

# Interchange: The Global Lincoln

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This “Interchange” discussion took place online over the course of several months in the winter of 2009. We wanted the “Interchange” to be free flowing; therefore we encouraged participants not only to respond to questions posed by the *JAH* but also to communicate with each other directly. What follows is an edited version of the very lively online conversation that resulted.

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The *JAH* is indebted to all of the participants for their willingness to enter into the online conversation:

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**JAH: Abraham Lincoln understood the American Union to be the “last best hope of Earth.”<sup>1</sup> How and why, since his assassination, have Lincoln’s principles exerted such influence around the globe?**

JAY SEXTON: The first point that comes to mind is that Lincoln did not “own” certain “principles,” though he articulated and advanced those principles with uncommon (unequaled?) success. He was not the only American of his day to embrace republican self-government and the rule of law, to oppose slavery, to think creatively about how best to promote economic progress and development, to harness the forces of nationalism. Nor were Americans alone of this mind-set—I’m thinking here not only of British and

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Lincoln, “Annual Message to Congress,” Dec. 1, 1862, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (9 vols., New Brunswick, 1953–1955), V, 537.

European liberals but also of Latin American modernizers like the Argentine statesman Domingo Faustino Sarmiento.

Nonetheless, Lincoln came to personify such principles. His celebrity spanned the globe by the early twentieth century. A big part of the reason is the rise of the United States internationally after 1865. Lincoln came to personify not only principles, but American power, even if he promoted a relatively benign foreign policy. The global reception of Lincoln thus entailed not only understanding certain political principles but also coming to terms with (or co-opting or even opposing) an increasingly powerful and active United States.

ADAM I. P. SMITH: There are two general methodological points I'd like to make at the outset. First, as Jay Sexton suggests above, we need to remember that Lincoln's image was connected to (although not inseparable from) the matrix of images of America. I think that Jay is right that the important context here is American power—both the nation's ideological/emotional appeal and its political, economic, and cultural power. Lincoln was contested just as the idea of America was contested and for much the same reasons. The second point follows from the first: Lincoln's principles were interpreted slightly differently by different groups and individuals in different contexts.

Let me illustrate these two points by saying something about the influence of Lincoln's principles in Britain in the decades after his assassination. Lincoln connected to preexisting ideas, in Europe at least, about what America represented: nature/the frontier (in the stories about his humble birth, his woodcutting, his formidable physical strength, his "folk wisdom," and his lack of formal education); social mobility and a freedom from the social hierarchies of the Old World (probably the most familiar Lincoln quotation after the Gettysburg Address to the readers of late nineteenth-century British popular newspapers was his response to a serenade in which he said, "I am a living witness, that any one of your children may look to come here, as my father's child has"); and, above all, the promise that democracy meant a less corrupt (and less financially profligate) government with a sense of moral purpose lacking in bloated aristocratic regimes.<sup>2</sup>

In the decades following the Civil War, Lincoln was adopted as the epitome of the democratic hero by many working-class and middle-class radicals and liberals in Britain and elsewhere. It had been liberals and working-class radicals who had led the support for the Union during the Civil War itself while the *London Times* held aloof. And news of Lincoln's assassination had an extraordinary impact, especially in centers of radical politics—people wept openly in the streets of Newcastle and Liverpool; there were hundreds of mass public meetings to send messages of condolence to the American people. For decades afterward, public veneration of Lincoln was a statement of radical politics. *Reynolds's Newspaper* (the radical paper in Britain with the largest circulation) had "government of the people, by the people, for the people" on its masthead; Lincoln's portrait adorned the front parlors of miners' cottages in Yorkshire; while trade unionists, such as the Durham miners' leader John Wilson, dedicated their memoirs to him.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, the image of America as a land of promise for the workingman became increasingly implausible in the late nineteenth century as socialist ideas gained ground in Europe

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "Speech to One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment," Aug. 22, 1864, *ibid.*, VII, 512; John Wilson, *Memories of a Labour Leader: The Autobiography of John Wilson* (London, 1910), 173–74.

<sup>3</sup> Masthead, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, April 5, 1885, p. 1; Wilson, *Memories of a Labour Leader*.

and as the foreign press coverage of America focused more and more on unemployment and capital-labor conflict. (The execution of anarchists in the wake of the Haymarket bombing was, to some radicals, seemingly almost as disillusioning as the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was to postwar Western European Marxists.) In that context Lincoln lost some of his radical allure and reemerged during and just after the Great War as a figure around whom the British establishment could rally: a liberal who was prepared to fight; a man of the people who had transcended class politics; a figure of strength who had fought a war to maintain established institutions; a man who showed that democracy, order, and liberty were compatible (contrary to the fears of previous generations of conservatives, who had disliked the American experiment precisely because it seemed to show that the first threatened the second two).

Even then, however, Lincoln's image still had potentially unsettling, perhaps even subversive, connotations. I think we can see these fears come to the surface during the extraordinary row in 1917–1919 over the plan to set up George Grey Barnard's statue of Lincoln (the "stomach ache statue") in London. Those who opposed it (including none other than Lincoln's biographer Lord Charnwood, who said that it looked like a "minor poet who had gone under") found the rustic, homely Lincoln profoundly disturbing.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, the dignified, meditative statue by Augustus Saint-Gaudens that was put up in Parliament Square instead was much more reassuring.

Finally, on the "last best hope of earth" point: one of the stumbling blocks to foreign admiration of Lincoln is his status in American culture as a quintessentially American figure. This problem was overcome in Britain by recasting Lincoln within Anglo-Saxon racial ideology. In Britain at least his nationalism was downplayed (often his antislavery politics was too). Certainly, by the time of the Lincoln statues in London (1920) and Manchester (1919) and the immensely successful 1919 play by John Drinkwater (the era when, in George Bernard Shaw's words, a "cult of Lincoln" flourished in England), his "Anglo-Saxonness" was seen as his defining characteristic: "that knightly son of our blood," the *Times* once called him.<sup>5</sup>

CAROLYN P. BOYD: Lincoln's image in Spain in the nineteenth century certainly corroborates the general points made above. Both Lincoln and America stood as symbols of hope for progressives and republicans in Europe. The possibility of hope, of change for the better, of leaving the burdens of history and tradition behind, animated middle- and working-class politics in the nineteenth century. The veneration of Lincoln and of the (American) principles that he was thought to embody responded to the rise of a public for whom hope was both a novelty and an article of faith. Lincoln's triumph over poverty through hard work and education, his seeming simplicity of manners, and his commitment to republican values coincided with the goals and ideology of Spanish progressives, who held him up as the exemplar of the personal and civic virtues they considered essential to the democratization of their own society.

Jay's point is also worth underlining: Lincoln was only one of a number of reformers and modernizers whose ideas and achievements were celebrated by progressives in Europe

<sup>4</sup> For Lord Charnwood's critique of the statue of Abraham Lincoln, see Frederick C. Moffatt, *Errant Bronzes: George Grey Barnard's Statues of Abraham Lincoln* (London, 1998), 117.

<sup>5</sup> John Drinkwater, *Abraham Lincoln* (Boston, 1919). For George Bernard Shaw's remark, see Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia* (New York, 1982), 53. "The Stain of St. George," *London Times*, April 23, 1918, p. 9.

and Latin America. Favorite vehicles for these celebrations were the collections of brief biographies, written with moral and political intent, that were published for both adults and children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Similar to the books of martyrs and saints, these books reflected the expansion of schooling and of a literate public as well as efforts by progressives to mobilize the masses in opposition to the status quo and to cultivate republican virtue through the emulation of great men. Lincoln was often included in the ranks of these secular saints, which also helps explain his stature as a figure of universal significance.

DAVID W. BLIGHT: I will leave to my colleagues the analysis of exactly how and why Lincoln's image and principles traveled so widely and so well by the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in specific places around the world. The claim in his annual message of December 1862 that the war was about preserving or reinventing the "last best hope of earth" was intended for his different and warring American audiences. Without doubt, Lincoln believed this statement about American exceptionalism and America's role as a model to the world. But we need to think about how he made use of such phrasing in the context of a horrible civil war, a war that he was himself now leading in fundamentally different and revolutionary directions—namely emancipation and what would flow from it.

Lincoln had never been abroad. He was from a particular place—frontier and prairie Indiana and especially Illinois (and born in Kentucky). But as he said hundreds of times, he took his own philosophical sustenance, his political lifeblood, from the first principles of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. That was his way of saying that his outlook was rooted in the natural rights tradition of the Enlightenment. As the "world" came to grasp Lincoln as hero, as image, as "man of the people," as "the emancipator," as the prototype of the perfect American, I also wonder how much the world also may have come to know him as a man of letters, a man of ideas, a thinker, and a reader. All of which he very much was. Among the flood of Lincoln books in recent years and among those coming out right now (in early 2009), I find some of the most (often only) original work seems to be on Lincoln the writer, the wielder of words. I am thinking of books by Douglas Wilson, Ron White, and Fred Kaplan. Did the world begin to know Lincoln in those lasting words or was it largely in popular imagery and mythic descriptions? I pose this as a question and a suggestion. His ideas, after all, especially about political liberty and general human rights (although he had to grow significantly on race and slavery), were decidedly not parochial, but worldly and international.<sup>6</sup>

ODD ARNE WESTAD: People may wonder what a historian of late twentieth-century revolutionary movements is doing in this conversation, but since the *Journal* has been kind enough to invite me, let me add my two cents worth, linking up to what David Blight has said. I have always been fascinated by Lincoln's writings, and not just because of the power of his words. There is a pained contradiction in much of what Lincoln wrote between concepts of freedom (and liberation) and concepts of unity (and state power). My

<sup>6</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "Speech in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," Feb. 22, 1861, in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, IV, 240–41; Douglas L. Wilson, *Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words* (New York, 2006); Ronald C. White Jr., *A. Lincoln: A Biography* (New York, 2009); Fred Kaplan, *Lincoln: The Biography of a Writer* (New York, 2008).

sense is that both these discourses were picked up by many of those who labored to defeat colonialism and establish new independent countries in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean in the century that followed Lincoln's death. Lincoln the liberator is obviously relevant (as a white man who, after much debate and soul-searching, did the right thing and set his black countrymen free). That image of Lincoln was, I think, truly important for those who believed that they could win adherents to their anticolonial cause in Europe and North America by arguing, as the Nigerian nationalist Nnamdi Azikiwe did in 1947, that "one half of the world cannot be democratic and the other half undemocratic."<sup>7</sup> In some cases Lincoln as a symbol of liberation was picked up directly from those who had tried to use his words to oppose U.S. colonialism in the Philippines or in Cuba.

But there is also the unity aspect to Lincoln's writings, the conviction that the United States, in spite of its disparities, should survive as one nation, whatever it took to achieve that aim. The first leader of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah (who had attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania as a young man) liked to read Lincoln's texts on national unity to those of his associates who worried about the massive force the new state used to defeat its internal enemies.<sup>8</sup> So it is a double image of Lincoln that is relevant to the Third World project, a double message too about the United States itself: the hope of liberation and the utility of force.

SMITH: Responding to David Blight's question about the role of Lincoln's "lasting words" in the creation of his worldwide image, I wonder: To what extent were Lincoln's speeches translated? How far could the famous phrases that are so bound up with his image in the Anglophone world resonate in other languages? There is clearly a methodological challenge in trying to evaluate the relative importance of Lincoln's mythic image on the one hand and his words on the other. Both mattered, and each reinforced the other.

I mentioned the salience of that quote about social mobility, but I was talking there only about a specific group—late nineteenth-century British reformers and radicals. A whole book could probably be devoted to the worldwide dissemination of the Gettysburg Address, which has had a much wider currency and which has been used by surprisingly diverse people in strikingly different contexts. That "of, by, and for" phrase in particular was used as a rallying cry for working-class suffrage before World War I and by Irish nationalists in the same period. It became even more familiar in Britain during World War II, when Lincoln became a useful embodiment of the idea that the war was being fought to save democracy (as well as of the Anglo-American alliance). Two phrases—"the dead shall not have died in vain" and "new birth of freedom"—peppered wartime rhetoric. The most striking example of the use of the Gettysburg Address in wartime Britain that I've found is a short 1941 Ministry of Information film, *Words for Battle*, directed by Humphrey Jennings, the famous documentary filmmaker. To images of the white cliffs of Dover, rolling English hills, and sleepy villages, Laurence Olivier reads extracts from John Milton, Robert Browning, William Blake, and Rudyard Kipling. He then quotes Winston Churchill's famous speech, ending "and even if this island were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas armed and guarded by the British fleet would carry on the struggle until in God's good time the new world in all its might steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the old." At which point there is an unexpected change of

<sup>7</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik, a Selection of Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1961), 83.

<sup>8</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London, 1963), 18.

focus: the camera fixes on the Saint-Gaudens statue of Lincoln in Westminster, and Olivier reads the final sentence of the Gettysburg Address (with one small but significant alteration: he changes “this nation” to a more ambiguous “the nation”). When he reaches the passage “government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” there are shots of ordinary Londoners passing Lincoln’s statue on their way to work as tanks and military vehicles trundle through Parliament Square. The invocation of Lincoln may have been a transparent plea for American intervention, but given the film’s primary purpose—to be shown in every cinema in Britain—this cannot be the whole explanation. Blake and Milton evoked a tradition of English liberty, Churchill offered defiance, but isn’t it significant that Jennings had to turn to Lincoln to express the democratic idea that it was the ordinary people of England—not rulers or landscape or beautiful buildings—who made England worth fighting for? Surely it was who Lincoln was as much as the words themselves that gives this final scene its power—the words reinforce the myth.<sup>9</sup>

The second inaugural address was certainly quoted liberally at the end of both world wars, but “a new birth of freedom” from the Gettysburg Address probably appeared even more often. What may give this phrase its emotional and imaginative power is that it invokes, perhaps often only subconsciously, some sense of the literal emancipation wrought by the Civil War. In those postwar contexts of 1918 and 1945 the new-birth-of-freedom trope was a way of capturing that most satisfying of all narrative forms: crisis followed by suffering, sacrifice, and final redemption. And the manner and timing of Lincoln’s own death (or “martyrdom”) only reinforced this. An article in the *English Review* in 1920 analyzing why Lincoln was such a compelling figure in the postwar world concluded that “in this indomitable hempen figure of truth and humanity men saw, as it were, a mirror of themselves; of what they had suffered and won to, of what perhaps in their souls they hoped their civilisation would attest to.”<sup>10</sup>

The Lincoln phrase that has cropped up most often in the research I’ve done is undoubtedly “a house divided against itself cannot stand” (which of course is from the King James Bible, but which was forever associated with Lincoln).<sup>11</sup> This has often appeared in the context Arne Westad describes above—as a justification of force in defense of national unity. I’ve seen that phrase used by opponents of Irish home rule and opponents of the partition of Ireland and opponents and supporters of the partition of India.

Several bogus Lincoln quotations have received wide circulation. The best-known of these is, to me at least, stunningly un-Lincolnian, but connecting it to him seems to have been a way of trying to undermine the moral credibility of redistributive policies. It begins “you cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong” (to the best of my knowledge the original source is a very strange book by William Boetcker called *Lincoln on Limitations*). The phrase was attributed to Lincoln on several occasions by Margaret Thatcher (who so far as I can discover never quoted Lincoln accurately, unlike her prede-

<sup>9</sup> For examples of quotations from Abraham Lincoln in wartime rhetoric, see “Lord Gort’s Broadcast,” *Manchester Guardian*, Aug. 5, 1940, p. 6; “After the War,” *ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1942, p. 3; and “Festival of the Family,” *London Times*, Dec. 22, 1944, p. 2. Abraham Lincoln, “Address at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg,” Nov. 19, 1863, in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, VII, 17–18. *Words for Battle*, dir. Humphrey Jennings (Crown Film Unit, 1941). For online access to this film, see “Words for Battle (1941),” *Screenonline*, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/77923/index.htm>; and “The Art of War,” *The National Archives*, [http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/theartofwar/films/words\\_battle.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/theartofwar/films/words_battle.htm).

<sup>10</sup> “The Success of Abraham Lincoln,” *English Review*, 30 (Feb. 1920), 187.

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 12:25 (Authorized Version).

cessors Ramsay MacDonald, Harold Wilson, and, most of all, David Lloyd George, for all of whom Lincoln was a hero).<sup>12</sup>

Another issue is connected with Lincoln's words: the comparison that has often been made between Lincoln and William Shakespeare. Have others found this in their work? John Drinkwater picked up this idea and ran with it. His book *Lincoln: The World Emancipator* contains an imagined conversation in the elysian fields in which Will compliments Abe on his ability to bring a poet's sensibility to the work of government. And in his play, Drinkwater tried to bring out Lincoln's humor to make this point. Lincoln had mythic status, Drinkwater thought, because, like Shakespeare, he demonstrated his humanity, his empathy in his language, which contained both high tragedy and low humor, humbleness as well as soaring idealism.<sup>13</sup>

SEXTON: I too would be interested in knowing more about how exactly Lincoln and his words traveled. Richard Carwardine found that by the early twentieth century, biographies of him had appeared in dozens of languages.<sup>14</sup> I wonder if anyone knows how Lincoln's key phrases/speeches were translated in these biographies, as well as how far the authors of such works used Lincoln for the social/political purposes Adam Smith has pointed out in the British context?

There is an obvious but important point: Lincoln's global traction appears to have little to do with formal, U.S.-government-sponsored projections. Biographies written by Americans made (and continue to make) their way around the globe. But the United States was slow to institute "public diplomacy" in its foreign policy apparatus, not really doing so until the mid-twentieth century (there is a new and very detailed study of the United States Information Agency [USIA] by Nicholas Cull). The few instances of which I'm aware when U.S. officials did use Lincoln as a tool of foreign policy before the mid-twentieth century were generally counterproductive. In the U.S.-occupied Philippines, American-run schools and textbooks trotted out Lincoln as a model of the politically moderate self-made man that they hoped to produce. But as Arne pointed out, it was hard to get the genie back into the bottle: Filipino opponents of the U.S. occupation saw in Lincoln a source of anticolonial inspiration. We're seeing something similar today, even if the official projections of Lincoln by the U.S. government are far more sophisticated. In light of all of the recent Barack Obama/Lincoln comparisons, it is easy to forget that George W. Bush also sought to capitalize on the image of Lincoln, both at home and abroad. The W. Bush team made Lincoln a chief symbol in its foreign policy and public diplomacy: Bush quoted Lincoln in his speeches (most notably in his 2005 second inaugural); Karen Hughes opened "Lincoln Corners" in public libraries in South Asia, which were charged with the unenviable task of improving America's image. Yet all this appears not to have achieved the desired results. It might have been a testament to the reach of the public diplomacy initiative that Pervez Musharraf cited Lincoln as justification for his

<sup>12</sup> William J. H. Boetcker, *Lincoln on Limitations* (n.p., 1916); *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 6th ser., vol. 40 (April 14, 1983), 935. See also "Maggie and Me: By Those Who Love Her (and Those Who Didn't)," *London Independent*, April 30, 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/maggie-and-me-by-those-who-love-her-and-those-who-didnt-1676343.html>.

<sup>13</sup> John Drinkwater, *Lincoln: The World Emancipator* (Boston, 1920), 114–15.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Carwardine and Jay Sexton, "Introduction," in *The Global Lincoln*, ed. Richard Carwardine and Jay Sexton (forthcoming, New York, 2010).



suspension of civil liberties and the Pakistani constitution back in 2007, but surely that was not the result the Bush team was looking for.<sup>15</sup>

On Adam's point about specific phrases of Lincoln's and the purposes for which they are deployed, I'll add one that has been important in the context of American foreign policy: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it." It was wheeled out by the American Anti-Imperialist League in 1898–1899 to oppose the establishment of colonial rule in the Philippines. But like so much with Lincoln, it has been interpreted and used in a variety of ways: Bush dredged up the phrase in his second inaugural as justification for his interventionist foreign policy.<sup>16</sup>

NICOLA MILLER: Latin American examples confirm the methodological points made by Jay and Adam. Lincoln was widely admired, but for very different reasons in different countries of the region. In Argentina, for example, little attention was paid to the Emancipation Proclamation: It was Lincoln as a nationalist, successfully prevailing over the forces of disunity, that caught the imagination of his biographer Sarmiento. In Mexico, too, his sheer capacity to sustain leadership of the Unionist campaign was often admired. For his supporters, Benito Juárez was "the Mexican Lincoln." In Cuba, where the U.S. presence was most visible earliest—in the 1830s, with the coming of the railways—the impact of Lincoln was probably greatest and had the greatest social depth. There, as in Brazil, the questions of abolition and emancipation were salient, and images of Lincoln figured in debates about slavery and abolition in a variety of (not always positive) ways. Even in Brazil and Cuba, however, the images of Lincoln that predominated were probably those of him as an institution builder rather than an emancipator.<sup>17</sup>

Images of him also changed markedly over time: In the 1860s, when many Latin American countries themselves experienced civil war, he was mainly represented as a strong political leader, capable of controlling his generals and implementing a civilian political vision of a united nation. Later in the nineteenth century, as state building and economic growth through trade brought political stability under the positivist rubric of order and progress, those who resisted such an unrelenting (and often brutal) approach to development (especially the Cuban independence leader José Martí) often invoked Lincoln as an example of "natural man," committed to a progress that was in harmony with nature.<sup>18</sup>

The question of the extent to which Lincoln was interpreted as representative of American—meaning U.S.—principles is particularly complicated in Latin America. Most of those Latin Americans who identified with Lincoln saw him as the incarnation of ideals common to the Americas as a whole, not just the United States. So Abraham Lincoln, along with George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, was incorporated into a pan-

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989* (Cambridge, Eng., 2008); "President Bush's Second Inaugural Address," *National Public Radio*, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4460172>; David Rohde, "Pakistani Sets Emergency Rule, Defying the U.S.," *New York Times*, Nov. 4, 2007, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/04/world/asia/04pakistan.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/04/world/asia/04pakistan.html?_r=1).

<sup>16</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "To Henry L. Pierce and Others," April 6, 1859, in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, III, 376; "American Anti-Imperialist League, 1899," *Modern History Sourcebook*, [www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1899antiimp.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1899antiimp.html); "President Bush's Second Inaugural Address."

<sup>17</sup> Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Vida de Abrahán Lincoln, décimo sexto presidente de los Estados Unidos* (Life of Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of the United States) (New York, 1866).

<sup>18</sup> Emeterio S. Santovenia, ed., *Lincoln in Martí: A Cuban View of Abraham Lincoln*, trans. Donald F. Fogelquist (Chapel Hill, 1953), 66.

theon of heroes from Latin America's fight for liberation and republicanism, heroes who were all acclaimed for having transcended narrow, local interests in order to promote the modern values of the New World, *americanismo*. From that perspective, Lincoln was a hero, not just of the United States, but of all the Americas. At the same time—and this point responds specifically to Adam's comment about U.S. power—his prestige in Latin America was at least partly due to his public opposition to U.S. expansionism (the Mexican-American War, the possible annexation of Cuba, and so forth). His support for Juárez's fight against the French occupation of Mexico was also widely welcomed by Latin American leaders. Soon after his death, the Chilean Congress passed a motion expressing sorrow as well as gratitude for his efforts to mediate in Chile's dispute with Bolivia. After two decades (1840s–1850s) in which negative images of a potentially all-devouring United States had begun to circulate far beyond Mexico (one Chilean intellectual depicted the U.S.A. as a boa constrictor), Lincoln's policies were heralded as the return of a less aggressive U.S. approach that would promote relations of mutual respect based on legal principles. So, whether he was being celebrated for general principles or specific policy positions, in neither sense was he thought of as quintessentially of the United States, but rather as quintessentially American in a far broader way.<sup>19</sup>

VINAY LAL: I think that David Blight is right in suggesting that the image of Lincoln as an extraordinarily effective and eloquent wielder of words assisted at least as much in his worldwide circulation as his reputation as the Great Emancipator or the architect of unity in the midst of divisions. Growing up in India, I remember first encountering Lincoln in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* when I was around eleven or twelve years old. It was only a few years later that, having arrived in the United States, I read the entire (if still brief) text of the Gettysburg Address and his second inaugural address. I wonder if I would have been as drawn to Lincoln if I had not read Robert Sherwood's play *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. (I did not then know that Sherwood had become something of a hawk.) The more pertinent consideration is that well-known literary works, other than those of Lincoln, have sharpened our appreciation of Lincoln as a gifted writer and orator.<sup>20</sup>

Other distinctions may also be helpful, and I shall here draw upon a few episodes from Indian political and literary history. Certain constituencies found Lincoln a very attractive figure while others wholly ignored him. Even among those who were his admirers, such as Mohandas Gandhi, over time the estimation of Lincoln changed considerably. In 1905 or thereabouts, while Gandhi was still in South Africa, he penned an article in *Indian Opinion*, one of several newspapers he founded in his lifetime, declaring Lincoln the greatest figure of the nineteenth century. For some years Lincoln occasionally surfaced in Gandhi's writings, but over the last two decades of Gandhi's life, there is scarcely a mention of him. I would suggest that Indian nationalist thinkers generally had little to say about Lincoln, and he is seldom invoked in their writings. Gandhi himself gravitated more toward Henry David Thoreau and even Ralph Waldo Emerson; his close associate Jawaharlal Nehru was drawn to socialist thinkers, though many Marxist intellectuals viewed him as a representative of the bourgeoisie. For somewhat obvious reasons, the

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, "A Lecture before the 'Traveler's Club' of New York on the Present Condition and Prospects of Chili," Dec. 2, 1865, in Daniel J. Hunter, *A Sketch of Chili* (New York, 1866), 13–29; Francisco Bilbao, "El Congreso Normal Americano" [1865], in *Obras completas*, ed. Manuel Bilbao (2 vols., Buenos Aires, 1866), I, 287–304, esp. 289.

<sup>20</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (New York, 1939).

West to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Indian thinkers meant largely Britain and some of the metropolitan capitals of western Europe. The one constituency that was unquestionably drawn to Lincoln were the Dalits (untouchables or outcastes), and it is perhaps no coincidence that Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, effecting a significant departure from the practice prevailing among Indian students who opted for an overseas course of study, chose to study in the U.S. (at Columbia University, where he earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees) rather than in Britain. Ambedkar became the undisputed leader of the Dalits and thereafter the principal drafter of the Indian Constitution. His closing speech, as the constitution was about to be adopted in 1950, quotes Lincoln; and it is said that he had Lincoln in mind when he founded the Republican Party of India as a platform to advance the interests of the Dalits, the lowest of the low in Indian society. One might, therefore, have to differentiate between Anglo, Brahminical, and upper-caste readings of Lincoln in India on the one hand and Dalit, Dravidian-inspired, and lower-caste readings on the other hand. And all this would still be far from answering the question: Just what kind of Lincoln was being invoked by the Dalits? Surely not the Lincoln who in his first inaugural address declared that the "Union of these States is perpetual"? If, as a highly oppressed people, the Dalits had in mind Lincoln the emancipator, were they aware that as the author of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln might still have had considerable ambivalence about viewing black people as intrinsically equal to white people?<sup>21</sup>

We can also consider with some profit the popularization of Lincoln in relation to another question that has popped up in our discussions, namely, the proliferation of writings spuriously attributed to him. I just returned from an eighteen-month-long stay in India, where my children were attending one of the finest public schools in Delhi, the Shri Ram School. I was struck when I first visited the school on finding framed posters in the school's corridors of Lincoln's "Letter to His Son's Teacher," which begins:

He will have to learn, I know,  
that all men are not just,  
all men are not true.  
But teach him also that  
for every scoundrel there is a hero;  
that for every selfish Politician,  
there is a dedicated leader . . .

My understanding is that Lincoln never wrote any such poem. This letter gained immense popularity in India, and at one time it even had the endorsement of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the country's premier body for primary and secondary education. Supposing it were true that this poem could not be attributed to Lincoln, should we then just go with the liberal humanist view that the sentiments expressed in the poem are sensible and perhaps even beautiful and that the precise authorship should ultimately not matter? For our purposes, though, at least some apparently spurious writings are just as important to an understanding of the global dissemination of Lincoln as those writings that are justly attributed to him, and there is plenty of interpretive work to be done here.

<sup>21</sup> Mohandas Gandhi, "Abraham Lincoln," in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (100 vols., New Delhi, 1969–), IV, 393; Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, "Speech on the Draft Constitution," Nov. 26, 1949, in *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, ed. Vasant Moon (16 vols., Bombay, 1979–2006), XIII, 1218.

MILLER: A quick note on phrases: a great favorite of Fidel Castro's has been "you can fool some of the people all the time, etc.," which he has used in major speeches on U.S. imperialism, on the Christian Democrat reformist government in Chile, and on the debt crisis of the 1980s. (Have the specialists resolved the attribution of that quotation? Castro has never acknowledged any doubt about those words being Lincoln's.) "Of the people, by the people, and for the people" is cited in almost everything I've read by Latin Americans about Lincoln. Castro likes that one too; he has often invoked it in defenses of Cuba's participatory democracy, contrasting that to the "bourgeois democracy" of the United States. Another almost ritual citation is Lincoln's comment about Henry Clay's loving his country partly because it was his own country, but mainly because it was a free country.<sup>22</sup>

The Gettysburg Address is included in many Latin American anthologies devoted to "liberty in the Americas." The Emancipation Proclamation is far less common, except in Cuba and Brazil, and even in the latter it seems to be less common than might be expected.

EUGENIO F. BIAGINI: About the Gettysburg speech, Timothy Roberts has recently argued that the phrase about "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" may have been suggested to Lincoln by Giuseppe Mazzini. The latter had used a similar turn of phrase in the early 1830s. The interesting thing, which Roberts has not explored, is that one of Mazzini's admirers actually sent a copy of volume 1 of the Italian patriot's works to Lincoln in 1863. A question that must arise when we discuss the "translation" of Lincoln's ideas is who started it and from which language they were first translated. These quintessentially American principles also belonged to a wider Atlantic tradition of democracy and republicanism.<sup>23</sup>

In other words, whatever Mazzini's influence on Lincoln, in the nineteenth century these principles were widely traded in the Euro-American democratic and republican debate.

## Lincoln as an American

### **JAH: To what extent did observers outside the United States view Lincoln as an American?**

SMITH: This is a very interesting question. There is a universalism inherent in most iterations of American nationalism from the Declaration of Independence onward, not least,

<sup>22</sup> On the questionable attribution of the statement about fooling the people to Lincoln, see Donald E. Fehrenbacher and Virginia Fehrenbacher, eds., *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford, 1996), 277. For Fidel Castro's use of quotations from Lincoln in speeches, see Fidel Castro, "Statement by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro in Reply to Statements Made by Chilean President Eduardo Frei," March 20, 1966, *Castro Speech Data Base*, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1966/19660320.html>; Fidel Castro, "Castro Comments on Sugar, Chilean Land Reform," April 15, 1966, *ibid.*, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1966/19660415.html>; and Fidel Castro, "Castro Reiterates Debt Nonpayment," July 8, 1985, *ibid.*, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1985/19850708.html>. Abraham Lincoln, "Eulogy on Henry Clay," July 6, 1852, in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, II, 126.

<sup>23</sup> Timothy M. Roberts, "The Relevance of Giuseppe Mazzini's Ideas of Insurgency to the American Slavery Crisis of the 1850s," in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism, 1830–1920*, ed. C. A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (New York, 2008), 322.

of course, in the words of Lincoln (the “last best hope of Earth,” the Gettysburg Address, etc.). One interesting feature of the idea of American exceptionalism is that in claiming uniqueness and separation—the idea that America has been exempt from the laws of history—exceptionalists usually also make a case for America’s global significance (perhaps, in a Lincolnian sense, as a redeemer nation). And this view of America’s ultimate meaning was shared by many non-Americans, certainly in the nineteenth century, but also today—as we’ve all been reminded in the last week by the reports on the inauguration of Barack Obama. Foreigners sometimes invested just as heavily in a providential, exceptionalist vision of America as did Americans. Viewing Lincoln as an American did not necessarily mean viewing him as an “other.”

There was also a tendency, certainly in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to remake Lincoln as a figure of such transcendent significance to mankind that his nationality was immaterial. David Lloyd George did this at the ceremony to unveil the Saint-Gaudens statue in Westminster in 1920. “In his lifetime [Lincoln] was a great American,” said the prime minister. “He is no longer so. He is one of those giant figures of whom there are very few in history, who lose their nationality in death. They are no longer Greek or Hebrew, English or American; they belong to mankind.” To contextualize this facet of Lincoln’s image, we’d need to look at the religious Nonconformist political culture out of which Lloyd George came. Richard Carwardine knows much more about this than I do, but I have looked at narratives of Lincoln’s life published in temperance journals and Methodist and Baptist newspapers in the late nineteenth century, and the striking thing is the ease with which they relate Lincoln’s life journey, from humble birth to final martyrdom, to that of Christ. An important text in the British image of Lincoln was a pamphlet written during World War II by Isaac Foot, a former Liberal member of Parliament (and father of the Labour party leader Michael Foot), who came out of a religious culture not so different from the one that shaped Lloyd George. Like Oliver Cromwell, whom Foot much admired (he was a longtime president of the Cromwell Association), Lincoln had a vision that stretched beyond the frontiers of his own nation. He could “never become the patron saint of those who love to call themselves 100 percent Americans.”<sup>24</sup>

But even people who were not “chapel”—not outside the established church—were also drawn to this transcendent conception of Lincoln. Lord Charnwood, for example, explains in his biography that since visiting the United States as a young man he had found Lincoln to be the perfect embodiment of the Christian graces of “honesty, humility [and] generosity.”<sup>25</sup>

The idea of Lincoln as a figure who transcended nationality coexisted, in Britain, with a more partisan effort to incorporate him into Anglo-Saxon racial ideology. One key to understanding the interwar “cult of Lincoln” in Britain was the embrace of Lincoln as an “Anglo-Saxon” figure. Unquestionably, one reason for Lincoln’s salience in those years was Britishers’ perception that in some sense he was one of them. While a discourse about the Anglo-Saxon peoples became most prominent at the end of the nineteenth century, it was present throughout the century after Lincoln’s death. In Newcastle in May 1865, a speaker at a mass meeting to express sympathy with the American people told his audi-

<sup>24</sup> For the speech of David Lloyd George, see Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York, 1994), 214. Isaac Foot, *Oliver Cromwell and Abraham Lincoln* (London, 1944), 29.

<sup>25</sup> Godfrey Rathbone Benson Charnwood, “Address in Springfield, Illinois,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 12 (1920), 498–502.

ence that “[Lincoln’s] was not an assassination that had taken place in some foreign country [but] in a land kindred to our own, speaking the same language, moved by the same impulses, and animated by the same principles.” In the early twentieth century, this notion was expressed in efforts to trace and mark the sites where Lincoln’s English ancestors lived—so, for example, in 1919 a bust of Lincoln was put up in the church in Hingham, Norfolk, where Lincoln’s ancestors had lived. John Drinkwater was clear that Lincoln’s “English stock” was critical to understanding him: “We in England should rejoice without any envy that he rose in Illinois and not from one of the counties of the Thames or the Tweed,” he wrote in 1920. This view was echoed by the Liberal *Manchester Guardian*, which presented Lincoln as a figure who could bind together the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the world. This was certainly also Winston Churchill’s view in *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*—and after Drinkwater and Charnwood, Churchill probably counts as one of the most important English interpreters of Lincoln in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, like images of America more generally, Lincoln was simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. His otherness was radically contested, but neither was the effort to emphasize his kinship entirely unproblematic. For many people Lincoln represented a “good” America—outward looking and progressive. That is what Lloyd George meant in the peroration of his speech at the unveiling of the Westminster statue: “this torn and bleeding earth is calling today for the help of the America of Abraham Lincoln.”<sup>27</sup> The contrast between the idealized America that Lincoln embodied and the reality (at that time, its rising isolationism) gave added power to Lincoln’s image.

SEXTON: I want to pick up on Adam’s very interesting points, particularly the idea of Lincoln as the “good” American.

We have asked how Lincoln traveled. But it is also important to consider *when* Lincoln traveled. My sense is that the moment when foreign peoples became most interested in Lincoln roughly corresponded with significant encounters they had with American power. In Latin America, for example, Lincoln became an iconic figure in the late nineteenth century, not coincidentally as the United States implemented a more proactive and interventionist foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. Lincoln’s fame grew in Britain and Europe at the turn of the century, as the United States entered the club of great powers and departed from its traditional policy of political nonentanglement in the Old World. The British became most interested in Lincoln when American troops fought on European soil and a sitting American president crossed the Atlantic for the first time to construct a new international order at a European peace conference. And in Africa Lincoln rushed onto center stage in the post–World War II years, when Cold War rivalry and American foreign policy created new threats and opportunities for the peoples breaking free from European colonialism.

If the general chronological sequence above holds up, it suggests that the biography of Lincoln became a way for foreign peoples to understand and respond to American power. The life and political career of America’s greatest statesman became shorthand for the rise

<sup>26</sup> “Meeting of Sympathy with America,” *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, May 5, 1865. On the Lincoln bust in Hingham, see *London Times*, Oct. 16, 1919; and *ibid.*, Sept. 23, 1923. Drinkwater, *Lincoln*, 6; “Lincoln,” editorial, *Manchester Guardian*, Sept. 16, 1919; Winston Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (4 vols., London, 1956–1958).

<sup>27</sup> Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, 214.

of the United States. This did not mean that all accepted American power in the forms in which it presented itself. Indeed, the conception of a mythic and flawless Lincoln—the good American that Adam wrote about—functioned as the standard to judge the actions of subsequent American statesmen. And, most important, Lincoln became a symbol and language that could be used to co-opt or even oppose American power. Adam observed that British statesmen pointed to Lincoln's internationalism to coax the Americans into sharing some of the burdens of the postwar world of the 1920s, as well as to reconfirm their own faith in a progressive America. Many other invocations of Lincoln could similarly be read as an attempt to harness the power of the United States for beneficial purposes. A similar dynamic plays out when the "bad" Lincoln is invoked (the Lincoln that violates civil liberties, stretches the Constitution, confiscates private property). The obvious example here is Musharraf's invocation of the bad Lincoln, which sought American support for, or at least acquiescence in, his suspension of the Pakistani constitution by packaging it as a Lincolnian act.

SMITH: Jay must surely be on to something here. He is certainly right about the timing of Britain's cult of Lincoln, and I strongly agree with him that Lincoln has been appropriated to "co-opt or even oppose American power." I am also struck, though, by the salience of Lincoln's image *before* America's rise to economic and political prominence. Colleagues may be familiar with that famous interview with Leo Tolstoy in 1909—in the *New York World*, if I remember rightly—which has been quoted at the end of many Lincoln books, including Doris Kearns Goodwin's. Tolstoy talks about Lincoln as the greatest figure of the nineteenth century—a Christ in miniature. He then recounts a meeting he'd had with a remote tribe in the Caucasus during which, Tolstoy claims, the chief, desperate for more knowledge from the outside world, begs to hear tales of the man whose voice was like thunder, whose deeds were as strong as the rock and as fragrant as roses. The angels had appeared to his mother and predicted that the son she would conceive would become the greatest the stars had ever seen, a man who was so great he forgave his enemies, the man called Lincoln from the country called America . . . What, other than Tolstoy's creative imagination, was all that about?<sup>28</sup> And Vinay Lal talks about Gandhi's admiration for Lincoln at the turn of the century, in a context where American power was not the issue, British power was. When Lincoln became such a revered figure in the wake of the Great War it was less, in the British case at least, that he was being encountered for the first time and more that the Wilsonian vision of a democratic world peace made Lincoln's vision seem prophetic—people went back to Lincoln as a reminder of what America could be. This does not negate the relationship between the uses of Lincoln's image and different societies' responses to American power. But such uses suggest that there were preexisting images of Lincoln on which politicians could draw.

BLIGHT: Jay's notion that in considering Lincoln's image context—timing—matters is paramount. That reference to "torn and bleeding earth" that Adam nicely quotes from Lloyd George was made immediately after the ghastliness of the Great War. But in any context, at any particular moment in time, it seems to be Abraham Lincoln's essential malleability and ambiguity that makes him so ever useful. He himself was a man of

<sup>28</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2005), 747–48.

paradox, ambiguity, and even a lover of irony. He did offer that America was an “almost chosen” nation, not “chosen.” And slavery, in the second inaugural, caused the war “somehow.” There are many other examples of Lincoln’s slippery, cautious ability to give U.S. magnificent words that can be used and interpreted in quite different ways. This is surely true on the all-important race question. Having said that, there is also a core Lincoln, a man who could usually reach moral clarity on most great issues. But in this world we are discussing of myths, images, and usable symbols, it is ever the representative Lincoln at stake.

I have just finished a review for the *Washington Post* of Ron White’s new *A. Lincoln: A Biography*. It’s good, and it makes much of Lincoln’s marvelous uses of language—his lifelong devotion to reading and words. But Ron also stresses the ambiguity of Lincoln’s ideas and does not in the end portray him as the flawless one who always seemed to have things figured out a half century before other mortals. And now I am reading Fred Kaplan’s *Lincoln: The Biography of a Writer*, and Barry Schwartz’s *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-heroic Era* (a book deeply about Lincoln in national memory). Kaplan is wonderful on language and the influences of Lincoln’s amazing array of beloved books. Schwartz is dense and lumpy but very good on the rising and falling tides of Lincoln’s reputation and memory in the twentieth century. In all of these new Lincoln books, and there are many more, we see just how malleable Lincoln was; otherwise there would be no way to sustain the Lincoln publishing industry.<sup>29</sup>

One thing that continues to puzzle me is why so much is at stake in how we remember and use Lincoln, here and abroad. What is at the heart of this? The meaning ultimately of our Civil War? The meaning of slavery and race? The meaning of the central drama of American history? The meaning in the deep American myth that a boy from a dirt farm in Indiana who loves to read can become a genius at political theory, writing, speaking, and statecraft? What’s at stake here?

SEXTON: Something important in the context of Adam’s comment about early views of Lincoln is the timing and suddenness of his death. Much has been written about the role the assassination played in his sanctification at home. Surely, it was important internationally as well. There is an entire volume of the *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* devoted to “expressions of condolences and sympathy” sent to Washington after the assassination not only by foreign governments, as was customary in such a contingency, but also by private organizations, political clubs, churches, reform groups, etc.<sup>30</sup>

Have others found that the assassination played an important role in shaping international views of Lincoln?

RICHARD CARWARDINE: These exchanges prompt several lines of thought. One—which bears on Jay’s reflections on when Lincoln traveled as well as on how much foreign ob-

<sup>29</sup> David W. Blight, “Abe the Intellectual,” *Washington Post*, Feb. 8, 2009, p. BW03, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/05/AR2009020503121.html>; White, *A. Lincoln*; Kaplan, *Lincoln*; Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> United States Department of State, *Appendix to Diplomatic Correspondence of 1865: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Late President of the United States of America, and the Attempted Assassination of William H. Seward, Secretary of State, and Frederick W. Seward, Assistant Secretary, on the Evening of the 14th of April, 1865; Expressions of Condolences and Sympathy Inspired by These Events* (Washington, 1866).



servers saw him as American—is to consider how to find more than merely impressionistic measures of his salience and appeal over time in particular countries. The fluctuating tide of Lincoln biographies, other publications, and press attention helps indicate high- and low-water marks. (Adam Smith may be able to document this statistically in England; Carolyn Boyd and Eugenio Biagini in Spain, Italy, and Germany; Nicola Miller in Latin America.) One of my graduate students searched all references to Lincoln in British parliamentary debates from the 1860s to the present and found the high-water marks to be the 1910s and 1940s.

Another approach, which reveals Lincoln's profound influence in the private sphere, is to search the decennial censuses for the newborn males named after him. Robert Kenzer and Benjamin Kenzer's work in progress on U.S. naming patterns shows "Abraham Lincoln" and "Lincoln" enjoyed continuing popularity during the late nineteenth century: there were in excess of 5,000 newborns so named by 1900, followed by a spike in "Lincoln" namings during the centenary year of 1909; the total rose to over 7,000 by 1930. The England and Wales census for 1901 shows almost 300 males with the first name Lincoln, about twice the number of 1871, which suggests the persistence of deep admiration through the late nineteenth century. Analysis of later censuses could confirm whether during the Great War and its immediate aftermath and again during the 1940s Lincoln exercised the same influence privately as he did in the public arena.<sup>31</sup>

We might want to reflect on these naming practices. African Americans were certainly honoring the emancipator; white native-born Americans were surely moved by a variety of principles along with a desire to promote their children's chances of success; and first-generation American immigrants appear to have chosen "Lincoln" for their sons to affirm their new nationality. (Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, born in Wisconsin in 1905 to Lithuanian Jewish parents, told how they had named him in the belief that Lincoln was a Jew, having heard that John Wilkes Booth had shot him in the temple.) When, however, English or Welsh parents named their child after Lincoln during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is unlikely they were honoring Lincoln as an American but rather as an example of the nearest a human being could come to embodying liberal, democratic principles. Take the case of a Shropshire workingman dismissed for promoting trade unionism who moved to the more congenial and radical environment of industrial Sheffield, where he became a skilled and successful cabinetmaker and a Liberal in politics. We should not be surprised that in 1908, on the eve of the centenary, he named his son Lincoln.<sup>32</sup>

The rest of that story proffers further lessons. Sir Lincoln Ralphs, as he would become, was the key force, as chief education officer for Norfolk, behind the founding of a progressive, state-funded boarding college at Wymondham in 1950. Close to Hingham, the village from which Lincoln's East Anglian ancestors emigrated in the mid-seventeenth century and whose church draws many visitors to its Lincoln Memorial bust and tablet, the college opened a new boarding facility in 1958 and they named it Lincoln Hall. So we might say that both the college and the hall are the working out over time of Lincoln's legacy—culminating, appropriately enough, in an institution committed to pro-

<sup>31</sup> Robert C. Kenzer and Benjamin L. Kenzer, "Living Monuments: Americans Named in Honor of Abraham Lincoln," 2008, unpublished paper (in Richard Carwardine's possession).

<sup>32</sup> On Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, see Shuli Esbel and Roger Schatz, *Jewish Maxwell Street Stories* (Charleston, 2004), 69. Lincoln Ralphs's widow Enid Ralphs (Lady Ralphs) gave me biographical information about her father-in-law, January 15, 2009.

viding young people with the superior education Lincoln never had. But the speaker at the opening of Lincoln Hall was Dean Acheson, then U.S. secretary of state. The college's neighbors include U.S. Air Force bases. The event in 1958 was a Cold War celebration and endorsement of transatlantic ideological and political partnership. Lincoln was a convenient, perhaps the best, symbol of shared common values.<sup>33</sup>

BOYD: Let me comment on Jay Sexton's remark regarding Lincoln's assassination. I've encountered a two-volume work entitled *Los mártires de la república*, published by the Society of Republican Writers in 1873 in Barcelona, that includes a lengthy biography of Lincoln among other biographies of such martyrs as Mazzini, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Lajos Kossuth, and a host of lesser-known Spanish republicans. Lincoln was thereby located in a pantheon of republican saints that was not identified with any particular nationality. The underlying theme is the redemptive one of suffering and sacrifice on behalf of the rest of humanity. Symbolically, Lincoln's death functioned in tandem with the message of hope that we discussed earlier, particularly for progressive groups seeking to mobilize their followers in the face of successive defeats and disappointments.<sup>34</sup>

MILLER: In Latin American countries, Lincoln was certainly seen as a transcendental figure, but that status derived from the perception of him as the embodiment of the values of the Americas as a whole, not only the United States. The assassination was a crucial moment, at least partly because many Latin American liberals who wrote about Lincoln saw in him, rather than in his country, the "last best hope" of republicanism. In the speeches and writings that came out at that time, Lincoln was incorporated into a pre-existing tradition of *americanismo*, which had first acquired political significance during the independence era, although its cultural roots go back far further. At this stage, he was compared mainly with Simon Bolívar and Washington ("Washington created American liberty; Lincoln purified it"). So although I agree with Jay that it's important to map the history of images of Lincoln onto the history of "significant encounters" with U.S. power, I also think that in the case of Latin America it's important to take into account the history of *americanismo*, which is related to the history of U.S.–Latin American relations but is not reducible to it. *Americanismo* sometimes included the United States and sometimes didn't, but even when the United States was excluded, advocates of *americanismo* would include people like Lincoln and Washington as true Americanists, unlike whichever "imperialist exploiter" was being attacked at the time. Castro's 1981 claim "The U.S. revolutionaries belong to us" had a long history and resonated across the region.<sup>35</sup>

SEXTON: I might have mapped out too schematic a formula in connecting Lincoln's global celebrity and American power. Lincoln of course appears in contexts that are largely

<sup>33</sup> On Sir Lincoln Ralphs, see "In Memoriam," *London Times*, Oct. 24, 1978, p. 20. On Dean Acheson's speech, see "College Heritage," *Wymondham College*, <http://www.wymondhamcollege.org/about/College-Heritage-31>.

<sup>34</sup> *Los mártires de la república: Cuadros históricos de los sufrimientos, de las penalidades, de los martirios de todos los grandes apóstoles de la idea republicana . . . /por una sociedad de escritores republicanos* (The martyrs of the republic: Historical depictions of the sufferings, of the hardships, of the griefs of all the great apostles of the republican idea . . . by a society of republican writers) (2 vols., Barcelona, 1873).

<sup>35</sup> Fidel Castro, "Speech by Fidel Castro at Closing Ceremony of the Second Congress of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution," Oct. 25, 1981, *Castro Speech Data Base*, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1981/19811025>.

independent of direct American power. He certainly should be viewed alongside other nineteenth-century liberal heroes and often has been presented not simply as an American, but as an embodiment of hemispheric, transatlantic, or universal principles. Yet it still seems that the power of the United States—its rapid ascent in the global pecking order in the late nineteenth century, its expansive economy and culture, and its role as global superpower in the second half of the twentieth century—is important to understanding why Lincoln's image pops up time and again, as well as the form those appearances take.

A couple of other themes relating to Lincoln as an American have emerged as of particular importance. The first is the self-made man theme, which, though not exceptionally American, seems to have been associated with the United States as well as with other iconic Americans, such as Benjamin Franklin. The second concerns the various and contradictory ways Lincoln and the United States figured in debates about colonialism and/or national consolidation. Several of us have mentioned examples: advocates of Irish home rule and their opponents both found inspiration and legitimacy in Lincoln; Sukarno invoked Lincoln to remind the United States that it should oppose Dutch colonialism, only to invoke him later on behalf of his consolidation efforts. That Lincoln could reasonably be seen in such divergent ways testifies that there is no single meaning of his leadership during the American Civil War. Was the Civil War an example of colonial subjugation, where the Northern states used brute force to impose their will on the South? Or was it the antithesis, an instance of a freely elected government preserving itself and the nation it represented in the face of an unjustified rebellion and, ultimately, liberating oppressed slaves from the rule of an aristocratic minority? Most historians today, I imagine, have pretty clear views on this. But it bears pointing out that international views of Lincoln and the Civil War have not always broken down as one might expect.

There is also something larger at work, which Nicola touched on with reference to Castro: the paradoxical and contradictory meaning not only of Lincoln's statesmanship and the Civil War but also of the United States itself. Even as this new union of states extended its borders and exercised power over the peoples standing in its way, nineteenth-century Americans struggled to free themselves from their own colonial past and from persistent British neocolonialism. The United States, to use the old phrase of William Appleman Williams, was an "imperial anti-colonialist."<sup>36</sup> We American historians are accustomed to thinking about these paradoxical impulses in U.S. foreign policy, how the Monroe Doctrine, for example, both opposed European colonialism and articulated a vision of hemispheric supremacy. But it seems to me that the simultaneity and coexistence of anticolonialism and imperialism is also an important element in global perceptions of the United States. Foreign observers could find what they were looking for in the history of the United States, even in the life of a statesman such as Lincoln, who said surprisingly little about either his nation's colonial past or its imperial ambitions (contrast Lincoln with his hero Henry Clay, who was obsessed with the British Empire and with establishing a new "American system" to rival it).

### Lincoln as a "Natural Man"

SMITH: Nicola Miller observed that in the late nineteenth century Lincoln was invoked in Latin America as a "natural man" who represented a vision of a modernity that was in

<sup>36</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York, 1972), 18–58.

harmony with nature. Is this a more general phenomenon? How important to Lincoln's global image was the idea of him as an "authentic" or natural man who reconciled modernity with nature?

It seems to me that insofar as Lincoln was a carrier of the idea of America and insofar as "America" often signified modernity, Lincoln's connection with the soil may have offered an appealing counterpoint to the harshness of American capitalism in the Gilded Age and later. I think this was why supporters of Henry George often claimed Lincoln, and it explains the consistency with which British radical newspapers in the late nineteenth century emphasized his signing of the 1862 Homestead Act.

Lincoln's authenticity, his rural frontier upbringing, his strong association (rail-splitting, flatboating) with a simpler world before the rise of giant corporations, a world in which talented men could rise and in which wage labor was only a temporary stage of life: What role did these things play in Lincoln's global image?

SEXTON: I've been thinking about the natural man issue, as well as Nicola Miller's earlier remarks about how/why many Latin Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century viewed Lincoln favorably. I don't know of further examples of the natural man theme, but I suspect that Adam is right in identifying it as an important element of Lincoln's international traction. What strikes me in both cases is how easily Lincoln could be interpreted in the opposite manner. Lincoln might well have split rails and advocated the Homestead Act, but his administration also directed fundamental changes in political economy that empowered an emerging group of financiers and industrialists whose power would become dominant in the coming decades—the very developments that a British radical would see as threatening. Similarly, Latin American liberals had reason to point to Lincoln's opposition to the war of conquest against Mexico and to schemes to seize Cuba as portending a new era in inter-American relations. Yet it was during the Lincoln administration that new tactics and approaches aimed at extending commercial and political control over Latin America were developed. The Lincoln administration supported Juárez but hoped that so doing would bring Mexico into the economic orbit of the United States. To be fair, Lincoln himself was not solely responsible for either of those developments—he did not personally draft the banking and financial legislation of the war years, nor did he devote much time to promoting export expansion in Latin America. Yet his administration oversaw those developments, and the United States would probably have moved in similar directions on both fronts had he not been assassinated.<sup>37</sup> Though more sensitive to the common man and not a jingo like many of his contemporaries, Lincoln certainly shared the general economic and international vision of the mid-nineteenth-century Republican party. Even if he would not have liked the America of 1898, he played a role in creating it. I'm sure that we could come up with a list of foreign observers who would depict Lincoln in this less laudatory light.

The elasticity of Lincoln's words that was discussed earlier has a parallel in his actions and policies. In both cases above we have an ambiguous policy record, but one that was airbrushed by foreign observers at particular times to serve particular functions. Here we see an international version of the game disillusioned Americans (and American historians, in particular!) like to play: When exactly did things go wrong? When did the repub-

<sup>37</sup> Thomas David Schoonover, *Dollars over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican–United States Relations, 1861–1867* (Baton Rouge, 1978).

lican promise of the United States devolve into the corrupt monopolies of the Gilded Age? When did U.S. imperialism overrun plans for Pan-American solidarity? The answer some international observers appear to have come up with—when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated—reveals a set of paradoxes. Lincoln could be a vehicle for both admiration of and opposition to the United States; he could symbolize economic modernization and growth whilst retaining the ideals of the natural man; he could be viewed as an apostle of hemispheric, or even global, engagement and harmony, without the imperialist baggage that accompanied those processes.

LAL: I can understand the idea of Lincoln as a natural man, but its global import is not altogether clear. The idea of Lincoln as someone who transitioned, in the clichéd phrase, from the log cabin to the White House has had appeal in many parts of the world, but I wonder to what extent the representations of him that dwell on his authenticity have had a global reach. I was intrigued to read Nicola Miller's observation that in nineteenth-century Latin America, Lincoln was invoked as a natural man. The word "natural" has many different registers. Lincoln's contemporary Henry David Thoreau was clearly a natural man, but as studies about the composition of *Walden*—which, far from flowing effortlessly from Thoreau's pen, was redrafted and rewritten many times over—amply demonstrate, Thoreau cannot be viewed as being without affect. When Thoreau writes, in the opening chapter of *Walden*, that the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation, the affect is palpable.<sup>38</sup> It appears to me that we cannot describe Lincoln and Thoreau as natural men in the same way, and I doubt that the image of Lincoln chopping wood had a reach that could be termed global. The sobriquet Honest Abe certainly gestures at his authenticity, but the very idea of authenticity has undergone a sea change over the last few decades. One does not have to be committed to postmodernism to inquire whether the authenticity of Lincoln resides, as the folklore would have it, in his modest beginnings and his proximity to nature in Kentucky and Indiana—or in his sensitivity to questions of injustice and inequality or, indeed, in the gradually evolving views on black people that brought him, before his assassination, to think of endowing black men with the vote under certain conditions.

MILLER: I agree that what is meant by Lincoln as natural man needs to be carefully unpicked in each instance. One theme, which was a marked feature of the Latin American reception, is Lincoln as an autodidact. Martí strongly identified with this aspect of Lincoln's biography, as did a host of his successors in the early twentieth century, when many of Latin America's prominent intellectuals spent only a brief time in formal higher education. For many of them academicism was a term of contempt, referring to superficial, irrelevant, dogmatic knowledge that impeded true understanding and precluded the possibility of authenticity.

To pick up on one other thing mentioned by Jay: Matías Romero, Juárez's representative in Washington, became highly disillusioned with Lincoln, mainly for his failure to offer as much support to Juárez as Romero sought, and he was one of the few prominent Mexicans of his era who had a relatively low opinion of Lincoln.

<sup>38</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854; New York, 1910), 8.

As for the periods when Lincoln's image was particularly significant, in Latin America, after the importance of Lincoln during the late nineteenth century, 1909 seemed to have relatively little impact (there was far more about Washington, related to Latin American independence centennials). A lot of works on Lincoln appeared in the 1940s, perhaps connected to comparisons of him with Franklin D. Roosevelt and the improvement in the general Latin American view of the U.S.A. with the Good Neighbor policy and World War II. Also, the Spanish civil war, especially because of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, seems to have been important in reviving the "apostle of liberty" image. The 1959 anniversary had less impact (overshadowed by the Cuban Revolution?), but quite a lot of attention was paid to the centenary of his death.

BOYD: Among Lincoln's democratic and republican admirers in Spain, it was the president's "character" that was most frequently invoked as a sign of his greatness. Acknowledging that other American presidents surpassed Lincoln in education, manners, even intelligence, they insisted that Lincoln had earned his place among them on the basis of his natural endowments of prudence, perseverance, and commitment to the highest ideals of Christian morality. In this sense Lincoln exemplified the virtues of the natural man, whose inborn qualities prepared him for the great crisis he was called on to meet.

Lincoln's humble origins, which had denied him the educational opportunities and privileges that others like Jefferson had enjoyed, played an important role in Spain in shaping his image as a natural man. The "woodcutter Lincoln" was a stock phrase that appeared in nearly every essay, speech, or biography written about the American president, even though those who invoked it understood that Lincoln had not leaped directly from the forests to the White House and that his modest upbringing was atypical of those who had achieved the presidency. His limited social and educational background was important for progressives seeking to democratize Spain's constitutional monarchy, which was based on a restricted franchise, and Lincoln's unpolished demeanor, plain speaking, and inelegant dress provided a telling contrast to the brilliance and extravagance of the court, the military hierarchy, and the dominant social groups in midcentury Spain.

### What Is at Stake in How We Remember and Use Lincoln

**JAH: As David Blight asked, why is so much at stake in how we remember and use Lincoln, here and abroad? What is at the heart of that remembrance? The meaning of our Civil War? Of slavery and race? Of the central drama of American history? Of the American myth that a boy from a dirt farm in Indiana who loves to read can become a genius at political theory, writing, speaking, and statecraft?**

SEXTON: One of the interesting things I've found in U.S. projections of Lincoln abroad—especially the 1959 sesquicentennial, which was one of the greatest public diplomacy efforts of its era—is the extent to which American officials latched onto the self-made man theme, even to the exclusion of the other meanings of Lincoln. U.S. overseas propaganda disproportionately focused on the young Lincoln, the man who split rails in the day and studied by firelight in the evening, the humble man of common origins who rose to hold the greatest office in his land.

This emphasis on the self-made man is partly explained, no doubt, by the traction this idea had across the world. Yet I also sense U.S. officials' fear that Lincoln was open to a range of meanings, several of which might not suit the political objectives of the United States. Lincoln could be dangerous to the United States. He could be an inspiration to anticolonialism, as Arne pointed out. And despite his ambivalence on racial issues, he could be deployed to condemn the persistence of racism and segregation in the United States (indeed, United States Information Agency agents on the ground during the 1959 sesquicentennial campaign feared that talk of Lincoln would only lead foreign peoples to note the betrayal of his principles by southern segregationists during the recent crisis over school integration in Little Rock). Such images of Lincoln would hinder U.S. diplomacy abroad, and open up at home the contentious issues of the meaning of the Civil War and Lincoln's legacy. Robert Cook's excellent new study of the Civil War centennial has shown how divisive those questions continued to be in this period.<sup>39</sup>

From the perspective of U.S. officials much was at stake, indeed. Lincoln was open to a range of meanings, some of which did not fit the international and political interests of the United States. So American propaganda hammered home what was presumed to be the safe theme of the self-made man.

CARWARDINE: All of David's suggestions are at work, I think, though their relative significance depends hugely on the vantage point, which means there is no one answer to his question. Lincoln's tug on Americans' memory is naturally quite different from his inspirational power in other places. Still, common to all positive readings of Lincoln and an essential ingredient in his peculiar reach is Lincoln the sacrificial figure. Jay asked how far the circumstances of Lincoln's death shaped his reception abroad and noted that his assassination not only secured tributes from heads of state and government (there's no surprise in this concern for self-preservation amongst the guild of rulers!) but also prompted expressions of heartfelt grief from countless common people, through their voluntary organizations, from Argentina to Switzerland, Bavaria to Venezuela, Belgium to Uruguay. Assassination alone is not enough for enduring influence—witness James A. Garfield and William McKinley—but untimely death where there is a deeply admired work in progress brings a semireligious sense of shared loss. It is no accident that the two most internationally inspirational Americans of the second half of the twentieth century—outdoing Lincoln as talismans abroad—were John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. But compared to Lincoln's, their political agendas, ideological reach, and human qualities were narrower. Lincoln's power lay in a complex of attributes, any one or more of which could be foregrounded or amplified according to the political and cultural demands of the observer: democrat, progressive-liberal, emancipator, romantic nationalist, citizen-commander, frontiersman, orator, self-made man, temperance advocate, and—this perhaps above all—a figure of uncommon humanity. Ticking all these boxes, he offered the same malleability in attributes that, as David and Jay note, he did in his language. But common to all celebrations and invocations of Lincoln, whatever the context, was surely the perception of Lincoln as martyr, fusing Moses and the redemptive Christ, whose Good Friday Passion he shared.

<sup>39</sup> Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961–1965* (Baton Rouge, 2007).

SMITH: As Jay suggests, different things could be at stake in different contexts and at different times. The malleability of Lincoln's image is in part a reflection of the quality of the man himself. Probably one of the secrets of great leadership is to allow people to project onto you their own identities, and Lincoln certainly had that quality. In part this was because Lincoln combined such sharply contrasting qualities: humor and solemnity, confidence and insecurity, hope and despair. In part it was because of his speeches, which were so often inspiring yet had a certain hard-to-pin-down quality (rather like Obama's). In death, this enigmatic quality to Lincoln undoubtedly encouraged the many different readings of him, enabling him to be "appropriated" by Spiritualists, nationalists, teetotalers, Baptists, socialists and free-marketeers, insurance salesmen, Caucasian mountain chiefs dreaming of great military heroes—all with at least some plausibility. Consequently, Lincoln has been made into many different recognizable hero types: the military leader, the great nationalist, the benign philosopher-king, the martyr that Richard writes about, and many others.

But my guess is that of the suggestions David makes, the last—Lincoln as a self-made man—had the most universal appeal and, as the Cold War-era State Department evidently realized, was the one that fitted most closely with a positive vision of the United States as a land of opportunity and more generally with the romantic idea that greatness can be found in the humblest as well as in princes and kings. That is one of the things that drew Lincoln's greatest British admirers, even when, like Charnwood and Churchill or the Scottish novelist and imperial administrator John Buchan, they were themselves wellborn.

CARWARDINE: Thanks to Kenneth Morgan's research, I can reflect a little on Wales. (It also helps that, as we Welsh commonly boast, Lloyd George knew my father—and, indeed, my grandmother too, though that's not something to trumpet). In Wales the Nonconformist, chapel-going, Liberal majority had begun to celebrate Lincoln, even before his assassination, as an inspiring embodiment of social mobility and the democratic republican ideal. His unorthodox religious faith remained invisible; instead he was, as Morgan puts it, "hailed for his devotion to religious principle." When he died, he was sanctified as "our Lincoln." It was also asserted that through his mother, Nancy Hanks, he was descended from medieval Welsh princes. He would later be called "our Welsh president." (Mary Lincoln too was claimed for Wales.) Lincoln the foe of slavery won a place in the hearts and minds of pious, reform-driven, chapel goers, most of whom would have read and reread *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (the first novel ever translated into Welsh). But for Lloyd George it was Lincoln the democrat and believer in the common sense of the common man—not Lincoln the emancipator—who was so worthy of admiration. From humble roots himself and enjoying only limited education, Lloyd George had reached the premiership through his own talents. That would have been enough to encourage his hero worship of Lincoln, but World War I and its aftermath made the president even more relevant to the British prime minister, as a model of civilian but strong leadership in wartime, one with which he could empathize: Both he and Lincoln had dealt with troublesome generals and politicians, mastered military strategy, undeviatingly pursued unconditional surrender in the supreme crisis of the nation, and finally, in victory, looked for clemency and reconciliation. Lloyd George's rhetoric struck a chord that resonated with liberal, progressive opinion in Wales and beyond at a time when, as Adam has so



helpfully described, the fate of democracy appeared to hang on Anglo-Saxon unity in addressing the immediate needs of war-torn Europe in the “fight against the wave of autocracy that is sweeping over our continent. Russia, an autocracy; Italy for the moment a dictatorship; Spain, a dictatorship; Germany, slipping into dictatorship—most of Europe having abandoned confidence in the people. It is the hour of Lincoln’s doctrine to be preached in the countries of Europe.”<sup>40</sup>

Another way of approaching what was at stake in the memorializing of Lincoln is to consider the circumstances in which he fell out of vogue. In Wales the cult of Lincoln lost its force between the world wars. It was an era in which Nonconformist Liberalism gave way politically to a Labour party whose heartland working-class constituency never made him their hero. (The contrast with German Social Democrats, who shared Karl Marx’s admiration for Lincoln, is noteworthy.) Kenneth Morgan notes that the political Left in Wales “increasingly saw in America not the last, best hope of democracy but the linchpin of capitalism.” The great radical socialist and orator Aneurin Bevan never alluded to Lincoln in his speeches, while Michael Foot regarded him as a conservative figure. Something significant had changed since the days of Lloyd George—something more than the mere passage of time.<sup>41</sup>

SMITH: The veneration of Lincoln in Liberal Nonconformist working-class communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not confined to Wales. Richard’s analysis closely parallels the work I’ve done on Lincoln’s image in parts of Britain with a similar religious and political culture to nineteenth-century Wales, such as the rural mining communities of the Northeast or the Staffordshire potteries. In an 1873 lecture to the Turners’ Burial and Sick Society of Longton, Staffordshire, a speaker stressed God’s clear “election” of Lincoln in “His plan for the raising of the class he came from” and went on to offer him as a model democrat whose life—and martyrdom—were evidence that the fight against aristocratic privilege could be won.<sup>42</sup> The trope of the poor boy made good was a staple of Victorian culture, and it has often been seen by historians as a way of validating capitalist individualism. But in Lincoln’s case—where the emphasis was firmly on a moral quest and on the achievement, not of great riches, but of political power—it also supported a latter-day Chartist ideal of self-improvement through education and a meritocratic society with no barriers of class or privilege. So for this important constituency, Lincoln became the embodiment of the kind of society they wanted to build: what was at stake was nothing less than their world view.

BOYD: Seemingly another reason for the veneration of Lincoln in Spain was his resolute commitment to winning a civil war and preserving the unity of the nation. The history of Spain in the nineteenth century was dominated by civil war: the so-called War of Independence against the Napoleonic forces was also in part a civil war, and liberal parliamentary government was only consolidated after three fratricidal conflicts that pitted liberals against Carlist defenders of the traditionalist monarchy. For progressives whose

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, “Abraham Lincoln and Wales,” in *Global Lincoln*, ed. Carwardine and Sexton; David Lloyd George, “Abraham Lincoln, the Inspirer of Democracy,” Oct. 18, 1923, in *Building the Myth: Selected Speeches Memorializing Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Waldo W. Braden (Urbana, 1991), 206.

<sup>41</sup> Morgan, “Abraham Lincoln and Wales.”

<sup>42</sup> Eugenio F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment, and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 79.

default response to war was disapprobation, Lincoln's willingness to accept the necessity of war justified their own resort to arms to defeat Carlism, whose final armed assault on the liberal monarchy dragged on for six years during the 1870s. Lincoln's presidency and the final victory of those who fought to preserve the Union provided liberals with a welcome example of support for their contention that war in defense of higher principles was sometimes the only option, despite its inevitable moral and economic costs.

MILLER: Echoing what Carolyn said about Spain, for many Latin Americans, the great strength of Lincoln lay in his ability to sustain civil power to defend the republican ideal, even in the midst of war. There were different interpretations of how and why Lincoln had been able to preserve the Republic: In divided Argentina, mid-nineteenth-century statesmen emphasized the overwhelming importance of central, unifying power, which was seen as crucial to becoming a great nation; in overcentralized Colombia, by contrast, the U.S. Civil War was interpreted as illustrating the strength of a system that gave states a mobilizing capacity. But throughout Spanish America what was at stake was the defense of republicanism (against monarchism, resurgent in Mexico) and liberty; in other words, the defense of the values of the New World against the Old. The main comparisons were with Bolívar or Washington, with sometimes Jefferson and later with Franklin Roosevelt (there was a Cuban book in the 1940s about Lincoln as the precursor of the Good Neighbor policy, for example). Both Juárez and Martí have repeatedly been identified with Lincoln.<sup>43</sup>

SMITH: One way of approaching this question of what is at stake is to compare Lincoln's image with that of other heroic figures. Certainly, if we want to understand the international response to Lincoln's death and the development of his reputation in the rest of the nineteenth century, we need to situate it in a political culture that involved a growing cult of political celebrities, particularly (and not just in Britain and the United States) a veneration of what Patrick Joyce calls "democratic leading men"—political leaders who were hailed as tribunes of the common people and exemplifications of "manly" virtues like patriotism and moral purpose.<sup>44</sup> Lincoln's image slotted perfectly into the popular romantic sensibilities of this new (or at least renewed) type of radical political culture. His life and death were perfectly suited to the melodramatic form: a heroic triumph of virtue over great odds. The familiarity with Lincoln that many people felt, their sense of his immediacy, was reinforced by new printing technologies and cheaper newspapers and particularly by the spread, in the years immediately preceding the American Civil War, of the new rapid engraving techniques pioneered by the *Illustrated London News* (and used by *L'Illustration* in Paris, *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* in New York, and *Die illustrierte Zeitung* in Germany).

In Britain, John Bright, Richard Cobden, Feargus O'Connor, and above all William Gladstone were in this sense comparable to Lincoln. Perhaps the figure most comparable to Lincoln in his impact on the popular imagination was Garibaldi, whose 1864 visit to

<sup>43</sup> Emeterio S. Santovenia, "Lincoln, el precursor de la Buena vecindad" (Lincoln, the forerunner of the Good Neighbor policy) (1951), in *Estudios, biografías, y ensayos* (Studies, biographies, and essays), by Emeterio S. Santovenia (Havana, 1957), 481–99.

<sup>44</sup> Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), 136.

Britain has received a lot of scholarly attention, most recently in Lucy Riall's excellent book about the "invention" of the Garibaldi heroic myth. While Garibaldi's appeal in Britain was much less enduring than Lincoln's, it was even more intense and dramatic while it lasted. It drew on very similar impulses and was used by radicals for similar purposes. As democratic heroes, both Garibaldi and Lincoln became emblems used by the rich associational culture of British radical politics in the mid-Victorian era—the Garibaldi "welcome committees" of 1864 formed by the various workingmen's organizations and trade unions enlisted the same people who organized public meetings to express their horror at Lincoln's death the following year. And as Margot Finn and Keith McClelland and others have argued, the mobilizations in support of Garibaldi and of the Union cause helped stimulate the popular demand for reform that led to the 1867 Reform Act. British conservatives were as uneasy about the popular adoration of Garibaldi as they were of the public support for Lincoln, rightly seeing them both as a threat to the prevailing order. Lucy Riall even argues that Garibaldi was invested with "English" or "gentlemanly" virtues, just as Lincoln was. Garibaldi, like Lincoln, was also associated with, and compared to, two quintessentially English figures: Cromwell and Shakespeare. Shakespeare and Garibaldi were manufactured as a pair of Staffordshire pottery figurines to be placed on Victorian mantelshelves while the Lincolnian connection to Shakespeare is so voluminous that it probably deserves a separate discussion. Cromwell was reinvented in the nineteenth century as an avenger of the people's liberties, famed (like Lincoln, but also like Garibaldi, Gladstone, and others) for incorruptible honesty, moral integrity, and a conviction that "right makes might." Cromwell, although rooted in English history and English "virtues," was also, like Lincoln and Garibaldi and even Gladstone, a "transnational" figure—waging a universal struggle on behalf of the people against privilege and despotism. Thus in the currency his image had in Europe (particularly Britain) in the years immediately following his death, Lincoln mattered at least as much for the ways he exemplified an ideal type (the democratic hero) as for the specifics of the causes he was associated with (the ending of slavery, the meaning of the American Civil War). I am certainly not suggesting that these specifically American dimensions of Lincoln's image did not matter, but that we need to appreciate that Lincoln's image was created by, as well as helping shape, the forms and narrative patterns of a distinctive genre of radical political "celebrity culture."<sup>45</sup>

The Lincoln/Cromwell comparison is a vast subject and one with a long history. John Drinkwater, who also propagated the Lincoln/Shakespeare connection, wrote that "to see Lincoln moulding himself in the quiet and unsensational landscape of his homeland is to remember another figure so little like him in appearance, and the long, lonely fens among which Cromwell brooded upon his country's destiny until he too rose from middle age to the direction of a troubled people."<sup>46</sup>

**SEXTON:** One way to place Lincoln in the context of a cult of political celebrities would be to ask who was the American most widely known outside the United States before Lincoln. I'd hazard Benjamin Franklin. His writings and story of self-help and self-discipline circulated throughout the world. Unlike Lincoln, he spent time abroad. And his life

<sup>45</sup> Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven, 2007), 114; Keith McClelland, "England's Greatness: The Working Man," in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender, and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendell (Cambridge, Eng., 2000); Margot Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848–1874* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993).

<sup>46</sup> Drinkwater, *Lincoln*, 80.

not only spoke to certain values and practices but also could personify the founding of the United States. Before he wrote his biography of Lincoln, Sarmiento idolized Franklin, seeing in his story inspiration for both personal and national self-improvement.<sup>47</sup>

What are interesting are the similarities in the global celebrity of Franklin and Lincoln. Both personified a new and rising nation. Both had appeal because they opposed slavery. And, most important, both exemplified the ideal of the self-made man—this seems absolutely central to the image of both. A key difference is that Lincoln does not appear to have attracted the visceral criticism from foreign observers that from time to time Franklin has (I'm thinking of D. H. Lawrence's famous essay on Franklin). That might be an important question to ask about Lincoln's global image: Has anyone come across a critique of his life/actions/world view on par with Lawrence's savaging of Franklin?<sup>48</sup>

LAL: I would like to suggest a set of queries related to placing Lincoln in the context of a cult of political celebrities. To what extent can Lincoln be viewed as a world-historical figure? How much does his reputation owe to American hegemony over the course of the last century? It is wholly understandable that Lincoln should have a gigantic reputation in the United States, but what, if anything, would make a him a world-historical figure—like, to name highly disparate figures, Charles Darwin, Marx, and Gandhi? There are some enduring images of Lincoln as the emancipator of slaves, the preserver of the Union, and the self-made man exemplifying the possibilities of humankind in the relatively unencumbered circumstances of the New World, but is there in his writings a body of thought that made a substantial difference to intellectual activity worldwide? There is but little question that he deserves a great place in accounts of the (formal) end of slavery, and he strikes a chord in nearly everyone who struggled against racism. But that he is an inspiration to so many or that his humanism is immensely appealing should not be conflated with the estimate of Lincoln's contributions to the principal questions that have animated those who work and deliberate on such issues as nationalism, antiracism, anticolonialism, the creation of postcolonial states, and so on. In the very substantial literature that has emerged in postcolonial studies, the invocations are to the likes of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, and I have not seen any discussions of Lincoln. Once we are beyond the eminently quotable Lincoln, what is there in the body of Lincoln's work that would appeal to those outside the Anglo-American world?

It is necessary to ask some hard questions. Let us take, for instance, the example of human rights. To what extent did Lincoln figure prominently in the discussions about human rights that ensued in the 1930s and 1940s and culminated in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the late 1940s? My sense is not very much, if at all, judging at least from the work of scholars such as Paul Gordon Lauren. Perhaps the dominant political feature of the world in the quarter of a century after the end of World War II was decolonization, but I am not aware that Lincoln occupied a significant place in any of the debates. It would be interesting to find out whether and how Lincoln figured in the discussions that took place in Durban, South Africa, a few years ago on the occasion of a large international convention on the elimination of racism and "all other forms of discrimination."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Allison William Bunkley, ed., *A Sarmiento Anthology*, trans. Stuart Edgar Grummon (Princeton, 1948), 10.

<sup>48</sup> D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (New York, 1923), 15–27.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia, 1998); United

Viewing American history from the outside as much as the inside, I have come to an inescapable conclusion: The reputations of many American figures are larger than they might have been owing to the immense influence wielded by the United States in nearly every sphere of life, particularly in the post–World War II period. America is part of the national imaginary of every country, foe, friend, or otherwise; and even the ubiquitous presence of English and the immense cultural capital conveyed by a knowledge of English in much of the world must be factored into our understanding of the global reputation of Lincoln. Long before Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Toussaint Louverture had led the people of Saint Domingue in the first successful modern slave revolt against slave owners and imperial powers. Yet, shaped as we were, even in the Third World, by the intellectual and cultural products emanating from the United States, virtually all of us were wholly ignorant of Louverture—even as Lincoln remained a familiar figure. If, as now seems to be the case, the decline of the United States as the preeminent power of the day is certain, I wonder whether it will also incline the world to an altered estimation of American history and culture. We have for two to three generations lived in a world where America’s history, even after vigorous affirmations (both stated and unstated) of American exceptionalism, became in a certain sense everyone’s history. How is Lincoln going to fare in a world where that is no longer the case?

BOYD: Comparisons between Lincoln and other historical figures were part and parcel of the rhetorical strategy that sought to illustrate the general path of historical development through the lives of great men. Comparisons between Lincoln and Washington and/or Franklin were commonplace in Spain. But especially in the 1860s, comparisons between Lincoln and Juárez were also common. Both were viewed as the kind of natural leader that democracies bring forth to lead them in their hours of crisis; both were praised for their patriotism, their energetic character, and their perseverance in the defense of liberty, the rule of law, and republican ideals, despite the hostile pressures and interventions of old Europe.

Interestingly, at least one Spanish political reformer made an explicit connection between Toussaint Louverture and Lincoln. Rafael María de Labra, an eminent republican abolitionist, included a tribute to the Haitian liberator in a brief biography of Lincoln written in 1887, the year after the abolition of slavery in Cuba. Both men, he argued, were products of Nature and History, destined to correct the injustices and evils produced by human malice. Louverture, however, represented a “rectifying force,” a protest against human error, whereas Lincoln was a “rehabilitative force,” whose own martyrdom provided redress for the martyrdom of Louverture as well as for the secular sins committed by white oppressors against the black race.<sup>50</sup>

KEVIN GAINES: I welcome the challenging question posed by Vinay Lal about the possible connection between the postwar superpower status of the United States and Lincoln’s status as a world-historical figure. As Jay Sexton points out, it is striking that the U.S.-sponsored cultural exchange programs during the Lincoln sesquicentennial fixated on the image of Lincoln as self-made man. My sense is that this image of Lincoln offered

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Nations, *Report of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, Durban, 31 August–8 September 2001* (3 vols., New York, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> Rafael María de Labra, *Estudios biográfico-políticos* (Political biographical studies) (Madrid, 1887), 105–8.

USIA officials a means of changing the subject from the potentially damaging situation of race relations in the United States, specifically white resistance to desegregation. U.S. officials would also have been keen on impressing on audiences throughout the world, and particularly in Africa, that the United States was in the process of resolving its long-standing racial conflicts. What better means of doing this than invoking Lincoln as a consummate American symbol of opportunity and progress, thus diverting attention from the persistence of racial inequality?

To begin to answer Lal's question, we need to know more about the reception of these cultural programs by African audiences. And it would be important to have more evidence of a discourse on Lincoln among Africans independent of the USIA initiative. For example, there is a tantalizing, though cryptic, reference to Lincoln in Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. Mandela recalled that during his brief period of study at the University of Fort Hare (he was expelled for his political activities), an apartheid institution established for the training of African and colored youth (which defied the intentions of its founders by producing scores of antiapartheid freedom fighters), he had participated in a play on Lincoln, written and performed by classmates. This is noted in passing, without elaboration. The precise nature of Lincoln's appeal to these students is difficult to discern but clearly worth pursuing. We know that Kwame Nkrumah was photographed at the Lincoln Memorial, but we need to know the story behind the image.<sup>51</sup>

Carolyn Boyd's reference to the juxtaposition of Lincoln and Louverture by a Spanish reformer raises for me the issue of Lincoln's reputation in the African American intellectual tradition. One generally finds among African American commentators a more ambivalent, nuanced view than the extremes of either mass adulation of the Great Emancipator or harsh portrayal of him as an inveterate racist. Frederick Douglass's oration on Lincoln in 1876 as a heroic but deeply flawed figure provides the standard for most subsequent appraisals. The militancy of the New Negro phase of black resistance after World War I required for many a full-scale assault on the myth of Lincoln as emancipator as part of a broader repudiation of the racial paternalism of American public culture. By the 1930s such scholars as W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James relegated Lincoln further to the sidelines in their respective studies of Reconstruction and the Haitian Revolution, which emphasized the historical agency and self-emancipation of peoples of African descent. After all, Lincoln had never been an abolitionist and never believed in black citizenship. C. L. R. James compared Lincoln to Louverture, but only to suggest an analogy between insuperable historical challenges facing each and not to so flattering an effect as the example Boyd provides.<sup>52</sup>

We are left to explore Lal's important claim that the international standing of Lincoln has been in large part a function of the high tide of U.S. power and influence as postwar global hegemon. To my mind, the global fascination with Barack Obama's ascendancy provides a striking complication to his point and an important context for assessing Lincoln's standing as a part of the global reception of the image of the United States. I would argue that, despite the USIA's interest during the 1950s and 1960s in projecting Lincoln's image overseas, the more compelling and unofficial perception of America for many of

<sup>51</sup> Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (Boston, 1994), 46.

<sup>52</sup> Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881; New York, 1999), 484; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York, 1935); C. L. R. James, *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York, 1938), 290.

the world's peoples was defined by the U.S. black freedom movement. The cause of civil rights and racial justice politicized the presence of African Americans in U.S. popular culture, including sports figures and performing artists as well as black leaders and activists. Ironically, because of U.S. hegemony and the Cold War struggle for the allegiance of the world's peoples, the black freedom movement and African American cultural luminaries (from Louis Armstrong to Mahalia Jackson, both of whom toured for the State Department) occupied a global stage. Arguably, for many in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East who came of age during the 1960s, America has been defined by such figures as Muhammad Ali (for his political integrity in opposing U.S. imperialism as much as his athletic prowess) and Malcolm X (who recently was dubiously invoked by Al-Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri to attack Obama), and Martin Luther King Jr. I would argue that Obama's global appeal is connected to this history of the black freedom movement's role in defining the image of the United States. And Obama's much-noted admiration of Lincoln has certainly not escaped the notice of foreign audiences. If the history of African American struggles for equality and the movement's representative icons continue to exert such a powerful hold on the imagination of overseas publics, is there room for Lincoln in such a pantheon? It remains to be seen whether the renewed discussions of Lincoln occasioned by the convergence of Obama's election and the Lincoln bicentennial will elevate Lincoln's standing as a world-historical figure in the global South to the level of prominence it may hold in European and Latin American nations.

SEXTON: One thing that has surprised me in these discussions is how important the real, actual Lincoln has been to his global celebrity. Many observers outside of the United States have been drawn to specific aspects of Lincoln's political vision, policy record, and biography. The malleability of his words and actions, which has enabled those from innumerable contexts to find something in Lincoln that appealed, has also emerged as an important element.

Yet the contexts in which Lincoln has traveled remain central. Adam Smith has identified several, from Anglo-Saxonism in late nineteenth-century Britain to the cult of democratic heroes to economic development and integration. The broad forces of liberalism, nationalism, and anticolonialism also have helped carry Lincoln around the globe. So too has the power of the United States, even if the direct efforts of U.S. propaganda agencies met with varied success. Though we should be careful not to reduce Lincoln's global image to a simple result of American power, we nonetheless should bear in mind that many of the invocations of him abroad are in some way related to that power.

I think Vinay Lal's hard questions should be reflected on, especially in the current scholarly climate, where anything that attempts to "globalize" American history is instantly met with a chorus of applause. The globalization project should be lauded, but we need to think hard and deliberately about how we go about it. Here this might mean extra awareness that Lincoln is only one of several figures or narratives—most of which are not American—that have had international appeal since the mid-nineteenth century. In an international examination, it is important not to let our preconceptions about Lincoln or American history determine what we are looking for and what we see. I've learned much from comments that have related images of Lincoln to those of Garibaldi, Bolívar, Gandhi, and Gladstone, whose bicentennial is also this year (and who will also be the subject of academic conferences and journal articles). I think it has helped that most of the

historians on this panel are not specialists in American history. Several have pointed out that Lincoln should be viewed as a product of larger forces and influences, which in turn help account for his reception abroad. Several of us attended Allen Guelzo's recent lecture at University College London, which made the case for viewing Lincoln in the context of transatlantic liberalism. We needn't deny the peculiarly American aspects of Lincoln (a liberal protectionist!) nor have our preconceptions about Lincoln dictate how we view liberals outside of the United States to reap the benefits of such an approach.

### **Tension in Lincoln's International Legacy?**

**JAH: Is there a tension in Lincoln's international legacy between his wartime leadership in national consolidation and his political principles of democratic self-government and the rule of law?**

WESTAD: For most people who read about Lincoln in Asia and Africa there is an immediate tension between Lincoln the unifier and Lincoln the liberator. But there is also uncertainty about where to place him in relation to democracy: He made slaves citizens, but he also made the Yankee capitalist creed a universal program for betterment. If you were an anticolonial activist in the twentieth century, you would be tempted to return to Lincoln the liberator as a symbol of the United States, not because you believed that image equaled U.S. policy toward you, but because of its usefulness in representing a different America from the one immediately visible. Lincoln as Uncle Sam kept getting in the way, though. When the Indonesian leader Sukarno expected U.S. Marines to land in Jakarta after the Japanese capitulation in 1945, he had the place plastered with quotes from the Gettysburg Address: "a new birth of freedom," "government of the people." He wanted to remind the Truman administration that Lincoln stood in the way of handing the Indonesians back to their Dutch masters. But when Sukarno in the 1960s wanted to incorporate New Guinea, Borneo, or peninsular Malaya into his new Indonesia, he also quoted Lincoln on unity, on the naturalness of borders, on "a house divided." Lincoln's rhetoric makes for many uses, and democracy is only one of them.<sup>53</sup>

SMITH: This question prompts me to say something about the ways Lincoln was used with equal fervor by supporters and opponents of Irish home rule. No one can read the debates in the House of Commons about the various home rule bills, or scan the speeches of Irish nationalists (or, of many English or Irish "moderates" in the middle) without being struck by the readiness with which all sides tried to map the Irish problem onto the situation in America in 1861, drawing very different lessons from the exercise. In the speeches of unionist politicians opposing home rule, Lincoln was frequently compared to Camillo di Cavour and Otto von Bismarck. "These great men will be famous for all time," said one Tory MP in the House of Commons in 1893, "for the glorious work of unity and consolidation which they had achieved for their own nations and their own race." They had succeeded "in destroying and wiping out the fatal principle of separation and dismemberment." While Lincoln is not directly quoted, the response of the Republican party to southern secession is frequently referred to in one of the most important state-

<sup>53</sup> Els Item Rampen, *The Sukarno Years: A Photo and Text Documentary of the Birth of the Republic of Indonesia*, <http://www.sukarnoyears.com>.



ments of this case, A. V. Dicey's *England's Case against Home Rule*. And during the final crisis leading to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921, an anonymous letter writer to the *Times* warned Irish nationalists to remember that only the previous year the people of Great Britain had accepted a gift of a statue of Abraham Lincoln. "At enormous cost, he crushed the attempt to turn one nation into two, with two armies, two Governments, two groups of alliances, standing in constant danger of mutual war. In a word, he preserved the unity of the United States. God grant that Irishmen, drunk with each other's rhetoric, may even now not force the same necessity upon Great Britain!" Lincoln had called secession "the essence of anarchy" (in his first inaugural address) a line that was repeated endlessly by anti-home rule politicians. But the pro-home rule people had their own Lincoln. The great Lincoln biographer Lord Charnwood was a strong supporter of Irish home rule (in the context of imperial federation), while the Irish nationalist Michael Collins saw Lincoln the spokesman for democratic self-government as a natural supporter of the right of the Irish people to self-determination. (The key trope here was "government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth.") But once the Free State had been created, Lincoln the spokesman for national consolidation became just as useful to nationalists. Eamon De Valera used Lincoln on many occasions to argue for the illegitimacy of partition—for example in a long statement protesting (ironically?) against the arrival of American troops in Northern Ireland in 1942.<sup>54</sup>

As for the rule of law, I think that Lincoln's relationship to this idea is important. It could reinforce Lincoln's image as a national consolidator and wartime leader just as well as his image as a spokesman for democratic self-government—his determination to preserve order, government, and nationhood in the face of anarchy and schism made him a reassuring figure to those worried about the rising tide of democracy. But the key thing, at least in late nineteenth-century Britain, was to associate Lincoln with the flexibility and pragmatism of common law, and especially with the importance it attached to underlying "commonsense" principles rather than to legal forms *per se*. Lincoln's pragmatic willingness to violate the Constitution if it would serve the higher purpose of maintaining freedom was compared, by radicals and Liberals, to Cromwell's use of force to validate basic ideals. Lincoln's supposed familiarity with William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (in the Lincoln narratives this was the first book he read other than the Bible) and his commonsense lack of sophistry suggested that his legacy was to demonstrate that liberty and the law, at least English-derived common law, remained one and inseparable. The late nineteenth-century Liberal prime minister Lord Rosebery explained the "attraction and glamour" that Lincoln held for Englishmen as that peculiar combination of "unflinching principle" and "unflinching commonsense." So Lincoln as an embodiment of the rule of law could be a radical, "Cromwellian" idea to some people.<sup>55</sup>

Although we can talk about a "tension" in Lincoln's image in that he could be used for opposing purposes, as in the instances I've described here, it strikes me that the creation of Lincoln images was almost always done with great confidence—that is to say, those who wanted Lincoln to stand primarily for national integration saw him in an uncomplicated way in that light, while those who saw him differently were equally certain of their own

<sup>54</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 4th ser., vol. 11 (April 11, 1893), 38; A. V. Dicey, *England's Case against Home Rule* (London, 1866); letter to the editor, *London Times*, Aug. 27, 1921, p. 9; Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address—Final Text," March 4, 1861, in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, IV, 268. For Eamon De Valera's invocation of Lincoln, see *Manchester Guardian*, Jan. 28, 1942.

<sup>55</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, Nov. 14, 1900.

Lincoln. Does that mean there's a "tension" or just that there are many Lincolns, some of which inevitably clash?

In any case, "tension" strikes me as a slightly unhelpful word because the supporters of Lincoln the nationalist would not, in the instances I'm citing at least, have seen any contradiction between Lincoln the spokesman for democracy and Lincoln the embodiment of national integration—the one justified the other in their minds.

BIAGINI: The uses and abuses of Lincoln in Italy show a tendency to distinguish between the liberator and the defender of national unity. This distinction goes back to the very beginning of the debate on Lincoln. In 1861–1863 Giuseppe Mazzini was skeptical about the legitimacy of Lincoln's action from a democratic point of view; he did not go as far as Gladstone, who famously argued that Jefferson Davis "had made a nation," but he was unwilling to endorse the war until Lincoln committed the North to the cause of slave emancipation. The other great Italian democratic leader of the time, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was by contrast a fervent supporter of the Union from the start and went as far as considering a commission in the U.S. Army. However, from as early as 1861 he used his direct access to Lincoln to urge him to turn the war into a liberationist crusade.<sup>56</sup>

Between 1861 and 1863 Lincoln found his most loyal Italian supporters in the center-right Liberal government then in office (Cavour's followers). The United States had been the first government to recognize the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, the U.S. ambassador in Turin was very close to Bettino Ricasoli, the new Italian prime minister, and like the federal administration in Washington, the Turin government was involved in a sort of civil war, as it tried to crush large-scale peasant insurgency in the south. On all these counts, there were obvious reasons for official Italian support for the U.S. government.

### The American and Universal Lincoln

JÖRG NAGLER: In October 2007 Gabor Boritt, Uwe Luebken, and I organized a conference at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C., under the title "A Humanitarian as Broad as the World: Abraham Lincoln's Legacy in International Context." The quotation is from Leo Tolstoy, who during the 1909 centennial celebration of Lincoln's birth so described him. We thought that phrase exemplified the universality of Lincoln's moral and humanitarian standing.<sup>57</sup>

In my introductory remarks there, I emphasized that when we deal with the memory, legacy, and perception of Lincoln, we will concentrate less on the historical figure than on the individuals and collective entities that generated these Lincoln evocations and images. Since the processes of image making—which are never static—are deeply rooted in the history and culture of each community or nation, we will gain new knowledge of specific historical circumstances where Lincoln became recognized as a "humanitarian as broad as the world" (or not). Who were the major carriers of these Lincoln images, projections, and perceptions? With what intentions did they use them? How did they receive their

<sup>56</sup> Eugenio F. Biagini, "Abraham Lincoln in Germany and Italy," in *Global Lincoln*, ed. Carwardine and Sexton; John Clark Ridpath, *Life and Times of William E. Gladstone* (Cincinnati, 1898), 329.

<sup>57</sup> For an overview of the conference proceedings, see "A Humanitarian as Broad as the World: Abraham Lincoln's Legacy in International Context," *H-Soz-u-Kult*, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=1918&count=190&reco=16&sort=subject&order=up&geschichte=69>. On Leo Tolstoy's assessment of Lincoln, see Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, 186.

information on Lincoln? Were they aware of the enigmatic and complex personality of Lincoln? How much did they know about the historical, political, and cultural context in which Lincoln lived and operated?

BIAGINI: I agree with the methodological and contextual points made by Professor Nagler. With reference to the three or four national cases that I know or am studying (Britain, Ireland, Italy, and the German world), we should start by identifying 1863 (the Emancipation Proclamation) as the turning point. There had been much anticipation of such a development in democratic circles in Europe, and this compounded its significance and political impact. Emancipation meant that liberalism would develop away from economic priorities toward the politics of human rights. John Bright in Britain, Garibaldi and Mazzini in Italy, Karl Marx in Germany (at a stage when Marx was still broadly identified with “radical democracy”)—all agreed that emancipation was a moral imperative. However, for Lincoln as for many other political leaders (including Robert Peel in 1850 and Cavour in 1861), it was his “martyrdom” in 1865 that added a new dimension to the principles and ideas he was perceived to embody and with which his memory was associated.

NAGLER: As a latecomer to this discussion, I am impressed with the inspiring ideas and comments contributed. They demonstrate that we are about to enter a new field or frontier of Lincoln research. For a long time there has been discussion of internationalizing American history. However, I have the impression that have we gone beyond that perspective in dealing with Lincoln on a transnational and almost global scale.

Yet, the figure of Abraham Lincoln is inherently linked to American history and culture; you cannot separate this secular saint and icon from the land that generated it. Therefore, by analyzing how individuals and collective entities perceived Lincoln, we will detect their general assessment of the United States, its history and culture and hence the American way of life, the American dream, or Americanism.

But we do not need to start from scratch: We should incorporate into our findings and ideas the fine secondary literature and research on historical memory, the instrumentalization of memory, national perceptions, stereotypes, people’s stereotypes of themselves and of others, cultural and political anti-Americanism, pro-Americanism, etc. At least for the American–German bilateral dimension, we have good historiography on these subjects. We should perhaps also incorporate the comparative approach, using other American icons such as John F. Kennedy and comparing their reception with Lincoln’s. Why are Lincoln and Kennedy—and now Barack Obama—shining figures worldwide? In Germany close to 90 percent would have voted for Obama. Is it because those presidents embody the American dream, the “good America”? Lincoln might be seen as the true incarnation of a moral Americanism—or as a deviant historical figure that stands for the “other America” that has been morally corrupted ever since his time. Germans have often emphasized the universality of Lincoln and the moral values he stands for. His legacy and its evaluation depends on the group or individual: he is seen in the context of either unity and nationalism or of emancipation, race, equality, and moral values.

In what cases has Lincoln as a self-made man and martyred president transcended his nationality and became a champion of universal human rights? It was not only David Lloyd

George who observed that Lincoln lost his nationality with his death. We need to look at why carriers of the Lincoln image worldwide sometimes referred to him as the archetypal American—and when and why they proclaimed his universality.

I start my recently published Lincoln biography with a quotation from Willy Brandt, who was the keynote speaker at the sesquicentennial observance of the birth of Lincoln held in Springfield, Illinois in 1959. In the midst of the Cold War, representatives of twenty-one nations listened as he called for the reunification of Berlin and Germany in justice and freedom, as “Lincoln had called for union of his nation before the Civil War.” Brandt finished his speech emphasizing Lincoln’s universality by declaring that he “does not belong to you alone, he belongs to all of us, above all our young people, and he lives in the hearts of mankind everywhere.”<sup>58</sup>

As a German Social Democrat, Brandt stood in a long tradition of German socialists and especially Social Democrats who were very fond of Lincoln. Some of them truly venerated him, for example, Wilhelm Liebknecht, one of the founding fathers of the German Social Democracy and a good friend of Karl Marx. It was Liebknecht who published the famous Marx letter in Germany—signed on behalf of the International Workingmen’s Association—congratulating Lincoln on his reelection in November 1864. In that letter Marx called Lincoln the “single-minded son of the working class” and interpreted the American Civil War—the “American Antislavery War” as he named it—as a struggle for “the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world.” From that letter you can trace the Lincoln legacy within German Social Democracy, especially in the cases of Friedrich Ebert, who served as chancellor of Germany and its first president during the Weimar Republic; Willy Brandt, mayor of Berlin and then chancellor; and Helmut Schmidt, mayor of Hamburg and then chancellor of West Germany. Interestingly enough, Ebert was compared to Abraham Lincoln by Theodor Heuss, the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany. What we lack here, however, is empirical evidence about the rank-and-file Social Democratic party members. We should also look at the German conservatives. So far, I have not found evidence that one of their political leaders mentioned Lincoln at all.<sup>59</sup>

This brings me to a general observation: We need to work much more than before with empirical sources—newspapers, speeches, protocols of parliament, etc. Very often our observations rest on impressionistic analysis. At least in Germany, unfortunately, we lack public opinion polls concerning the Lincoln image over time. What Barry Schwartz has done for American opinion would not be possible here.<sup>60</sup>

I think Richard Carwardine is on the right track concerning empirical work. Working with an assistant, I recently started a small project on Lincoln names attached to German streets, open places, public buildings, schools, etc. We will also analyze important German newspapers and political speeches, looking for Lincoln. Strangely enough, there has been no work done, in the framework of the Americanization and reeducation process in West Germany after 1945, that includes Lincoln. There are bits and pieces, for example, a study of the building of a Lincoln log cabin in front of the America House in Frankfurt for the

<sup>58</sup> Jörg Nagler, *Abraham Lincoln, Amerikas grosser Präsident: Eine Biographie* (Abraham Lincoln, America’s greatest president: A biography) (Munich, 2009), 9.

<sup>59</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Letters to Americans, 1848–1895*, trans. Leonard E. Mins (New York, 1953), 66; Theodor Heuss, “Der Abraham Lincoln der deutschen Geschichte” (The Abraham Lincoln of German history), in *Friedrich Ebert: Erster Präsident der Deutschen Republik; Sein Werden und Wirken* (Friedrich Ebert: First president of the German republic; his growth and work), ed. Max Peters (Berlin, 1950), 169–78.

<sup>60</sup> Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-heroic Era*.

sesquicentennial. Has USIA utilized Lincoln for reeducational purposes, and if yes, in what ways?<sup>61</sup>

One of the most astonishing results of the 2007 conference was the discovery that Germany has produced the highest number of Lincoln biographies published outside the United States. (My British colleagues might correct me here.) Since Lincoln's assassination more than 23 full-fledged Lincoln biographies by German historians, journalists, and politicians have been published in Germany. In addition, we have translations of some standard Lincoln biographies written by American writers, for example, Carl Sandburg. Looking at the years of publication, it came as no surprise that we had the highest output of Lincoln biographies during the Weimar Republic and the postwar period in the Federal Republic of Germany. The latter ones were highly influenced by Sandburg. This year we added 3 new biographies, 2 scholarly (including mine) and 1 more journalistic.<sup>62</sup>

How do we explain this high output of Lincoln biographies in Germany? When I was asked that question at the Lincoln Symposium last year in Gettysburg, I gave some explanations: For Germans the United States had been an attractive magnet ever since the mass migration starting in the 1850s; there did not then exist a unified German nation, only a multitude of small states, but Prussia was on the verge of becoming the leading unifier. Germany was a latecomer in nationalism and became unified only in 1870/1871. My friend and colleague Stig Förster and I once organized a conference on the comparative aspect of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War and published a book on the subject. Both wars were also struggles for unification, and Carl Degler wrote a wonderful essay in the book comparing Lincoln and Bismarck. The German fascination with the American Civil War is hence understandable, and since Lincoln as the unifier is inherently linked with this conflict, he has become very well known to Germans, especially politicians and writers. The fact that close to 200,000 German Americans fought for the Union side seems to be an indicator of, and subsequently a reason for, this high interest in that war. Lincoln's well-known relationships with German Americans, such as Carl Schurz (who also wrote a Lincoln biography), Gustav Koerner, his private secretary John Nicolay, and Francis Lieber seem to have spurred the general interest in Lincoln. At the beginning of the twentieth century, filio-pietist German American historians even claimed that Lincoln had German ancestry (Linkhorn). Ever since the civil rights movements, 1968, and the anti-Vietnam War protests, however, an interest in Lincoln, not as the national unifier, but as the emancipator and in his attitude toward race relations have been evident in West Germany.<sup>63</sup>

Let me finish my comments by coming back to Willy Brandt. In 1989, shortly before German reunification, the chancellor often visited the German Democratic Republic. In his speeches and talks he often cited Lincoln's words "A house divided against itself cannot stand." At that historic moment, for Brandt Lincoln now stood more for national unity than for the rights of workingmen, with which Social Democrats normally associated Lincoln. "In all the years I have read and thought about Lincoln," said Brandt in 1989, "I al-

<sup>61</sup> Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial, 1959–1960: Final Report* (Washington, 1960), 123.

<sup>62</sup> Nagler, *Abraham Lincoln, Amerikas grosser Präsident*; George Schild, *Abraham Lincoln: Eine politische Biographie* (Abraham Lincoln: A political biography) (Paderbon, 2009); Ronald D. Gerste, *Abraham Lincoln: Begründer des modernen Amerika* (Abraham Lincoln: Founder of modern America) (Regensburg, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> Carl N. Degler, "The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification: The Problem of Comparison," in *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification*, ed. Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler (Washington, 1997), 53–71; Carl Schurz, *Abraham Lincoln: An Essay* (London, 1891). I made this point in a recent op-ed; see Jörg Nagler, "Undivided Loyalty," *New York Times*, Feb. 16, 2009, p. A23.

ways was fascinated by him, because he was a visionary and pragmatist at the same time.” Those qualities, according to Brandt, were needed to solve the German question.<sup>64</sup>

CARWARDINE: I’m prompted to add a few final reflections on a discussion that—perhaps inevitably—has thrown up as many questions as it has resolved but has also shown that Lincoln’s international legacy and reputation prompts attention to big issues about the global transmission and refraction of ideas, power, and celebrity in the modern age.

The discussion leaves me unsure about the relative influence we should accord to (a) Lincoln as a type, whose purchase on foreign publics had to do with attributes representative of his age and culture—the rough-hewn, self-made, disciplined, progressive man of the people; (b) the role of American power, culture, and language in spreading and sustaining his reputation abroad, albeit unevenly in time and place; and (c) the unique qualities of the man himself and of the truly remarkable narrative of his life (and death). Further, to the extent that the attributes of the real Lincoln have mattered, how far has his not having given the world a formal textbook of political philosophy or political economy worked to maintain, not reduce, his standing over time? Should we be impressed by the longevity of his influence (what other nineteenth-century political leaders can claim his durability?) or—as Vinay Lal suggests—by his absence as an ideological reference point during the anti-colonial movements and human rights debates of the middle and end of the last century?

We have barely begun to address Lincoln’s full international reach. We should register that by 1900, works about him had been published in (sequentially) German, French, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Spanish, Danish, Welsh, Hebrew, Russian, Norwegian, Finnish, Turkish, Swedish, and Japanese; and over the next twenty-five years or so the list had extended to embrace lives in Polish, Chinese, Czech, Arabic, Hungarian, Persian, Slovak, Armenian, and Korean. Who published those books? How many were indigenous, how many translations of English-language texts? Which Lincoln or Lincolns did they extol? How widely did they circulate? Moreover, the writings were but one measure of Lincoln’s global reach. The mapping of Lincoln statuary and visual images, for example, as well as the naming of places and people after him—those remain to be plotted.

There are further questions. For all the celebration of Lincoln abroad, he has not been universally admired. When and why has he been the target of attack or dismissal? How far in this has he served as a proxy for the United States? What do we make of the fact that his record has been used to endorse policies—with regard to race and civil liberties, for example—that have been far from progressive? And what should we make of the fact that Lincoln, although overshadowed in international esteem during the second half of the twentieth century by that era’s great American icons, John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, is still far from being eclipsed globally as the first decade of the twenty-first century draws to a close?

<sup>64</sup> For references to Lincoln made in the speeches of Willy Brandt, see Jürgen Leinemann, “Ein grübelnder Patriot” (A pensive patriot), *Der Spiegel*, Oct. 10, 1992, p. 21; and “Erst das Land, dann die Partei” (First the land, then the party), *ibid.*, Feb. 24, 1992, p. 25.