

Uncle Sam's Cabin

It's time to abolish collectivism,
the modern form of slavery

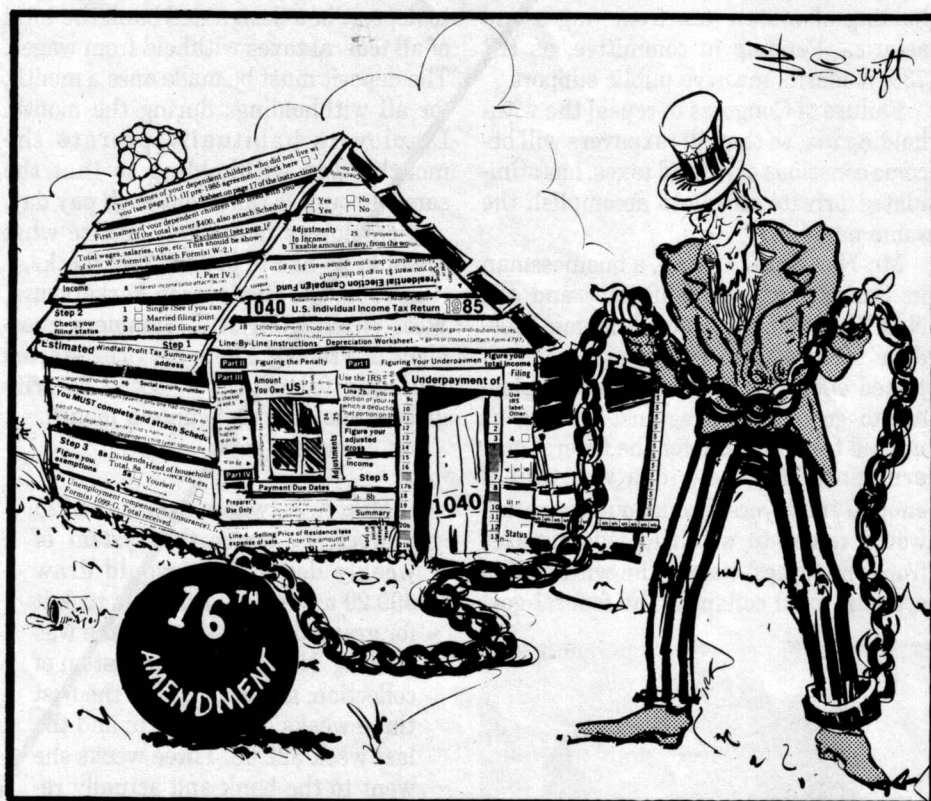
Think of your freedom, every time you see Uncle Tom's cabin; and let it be a memorial to put you all in mind to follow in his steps, and be honest and faithful and Christian as he was.

— Harriet Beecher Stowe

We have need of a memorial such as this, we fortunate Americans. For there are few among us who know firsthand the value of freedom — the price that slaves will pay for it — because it is only in servitude that the full worth of liberty can be reckoned. The bitter irony is that in taking our freedom for granted we risk the loss of it, yet once having lost it will discover just how dear it is. Only for some of our most recent immigrants, those refugees enlightened by the savage oppression of their homelands, is freedom anything more than a platitude or a synonym for license. Even for black Americans, the grandchildren and great grandchildren of slaves, freedom is for the most part a meaningless abstraction.

We as a nation must fix on something tangible to remind ourselves periodically that freedom is a God-given right, and that only in freedom can man retain his dignity, honoring his Maker with industry, charity and devotion.

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What, then, is freedom? It consists merely in being one's own temporal master, having control over one's life and labor. Slavery, being its opposite, is the condition we find ourselves in when we allow this control, this mastery of ourselves, to slip through our own hands and into someone else's.

It can come upon a people gradually, slavery can. And for a time they may find it a tolerable, perhaps even a pleasant, circumstance. We have only to witness the popularity of cults in our day to know that many weaker individuals will gladly relinquish the unequalled satisfactions of liberty if only they are promised relief from the more tiresome responsibilities attending it. There are all too many who

delude themselves with the belief that it is not servitude they must fear, but a cruel master. Indeed, their first master may be a benevolent one, but having once accepted bondage they will no longer have a choice of masters.

The Thing Itself Is Evil

The power of life and death over his fellows is an awesome power to bestow on any man. Warns Mrs. Stowe: "The number of those men who know how to use wholly irresponsible power humanely and generously is small." But the evil of slavery is clearly more than a personnel problem; it is a system that corrupts both the user and the used. Augustine St. Clare, the kindly second

master whose untimely death denies Uncle Tom the freedom he had been promised, avows that even a good man such as he can succumb to the corrupting influence of slavery, because "the *thing itself* is the essence of all abuse."

What import does Mrs. Stowe's ardent and entertaining abolitionist novel have for us today? Haven't all the slaves been emancipated? Aren't we the freest nation the world has ever known? Don't we have a constitution that protects our liberty? To answer these questions, we must go back to that turbulent era when the abolition of slavery and the preservation of the Union preoccupied the minds of all Americans and distracted them from the creation and first use of a tool designed to reduce an entire nation of fiercely independent people to vassalage.

Upon meeting her in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln greeted Harriet Beecher Stowe as "the little lady who made this big war." He was referring, of course, to the tremendous abolitionist sentiment she had aroused with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a decade earlier. The issuance of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on the first day of that new year had appeared to be the culmination of Mrs. Stowe's crusade to put an end to the subjugation of the black population. But, by his own admission, Lincoln's motivation in freeing the slaves had been a pragmatic, not an ideological, one. And notwithstanding his subsequent secular canonization, this Great Liberator was the first American president to institute a program leading to the enslavement of the entire population, black and white.

Lincoln and Marx

It was in 1862, the year preceding his famous Proclamation, that Lincoln inaugurated the nation's first income tax law — presented as a measure necessary for the continuation of the war against the South — styling it an "excise tax" to circumvent the prohibition against direct taxation found in Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution. Within two years he had opted for a *graduated* income tax, adopting a plank from the *Communist Manifesto* written by Marx just sixteen years earlier, and rejecting the principle of equality under the law which had prevailed in America until that time.

It was only as a temporary measure that Lincoln's income tax had achieved passage. Despite efforts to extend it, the

tax lapsed in 1872, two years after its prescribed expiration. But the appetite of politicians and their bosses for an unlimited source of revenue and power had been whetted, and the freedom that Americans had enjoyed for less than a century would soon be imperiled again.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt urged an unobliging Congress to enact an income tax law. In the first year of the administration that followed, President William Howard Taft acquiesced in the passage of a tariff bill with a rider taxing corporation incomes and agreed to a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment to establish an income tax, ostensibly with the belief that it would fall short of garnering approval by the three-fourths of the states needed for ratification. On February 3, 1913, however, Lincoln's precedent-setting violation of the constitutional rights of *all* Americans was resurrected to new life when the State Department certified 38 states as

"The freedoms won by Americans in 1776 were lost in the revolution of 1913."

having ratified the amendment. Only 36 of the then 48 states were required to ratify the amendment, but a February 15, 1913 memorandum from the Department's Office of the Solicitor — only recently brought to light — reveals that no more than 27 states *properly* ratified the amendment.

The Unratified Unconstitutional Law

With or without legitimate ratification by three-quarters of the states, the Sixteenth Amendment has had the full force of law for nearly three-quarters of a century. Indeed, this assault on the very liberties that the Constitution was designed to safeguard has been enforced more zealously than any law, constitutional or statutory, in all of American history.

Article I, Section 9 of the United States Constitution provides that "No capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration . . ." The U.S. government was empowered to impose tariffs and excise taxes, and with rare exception these had sufficed to finance the strictly circumscribed operations of our once lim-

ited government. To make up a budget deficit, the government might impose a tax upon the states according to their populations, but it was left to the states to levy the tax upon their citizens, thereby ensuring that officials closest to the people would be held accountable for the assessments.

The Sixteenth Amendment has changed all that by empowering the government "to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration." It has also had the effect of abrogating at least three of the rights guaranteed by previous amendments to the Constitution: the right to due process, established by the Fifth Amendment; the right of the states and the people to retain all powers not expressly delegated to the federal government, embodied in the Tenth Amendment; and the right to be free from involuntary servitude, as protected by the Thirteenth Amendment.

Conditioning By Crisis

It had taken a civil war and two depressions to condition the American people to lower their guard against this clear threat to their personal liberty and the sovereignty of their states. And it took two world wars and a worldwide depres-



Harriet Beecher Stowe

sion to weaken our character to the point that we would feel no qualms about sharing in the plunder of "entitlements" and "welfare." To make us less mindful of the fact that it was our own pockets being picked, and to make it more difficult to escape the prying fingers, Roosevelt in 1942 proposed a temporary "war emergency" measure to provide for withholding of income taxes from employee paychecks. The record since has been one of ceaseless expansion in the power of government and its control over the lives and livelihoods of all Americans. As Frank Chodorov observes in *The Income Tax, Root of All Evil*, "The freedoms won by Americans in 1776 were lost in the revolution of 1913."

Today, the federal government compels Americans (that is, those who do pay taxes) to fork over fully one-third of their income to it. It tells us which occupations we may enter and how we must conduct our business in them. It forces us to keep records of all our commercial activities

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and assigns us identity numbers to affix to all our documents. It keeps us in constant fear for our lives by imprisoning or destroying those impudent countrymen who seek to retain more of their income than it has allotted for them. Some of the money that it extorts from us it uses to extend its control over us; some it uses to finance the expansion of the largest and the most repressive slave empire in the history of the world, the Soviet Union and its satellites.

It Has Happened Here

Chodorov describes to just what extent the government has become our master:

Due to the revenues from income taxation, the government is now the largest employer in the country, the largest financier, the largest buyer of goods and services; and, of course, the largest eleemosynary institution.

Much as the slaveholders of little more than a century ago sought to depict their exploitation of blacks as indicative of an admirable solicitude for the welfare of their inferiors, so the government has striven to misrepresent its insatiable appetite for power by dressing it in paternalism. Social Security was but one of many "welfare" scams by which Franklin Roosevelt accomplished great accessions of power. Chodorov analyzes the slave-and-master mentality implicit in Social Security:

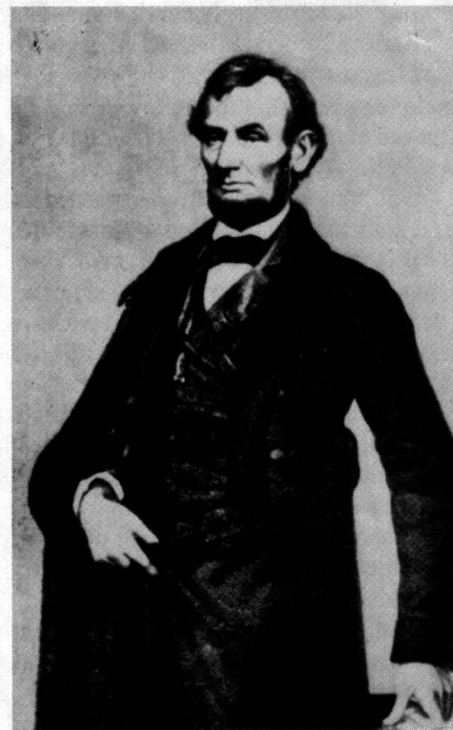
Lurking in the background of social-security thinking is a concept of organized society that is gall and wormwood to fundamental Americanism. It is the idea that in the nature of things some men are destined to rule and others to obey. . . . They maintain that social security is necessary because most wage earners are improvident and must be secured against their own weakness. Who is best qualified to look after them? Why, those who have been anointed with the proper college degrees and are invested with the power of the State.

As with the slave system of the Old South, some of the most powerful groups in society have a vested interest in maintaining the peculiar institution of the income tax. Banks holding government bonds, subsidized farmers and manufacturers, bums and bureaucrats on the dole — all can think of disinterested reasons for accepting increasingly higher income taxes.

Mrs. Stowe explains how we can be duped into supporting programs and policies that actually degrade and subjugate us:

Planters, who have money to make by it — clergymen, who have planters to please — politicians, who want to rule by it — may warp and bend language and ethics to a degree that shall astonish the world at their ingenuity; they can press nature and the Bible, and nobody knows what else, into the service. . . .

And as our taxes get higher and higher, and the government gets larger and larger, we will begin to see an even



Lincoln introduced an income tax during the Civil War.

sharper moral and economic decline in our country. We will lose altogether the disposition of our property and learn to shirk the work that earns us nothing. We will become dependent upon the government for all our needs and we will lose the habit of self-reliance. Unless . . .

Think Of Your Freedom

Having arrived too late to rescue Uncle Tom from his death at the hands of the godless Simon Legree, young George Shelby, the son of Tom's first master, returns to the family plantation in Kentucky and frees his slaves with the admonition that Uncle Tom's cabin, a symbol of that good man's servitude, be always a reminder to them of the treasure that is freedom. The book itself became just such a memorial for a generation of Americans.

Would that some modern author yet possessed of an independent spirit might pen such a book for our era, to point out for us in our complacency the evil of the slavery we know as collectivism. Until then let us raise our voices like Uncle Tom's in prayer for our own deliverance, and for the conversion of our oppressors. And let our memorial be that annual affront to our dignities, the 1040 form, which symbolizes the hateful tax that has put our freedom in peril. ■