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ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE CORWIN AMENDMENT - THE INFAMOUS 'GHOST VERSION' OF THE 13TH AMENDMENT

Abstract:

Most people would find it hard to believe how far Abraham Lincoln was prepared to go in political compromise in order to save the Union from secession. It is still hardly known or discussed that while Lincoln was preparing to assume office in the early weeks of 1861 he gave his active support to a piece of legislation that would have given permanent protection to slavery in the United States of America. That piece of legislation was the first version of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, also known as the Corwin Amendment. In fact, the last piece of legislation that out-going Democrat President James Buchanan endorsed, and the first one that the new Republican President, Abraham Lincoln endorsed was one and the same: the Corwin Amendment. This information is certainly not compatible with the picture we have of Abraham Lincoln today. How could the Great Liberator, the Emancipator of slaves have ever backed such a depraved statute? So should we cancel Abraham Lincoln and the slaveholding founding fathers as demanded by many social justice activists these days, or can we change the way we choose to remember them by including their dark sides, by striving to understand the historical context and moral framework these men lived in and held; thus revisit our national narratives?

Keywords:

The original 13th Amendment, permanent protection to slavery, revisiting heroes and public memorials, national narratives, cancel culture

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