

## The Goal of Emancipation

LINCOLN freed the slaves, it was not within his power to make them free men.

No leader can make men free. There is no external power that can strike off the shackles with which men, seeking surcease from struggle, bind themselves. Chattelism is a most welcome manacle, for it throws the entire responsibility of reality upon the slave owner. Statism is a less desirable form of bondage because it forces the slave to share with his rulers the job of making existence possible. But, whether it is to chattelism or Statism that man flees, the motive is to find an economic adjustment. So tenacious is the urge to live.

Having found a *modus vivendi*, man surrounds it with moral, legal and romantic bulwarks to insure its continuance and, behind these barricades, to hope for its permanence. Supernatural justification of the status is supplemented with soporific tradition, and rigidity is sought in the formalism of law. Life becomes tolerable, even pleasant, and an infrequent Simon Legree—a temporary depression, a war, or a few purges—are explained away as exceptions to the System, necessary unpleasantnesses that must be allowed to disturb the adjustment.

But somehow the unpleasantnesses persist and multiply. Uncontrollable economic forces seem to deny the validity of the adjustment. Suddenly this adjustment ceases to provide enough for the masters, leaves less than existence for the slaves. Bewilderment is followed by unrest, and unrest, groping for a cause, gives rise to violence. During the upheaval the master-slave pattern of existence persists (although the personnel may change) and in the readjustment becomes more strongly entrenched. Revolutions and wars make for anarchy.

The reason is that men do not know how to be free. They do not know that the essence of freedom is the enjoyment of one's own production,

that the essence of slavery is the enjoyment of another's production. Without property, man is not man. He is a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water if that which he produces is taken from him.

Whether the medium is chattel slavery or taxation by and for a bureaucracy, man is merely a zoological creature when he is robbed of his property. And the mechanism by which both forms of slavery—chattelism and Statism—are made possible is the monopoly of the Earth. For that is the source of all production.

This is the lesson of freedom that man must learn before he can be free. Not that mere enjoyment of his property will unleash his soul, make possible the dreams of which he is capable, or in itself endow him with the blueprint of a better world, but that without economic freedom all else is impossible. It is true that man does not live by bread alone, but without bread he cannot live.

The lesson of freedom was not included in the Emancipation Act. The black man, as ignorant as the white, and, because of his complete adjustment to the chattel economy, less capable of fending for himself, was merely transferred from a convenient slavery to a very inconvenient one. And the white abolitionist, fearing a disturbance in his adjustment in the monopolized world, proceeded immediately by law and by custom to force the "freed" black into an economic slavery far less desirable than chattelism. That, in substance, has been and is the "Negro problem."

And the black and the white (the unconquered red was tranquillized by being given access to land) will suffer adjustment and readjustment, poverty and degradation, chaos and war until the lesson of freedom is learned. Not until private property can be secured in common knowledge against tax collector and rent collector will man be free.