

**LINCOLN, LABOR, AND
SLAVERY; A CHAPTER
FROM THE SOCIAL
HISTORY OF AMERICA**

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Lincoln, labor, and slavery; a chapter from the social history of America by Herman Schlüter

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HERMAN SCHLÜTER

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SOCIAL HISTORY OF AMERICA

By
HERMAN SCHLÜTER

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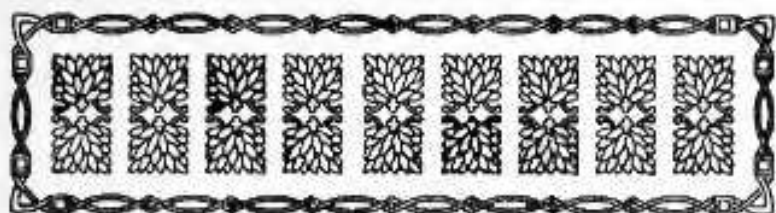
HERMAN SCHLÜTER

TO THE
AMERICAN
LIBRARY

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PREFACE

This book has a two-fold purpose: First, to throw light upon the position taken by the working class and the international labor movement regarding chattel slavery; secondly, to indicate the attitude taken by one of the most famous characters in the struggle for the emancipation of the Negro, Abraham Lincoln, towards the labor question and the working class.

The author's standpoint in the treatment of this subject is that of historical materialism, first brought into the science of history by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. According to this historical conception the political and intellectual phenomena of history stand in the most intimate relation with the economic and social events in society. It is the economic production, and the division of society into classes caused thereby,

which constitutes the foundation of the political and intellectual history of any given epoch. The division of society into classes and their antagonistic interests necessitate the conflict of classes, the *class struggle*, within this society. Feudal, absolutistic, bourgeois and proletarian interests in a given epoch of society become solidified into principles, into ideas of these specific classes, and produce by their contentions with one another universal history. This history offers us the spectacle of a series of struggles which have taken place between the ruled and the ruling, the exploited and the exploiting classes, in the various phases of historical development—struggles from which modern bourgeois society is not exempt.

〔 In our present society class antagonism rests on the exploitation and domination of the working classes, who are deprived of the means of production, by the owners of these means of production, the capitalists. The owners of the soil, of the factories and machinery, of the means of communication, and all other instruments of production, constitute the ruling class precisely *because they own* these means of production. The workers constitute the subjected and exploited class precisely *because they are excluded from the ownership* of these means of production. These two classes of modern society, the capitalists and the proletarians, or workingmen, are therefore antagonistic to each other alike in

their interests and in their ideas. The antagonism of classes naturally produces struggles which, with continued development, will assume larger and larger dimensions. The labor movement and the workingmen's organizations are the expression of these class antagonisms from the side of the working class. Instinctively the workingmen turn against the bourgeois. This class *instinct* changes with increasing antagonism and the greater understanding caused thereby into *class consciousness*. The class struggle assumes greater dimensions and more definite outlines.

We now see what a mistaken notion it is to represent the class consciousness of the workingmen merely as the result of the agitation of labor leaders. It is rather the natural result of social evolution, of the increasing antagonism between the interests of the exploited and the exploiting classes.

It is from the standpoint of this materialistic conception of history that those economic and political questions which the agitation and the struggles in behalf of the emancipation of the Negro slaves brought to the fore, are considered in this book. The position of the early labor movement in relation to the agitation for the abolition of chattel slavery; the economic antagonism between the North and the South and the inevitability of the conflict resulting therefrom, and the position of the international labor movement