

# THE REAL LINCOLN

John Painter  
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## LOOKING BACK ON THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

### Introduction.

When I realized that I'm looking at a form of American government that is the opposite of that designed by the Founding Fathers, I wanted to find out how it got that way. I thought the Constitution was supposed to prevent such a change. And, so it is.

But there have been instances where, during times of national emergency, the President has overridden the Constitution and gotten away with it. Sometimes Congress has been able to reverse these moves. Other times, not. And, sometimes Congress, itself, has made changes in the form of government that moved the country farther away from what the Founding Fathers set up. Sometimes the Supreme Court has been able to reverse such changes. Other times, not. It turns out that this move to the political left has been so gradual that it looks almost spiritual, rather than political. I'll have more to say about that, later.

And so, over a period of some 145 years, the country's government has gradually moved to the left, politically, away from the form of a voluntary Union of Sovereign States, and toward that of a monolithic Democratic-Socialist Welfare State. This, I found out by reading yet another surprising book. It's The Real Lincoln<sup>1</sup>, by Thomas J. DiLorenzo. This book was suggested to me by a reviewer of the first, incomplete version of the companion paper, The Battle for America, which is freely available upon request. Based on what I found, I decided to totally reorganize and rewrite that paper. This synopsis is what convinced me that the companion paper needed rewriting. This book by DiLorenzo is extraordinary.

### What Lincoln Did to the American Government.

The change in our federal government that enables it to do what it does today, as a participant in the undeclared cultural war, did not start in 1965. It can be traced all the way back to Abraham Lincoln. For, Lincoln made major changes in the federal government that survive today. And, those changes have only been added to by succeeding federal administrations.

The changes Lincoln made in the role, form, and function of the government were implemented during the Civil War, by riding rough-shod over the Constitution. Lincoln seized dictatorial power, in order to prosecute the War. And, he used that power to radically centralize what the Founders had originally set up as a loose, decentralized government.

Dr. DiLorenzo is a Professor of Economics at Loyola College of Maryland. He is also a senior faculty member and frequent lecturer at the Ludwig Von Mises Institute (the Austrian School of Economics). However, he is also recognized professionally as a premier historian on the Lincoln period

DiLorenzo's book is hair-raising, although completely and thoroughly documented, in detail. As was Huntington's<sup>2</sup> and Steyn's<sup>3</sup>, DiLorenzo's is another surprise, as it unravels the myth of Lincoln and shows what the facts really were. And, it shows why today's federal government is like it is. Like Huntington, DiLorenzo is analytical, drawing on over 500 references, with a selected bibliography of over 100 sources. Because of its controversial subject, it has drawn fire from what DiLorenzo labels as 'revisionist historians.'

What DiLorenzo's book says is that by riding roughshod over the Constitution, Lincoln destroyed Federalism, the decentralized form of government set up by the Founding Fathers, including Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. He critically damaged States' Rights by inventing a new theory that the federal government had created the States, and that they, therefore, could not be sovereign. Because they were not sovereign they therefore did not have the right to secede from the Union they had formed, seventy years before. (Modern historians have characterized that theory as a "spectacular lie," according to DiLorenzo.) Lincoln then waged the costliest war in American history to prove his point, destroying the fundamental forming idea of the Union as a voluntary association of sovereign States.

In doing all this in a couple of years time, Lincoln replaced the existing Constitutional government with one highly centralized that would plan economic development and grant subsidies to favored corporations, financed by protectionist tariffs and the printing of (paper) money by the central government. He invented the 'military-industrial complex', warned about by President Eisenhower some ninety years later. Does all this that Lincoln did sound familiar?

While doing this during the prosecution of the War, Lincoln still stated over and over again his long-time stance that he was opposed to the political or social equality of the races. So, he started the War on the issue of the form of government, not slavery.

### **Lincoln's Prosecution of the Civil War.**

Lincoln started the Civil War after the Southern States seceded from the Union, a right they had hitherto possessed, under States Rights. The Southern States seceded because of what Lincoln was trying to do to the federal government. In its new form, most of the tax costs would fall upon the Southern States, not the Northern States. But, even so, Lincoln had much ideological opposition in the North. To quell that opposition, he put his Northern opponents in jail.

Lincoln assumed the powers of a dictator by launching a military invasion without the consent of Congress, suspending the writ of habeas corpus, imprisoning

thousands of Northern citizens without trial, censoring all telegraph communications, imprisoning dozens of opposition newspaper publishers, nationalizing the railroads, using Federal troops to interfere with elections, and confiscating citizens' firearms. But, that wasn't as bad as what he did to the Southern people.

In his prosecution of the War, Lincoln abandoned the accepted moral code of civilized society and waged war on American civilians. He issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation for military reasons in 1863, trying to foment a slave rebellion in the South. If he could cause the slaves to rebel, that would draw Confederate troops back home from the front lines. The objects of that rebellion would be the women and old folks left on the plantations, since most of the young males were in the Confederate Army.

Lincoln ignored the generally accepted rules of war that had just been codified in 1863 as the Geneva Convention. Lincoln micromanaged the War, with the shelling and burning of entire Southern towns being a key element of his strategy and tactics. This tactic was employed in Tennessee and in Sherman's infamous march through Georgia. Another tactic was to take and perhaps kill randomly selected southern civilian hostages, in retaliation for Confederate attacks. The lists of types of such atrocities are long.

#### **How Lincoln Fits in the Governmental Picture.**

The idea of a strong central government, versus the weaker decentralized form of the Founding Fathers, goes back to one of them, Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton was a Northerner, coming from the State of New York. Madison, Monroe, and Jefferson were Southerners, all from Virginia. It was perhaps from these differing backgrounds that the beliefs of the three about the form of federal government differed from that of the one, Hamilton. He was for strong and centralized government, whereas the other three were for a relatively limited federal government.

The government form that Hamilton espoused was the British form of 'mercantilism'. That kind of government provided financial subsidies and monopolistic privilege for industrial 'special interests' and competitive protection for those interests via special tax rules, such as tariffs on their types of products. The special interests so financially favored were those that would return favors to the providing politicians. In other words, the subsidies were used to 'buy votes' through the special interests.

This practice was then combined with government printing of paper money to finance the special-interest subsidy schemes. That way, their cost could be more easily hidden from the voting public. This scheme required small armies of intellectuals to confuse the public about the scheme's true effects, which were always monetary inflation and higher consumer prices. Does this sound familiar? Today, we see this as a rampant practice of the Congress. And, Presidents get elected by making such promises.

The differences in beliefs about the two forms of government propagated on down, following the deaths of the four founders. Hamilton's push for big government was picked up by Henry Clay. Neither Hamilton nor Clay were able to get this past the Southern legislators. Then, along came Abraham Lincoln.

### **What Happened to the Government Lincoln Established.**

In 1861, Lincoln imposed a personal income tax on the nation's population, to help pay for the Civil War. That tax was repealed by Congress in 1872. But, in 1894, Congress reimposed personal income tax. It was immediately struck down in 1895 by the Supreme Court, as unconstitutional. So, in 1909, the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed, followed by ratification by the States in 1913. So, the personal income tax came back and has been with us ever since. Under the demolished States Rights, the only legal personal income tax would have been state income tax, not federal. So, States Rights had to go, to enable a federal personal income tax.

Alexander Hamilton set up a central bank of the United States when the nation was founded. President Andrew Jackson, a Southerner, refused to recharter it in 1836, and the only legally recognized money was gold or silver coin. However, in 1862, Lincoln signed into law the Legal Tender Act that authorized the Treasury to issue paper money printed in green ink, known as 'greenbacks'. This paper money flooded the banks and the value of the paper dollar dropped to 35-cents, gold. After the War, the Supreme Court found the paper money to be unconstitutional.

It wasn't until 1913 under Wilson that a central bank was reestablished as the Federal Reserve. This enabled the government to print paper money, but it was redeemable in gold or silver. However, in 1933 President Roosevelt took the country off the gold standard, outlawing private ownership of gold coinage. Some paper money remained redeemable in silver. But, in 1971, President Nixon removed silver metal from the country's coinage and paper Silver Certificates disappeared. Since that time, the United States has had a fiat paper currency, not redeemable in any precious metal. The Dollar is only worth what consumer prices reflect, and how much gold it can purchase. And inflation is a fact of everyday life.

Thus, the changes that Lincoln made to the U.S. government in the 1860s have finally become permanent. The mercantile system has been firmly implanted into American life, in spite of the Founding Fathers' efforts to give us a different and freer form of government. And, that heavily centralized form of government is now being steered toward its ultimate destination, a Democratic-Socialist Welfare State.

### **CONCLUSION.**

What we see in DiLorenzo's book is a picture of how the Administrative Branch of the U.S. Government got into the form it now has. It took one hundred years to get there, but the guiding pressures were constant in the interim. A Christian would think that this is either the greatest physical and temporal conspiracy that has ever been seen or that it reflects activities in the spiritual realm. In the companion paper, The Battle for America, I will address the spiritual possibilities.

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### **REFERENCES.**

<sup>1</sup> The Real Lincoln, by Thomas J. DiLorenzo, Random House, 2002, 2003, ISBN 0-7615-2646-3, paperback, 361 pp.

<sup>2</sup> Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity, by Samuel P. Huntington, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2004, ISBN-13: 978-0-684-87053-3, 428 pp.

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<sup>3</sup> America Alone, The End of the World as We Know It, by Mark Steyn, Regnery Publ., Inc., 2006, ISBN 978-0-89526-078-9, paperback, 234 pp.