most of the speaking. The facts of Douglass’ life are well known and readily available. The only subject that will be documented here is that his commitment to human freedom and human development, as it was set forward in the principles of the American Revolution, was uncompromising. Initially, Douglass distrusted Abraham Lincoln and didn’t particularly like him. A large part of this antipathy stemmed from Lincoln’s long-standing association with the American Colonization Society, an organization which Lincoln never actively participated in, but one whose goals he had praised on many occasions.

Eventually, the two men became very close. Their bond transcended the realm of practical politics and specific issues. One of the things which is striking is the willingness of both men to abandon previously held positions if they found them to be faulty, and to then act decisively, based on the implications of their newly-discovered insights. During their first meeting, when Douglass accused Lincoln of vacillating on the issue of slavery, Lincoln responded that although he “might seem slow to make a decision, I think it cannot be shown that when I have once taken a position, I have ever retreated from it.”

Douglass broke sharply with William Lloyd Garrison on the nature of the American Republic. When Garrison publicly burned copies of the Constitution as a

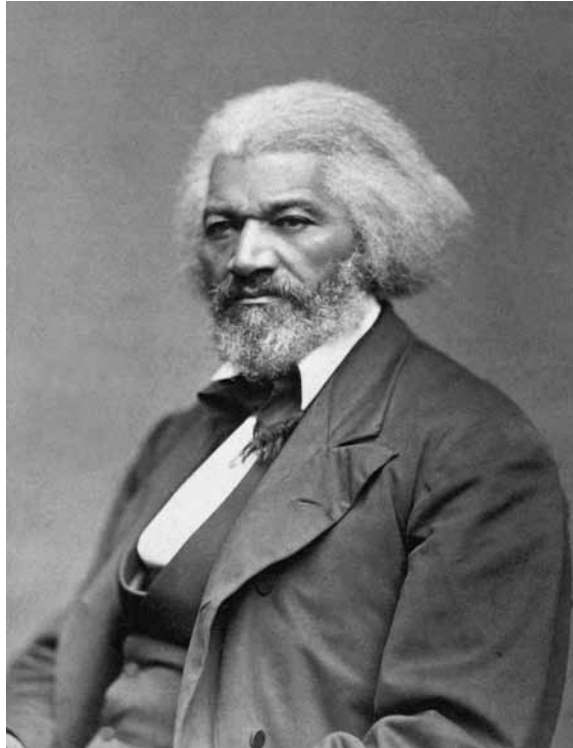
racist document, Douglass severed all relations with him. Douglass read and studied Spooner’s *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery* and became a vocal proponent of its findings. He became a major leader in the Liberty Party, working with Gerrit Smith. On July 5, 1852, Douglass delivered a speech to the Rochester Anti-Slavery Sewing Society. This speech is now famous and is usually given the title “What to the Slave is the 4th of July?” Unfortunately, many current versions of that speech are presented in an abridged or edited form, one which em-

phasizes Douglass’ attacks on racism but leaves out the heart of his argument. We present here excerpts which are often omitted:

I differ from those who charge this baseness on the framers of the Constitution of the United States. It is a slander upon their memory, at least, so I believe. There is not time now to argue the constitutional question at length; nor have I the ability to discuss it as it ought to be discussed. The subject has been handled with masterly power by Lysander Spooner, Esq., by William Goodell, by Samuel E. Sewall, Esq., and last, though not least, by Gerrit Smith, Esq. These

gentlemen have, as I think, fully and clearly vindicated the Constitution from any design to support slavery for an hour.

Fellow-citizens! there is no matter in respect to which, the people of the North have allowed themselves to be so ruinously imposed upon, as that of the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. In that instrument I hold there is neither warrant, license, nor sanction of the hateful thing; but interpreted, as it ought, ought to be interpreted, the Constitution is a *Glorious Liberty Document*. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? or is it in the temple? it is neither. While I



Frederick Douglass

do not intend to argue this question on the present occasion, let me ask, if it be not somewhat singular that, if the Constitution were intended to be, by its framers and adopters, a slaveholding instrument, why neither slavery, slaveholding, nor slave can anywhere be found in it. What would be thought of an instrument, drawn up, legally drawn up, for the purpose of entitling the city of Rochester to a track of land, in which no mention of land was made?...

Now, take the Constitution according to its plain reading, and I defy the presentation of a single pro-slavery clause in it. On the other hand it will be found to contain principles and purposes, entirely hostile to the existence of slavery....

I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. While drawing encouragement from the "Declaration of Independence," the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age.... change has now come over the affairs of mankind.

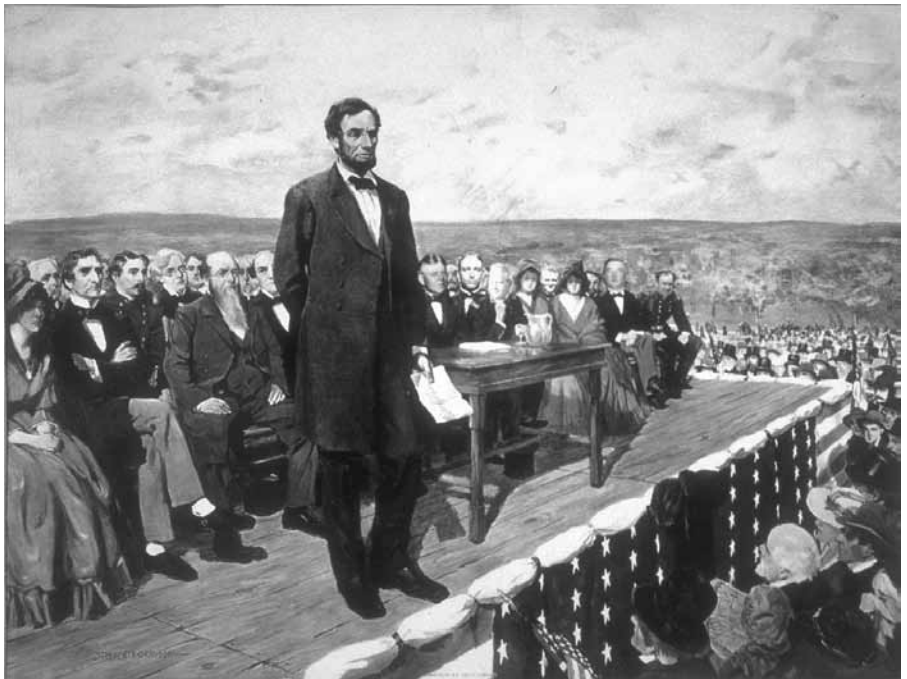
In the same speech, after reading from the Declaration of Independence, Douglass says:

From the round top of your ship of state, dark and threatening clouds may be seen. Heavy billows, like mountains in the distance, disclose to the leeward huge forms of flinty rocks! That bolt drawn, that chain, broken, and all is lost. *Cling to this day—cling to it*, and to its principles, with the grasp of a storm-tossed mariner to a spar at midnight....

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln concluded his Gettysburg Address with the words:

....from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the



Library of Congress

Abraham Lincoln delivering his address at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Nov. 19, 1863

last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

What was that "new birth of freedom"? Was it not a return to the freedom declared in 1776 and 1787? Was it not a reaffirmation of the principles embedded in the American Republic from the beginning?

In Abraham Lincoln we see the same unity of purpose which existed in Hamilton. The economic policies, the nation-building, the adoption of Public Credit. For Lincoln, as for Hamilton, these are all inseparable from the cause of human freedom and development. It is the sacred conception of Man, and the moral commitment to the uplifting of the people which defines the future. Lincoln's victory put an end to the sixty-year desecration of the nation. It was—in every sense imaginable—a new birth of freedom.

Lincoln always hated slavery. Unlike Henry Clay, he found it horrifying and morally abhorrent. For many years, however, under Clay's influence, he saw no domestic solution, and he supported colonization, even as late as 1862. His greatness is that he broke with that

view—and he broke with it not simply for pragmatic political reasons, but because he reached a moment where it was no longer compatible with his moral intention—just as Douglass had broken with Garrison.

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued in September 1862 and taking effect the next January, was the defining act of Lincoln's immortality, the action which made possible that "new birth of freedom." Lincoln's proclamation contained no mention of compensation for owners, made no reference to colonization; the emancipation was immediate, not gradual. Lincoln addressed blacks directly, not as property subject to the will of others, but as free men and women, citizens of the Republic. This was the Second American Revolution.

A month after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Frederick Douglass sent a message to Lincoln:

We are all liberated by this proclamation. Everybody is liberated. The white man is liberated, the black man is liberated, the brave men now fighting the battles of their country against rebels and traitors are now liberated. . . . I congratulate you upon this amazing change—the amazing approximation toward the sacred truth of human liberty.

And in 1876, in his "Freedmen's Monument" speech, Douglass recalled:

Can any colored man, or any white man friendly to the freedom of all men, ever forget the night which followed the first day of January 1863, when the world was to see if Abraham Lincoln would prove to be as good as his word? I shall never forget that memorable night, when in a distant city I waited and watched at a public meeting, with three thousand others not less anxious than myself, for the word of deliverance which we have heard read today. Nor shall I ever

forget the outburst of joy and thanksgiving that rent the air when the lightning brought to us the emancipation proclamation.

VIII. Martin Luther King

In looking at the lives of those Americans who kept lit the beacon of freedom in the early Nineteenth Century, one must take note that many among the most important leaders were ministers. Richard Allen, Samuel

Cornish, Absalom Jones, Charles Bennett Ray, Peter Williams, Jr., James Varick, Lewis Woodson, Theodore S. Wright, and others were all deeply religious men. These were not men who had a practical agenda; neither did they view their lives'—work as the single issue of "black equality."

And they certainly had nothing in common with the infantile shallow "multi-culturalism" and "identity politics" we see too much of today.

As was reborn in the adult personality of Martin Luther King, these individuals saw their mission as one of developing a human society—to uplift humanity from backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, and brutishness; to develop a culture and

institutions coherent with the creative potential within each individual human soul, to make possible opportunities for each new child to experience the beauty of growth, happiness, and development. This all flowed from the promise of the American Revolution. In his Aug. 28, 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C., Martin Luther King said:

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a



Martin Luther King, Jr.

joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. . . .

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

Martin Luther King remains to this day the best of America. People who never met him sensed in him a deep love for what America could and should become. And they responded to it. On Jan. 16, 1995, at an event in Washington, D.C., honoring Martin Luther King on King's birthday, Lyndon LaRouche had the following to say:

I want to bring Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King back to life, in the sense that there is a part of him I probably know better than many people who were close to him while he walked the Earth. I never had the chance to speak to him, never even the chance to shake his hand, though I lived through the same events through which he lived. And yet, I know him in some ways better than most of the people who were close to him, because I know his development. I know a transformation from a dedicated young preacher coming out of Atlanta going to Boston, coming out of Boston University, going from there to take up a parish, then being elevated by a happenstance, almost, to assume a position of leadership, and going

through succession of crisis after succession of crisis

In making the last public address of his life, in reflecting upon the cup of Gethsemane, he walked to the podium, before thousands of people, and said, "I am drinking the cup. I wish to live, but I am drinking the cup." And he laid forth a mission.

The difference between Martin and many other people who might envy his position, is that they don't understand one thing: that they would have had to give up something in themselves, a reluctance in themselves, to make each of those successive steps by which he stepped upward. Faced with a challenge from which many people would pragmatically have retreated, he moved ahead. He found the next higher level of action to carry out. And he not only decided to carry it out, because many of his associates also decided to carry out the action with him; but what he decided, was to present the conception of the action to the people in ways that the people would grasp the idea. . . .

The civil rights movement was not a creation of the late 1950s and 1960s. The civil rights movement has existed as long as there was slavery in the United States. There was always somebody fighting for the same thing; and the level of fight against slavery in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, was on a higher intellectual level in many respects, than was the fight for civil rights in the Twentieth Century. . . .

The moment of truth is approaching, and when we look at Martin, we remember him not only for his ideas, but we remember him for that which made him a leader, and we try to find in ourselves the equivalent quality.

When you are faced with a challenge, with the threat of defeat, do you, like Sancho Panza, go practical on us, and do you concern yourself only with your own personal position; or do you bring that within you, that creative power which is the distinguishing power of man in the image of God, and do you apply it to the problem that we face, to participate in developing the ideas which, given circulation, can give a movement the identity it requires to do the job which it is destined to do, and must do?

Can you find in yourself some of that quality of Martin? Can you develop and purify yourself, to find in yourself, something of that quality of Martin, rather than Sancho Panza? If you can, if enough can, then we can win. And the time has come to win. And the time for preparation is growing very short.

IX. Our Rebirth

Racism exists in America today. Everyone knows this is true. But from whence did that racism arise? It was not born in America. It is not part of the genetic make-up of white Americans. Racism, and the practice of slavery, are a heritage derived from Empire and Oligarchism. Find its roots in ancient Rome. Find it in medieval Venice. Find it in the Dutch and British Empires of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Oligarchical dominion, human bondage, the pursuit of monetary wealth and power—this is all the heritage of oligarchical rule. This is the horrifying nightmare which colonists traveled to America to escape.

The American Revolution was a declaration of war against that old oligarchical system; and that revolution has been the light of the world for the last two hundred and forty-one years. Nor was the promise of that revolution limited to eradication of chattel slavery. Remember Franklin Roosevelt's dedication to the plight of the Forgotten Man. The promise of America is intended for all of the people.

Look at the misery in our nation today: the poverty, the drugs, the homelessness, the suicides. The discarding of whole sections of the People—throwing them on the scrap-heap to be ignored and forgotten: This is tearing out the soul of America. That is our great moral crisis.

Martin Luther King's 1963 Washington, D.C. speech was spoken fifty-four years ago, the same year as the murder of John F. Kennedy. During all of these subsequent years, we have been living through a dark and utterly demoralizing time. Is it not time—is the date not already past due—for our own “new birth of freedom”? The patriots of the Nineteenth Century lived through sixty years of betrayal from 1801 to 1861. Is it not now our time to cash the promissory note, to achieve justice for all Americans, for all of our people together?

Our enemy resides in the oligarchical elite of

London, Wall Street, and Brussels. They seek to divide us, to pit us against each other. They know that the people are desperate, and desperate people, people who are losing hope, can be infused with rage, manipulated and defeated. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. How better to maintain power than to have the poor fight among themselves?

The solution to this crisis will be found in the mind, the morality, and the mission of Alexander Hamilton, the organizer and founder of the United States Constitution. Remember the American Revolution. As Frederick Douglass said of the Declaration of Independence, “*Cling to this day—cling to it*, and to its principles, with the grasp of a storm-tossed mariner to a spar at midnight.”

Bibliography

Allen, Richard, [*Eulogy for Washington*](#) (Philadelphia Gazette, 1799).

Douglass, Frederick, [*Fourth of July Oration*](#) (July 5, 1852).

Dubois, W.E.B., *The Negro* (New York: Holt, 1915).

Foner, Philip & Branham, Robert James, editors, *Lift Every Voice—African American Oratory 1787-1900* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, University of Alabama Press, 1998).

Harris, Leslie M., *In the Shadow of Slavery—African Americans in New York City 1626-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

McAllister, Marvin, *White People Do Not Know How to Behave at Entertainments Designed for Ladies & Gentlemen of Colour* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Quarles, Benjamin, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Sidney, Joseph, [*An Oration Commemorative of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the United States*](#) (New York City: 1809).

Spooner, Lysander, [*The Unconstitutionality of Slavery*](#) (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1846).

Wheatley, Phillis, [*Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*](#) (London: A. Bell, 1773).

White, Shane, *Stories of Freedom in Black New York* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Williams Jr., Peter, [*An Oration on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*](#) (1808), and [*Slavery and Colonization*](#) (New York: July 4, 1830).