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DEMOCRACY'S PASSION PLAY:
THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL, POLITICS AND HISTORY AS MYTH

by

TERREE RANDALL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2002

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Date

Chair of Examining Committee

9/10/02
Date

Executive Officer

Professor Sally Webster

Professor Harriet B. Senie

Professor Kevin D. Murphy

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Abstract

Democracy's Passion Play:
The Lincoln Memorial, Politics and History as Myth

by

Terree Randall

This dissertation is a study of how the symbolism, meaning and function of the Lincoln Memorial has been shaped and altered by civil rights protests held at its site from 1922 to 1968 and by the overarching influence of the ideology of American exceptionalism. The focus is on protests held at the Memorial not previously discussed and considers how and why they were marginalized by the dominant culture while other protests were subsumed and became synonymous with the Memorial and the "success" of American democracy. The use of exceptionalist rhetoric as a spoken and written iconography that reaffirmed prevailing cultural beliefs and attitudes is examined, as is its role in creating a national and mnemonic consensus about the meaning of the Memorial.

A detailed account is given of the segregated Memorial dedication ceremony in 1922 that initiated the first protest. The role the proposed 1941 March on Washington played in the establishment of a government policy of benign control that disempowered more radical civil rights demonstrations at the Memorial is also discussed. The negative receptions of the little-known 1946 American Crusade to End Lynching demonstration and the 1951 demonstration to prevent the execution of Willie McGee are analyzed within the context of anti-Communism and racism. These demonstrations are contrasted

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with the positively received NAACP event held at the Memorial in 1947 in which President Truman announced a groundbreaking civil rights policy.

The dissertation concludes with an examination of the impact on the perception of Memorial by the 1963 March on Washington and the 1968 Poor People"s Campaign. The March on Washington, which perpetuated the exceptionalist ideal is viewed as integral to the meaning of the Memorial, while The Poor People"s Campaign, which rejected it and abandoned the traditional symbolism and rhetoric associated with Abraham Lincoln, has been viewed as a failure. The Campaign's failure also marked the moment of the diminution of the Memorial's potency as a canonical, universally accepted symbol of democracy.

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My research was greatly facilitated by the following at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City: the entire staff of the Manuscript and Archives division and the Picture Collection; Diana La Chatanere, Archivist of the Civil Rights Congress Papers; Victor N. Smyth, Curator of the Art and Artifacts Division; and most especially Gilsa Stewart, head librarian, who often went out of her way to help me find materials, answered many questions and was genuinely interested in the project. Patrizia Sione, archivist at Cornell University, cheerfully brought the many boxes of materials relating to the IFLWU and at one point (as we were approaching closing time) helped sift through materials with me. In Washington, D.C., the staff at the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress was always helpful. Archivists at the National Archives eased my access to many materials. Robert Fudge and Kelly Scott at the National Park Service were most generous with their time, as was Gary Scott, head of Historic Resources. Wanda Styka, archivist of the Daniel Chester French Papers at Chesterwood in Stockbridge, Massachusetts; librarians at Wesleyan University's Olin Memorial Library and the archivists of the Henry Bacon Papers at the university, were all resourceful and helpful. Mark C. Rosenzweig, Chief Librarian of the Reference Center

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Introduction

When the Lincoln Memorial was formally dedicated in 1922, it seemed remote from the mundane world of politics. Sited at the extreme west end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the Memorial's neo-classical architecture and physical separateness reinforced its character of remove and quality of timelessness—qualities intentionally evoked by architect Henry Bacon, who believed that these elements befitted a national monument dedicated to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. Yet, from the day of the Memorial's dedication, it was a charged political symbol and a contested site. Many white Southerners considered the Memorial an insult to the "Lost Cause," and set about constructing monuments to the Confederacy and its leaders as well as to black slaves that were "faithful" to their owners. In contrast, over time many black Americans, white liberals and Communists were drawn to the Lincoln Memorial as the most suitable site for mounting demonstrations protesting the lack of civil rights for black Americans.

Today the Lincoln Memorial's meaning is inextricably linked to two civil rights events — the 1939 Marian Anderson Concert, and the 1963 March on Washington. Both of these protests drew large crowds and were successes, praised by the public and press for their moderate tone, order and peacefulness. Although both were held because of the shortcomings of democracy, they were hailed as proof of democracy in action, and were used with equal facility by the federal government, by civil rights advocates, and by the media, as examples to illustrate the claims, ideals and aspirations of American democracy. Of the two demonstrations, the March on Washington has acquired the highest visibility in the national consciousness and is regarded as integral to the meaning

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of the Lincoln Memorial. Martin Luther King's status as a moral leader of the nation now vies with that of Abraham Lincoln. If neither figure quite lives up to the facts of history, their broad symbolic appeal perpetuates the very element that most binds the nation together— that the United States is, in Lincoln's words, "the last best hope of earth."[1]

There were, however, several smaller, lesser known protests held at the Memorial between 1922 and 1968 that are critical to understanding how national symbols in the democratic culture of the United States are constituted and used. I offer the first sustained discussion of these protests and analyze how the rhetoric engendered by these protests and a study of their reception by the public, media and government are especially sensitive barometers to developments in the political culture that have taken place during the past fifty years. Changing conceptions of what formed and characterized the nation-state, and the increasingly active role played by the federal government and its various agencies to control civil rights protests, particularly those held at the Lincoln Memorial, illustrate how mutable the meaning of a national monument can be. Cold war consensus, anticommunism, the often bitter struggle to pass civil rights legislation and, finally, the fracturing in the 1960s of the idea of a "single public," [2] demonstrate how vulnerable the meaning of the Memorial is to the vagaries of nationalistic orthodoxies, racial politics and history-making.

The thesis of this dissertation is that the uncritical acceptance of the orthodoxy of exceptionalism,[3] a central and multivalent ideology of the nation, has been crucial in determining how these lesser-known protests and the Memorial itself would ultimately be integrated into the public culture of the United States. Exceptionalism is a concept properly understood as both dependent upon and inseparable from racialism[4]—an idea

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integral to the concept of democracy in the United States and one that has been particularly influential in conceptualizing and justifying the political ideal of the nation-state based on race throughout the 20th century. Exceptionalism also incorporated the ideals of American democracy—freedom, political, social and legal equality—with presumed rights and responsibilities to provide moral and political leadership. But these ideals were based on the racialist idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the Puritan vision of establishing a new Eden, a City on a Hill, that was to be a beacon of the free world. An almost religious belief in the uniqueness of the country and its citizens, this concept has provided Americans in the past as it continues to do in the present, with what Herman Melville described as a messianic vision of themselves as a "peculiar, chosen people," who "bear the ark of the liberties of the world."[5]

Civil rights protests at the Lincoln Memorial consistently relied on the ideology of exceptionalism as their raison d'etre, reflecting and reinforcing the inherent potency of the memorial as both a national and nationalistic symbol. While a vast amount of scholarly attention has been devoted to Abraham Lincoln, comparatively little attention has been devoted to the national memorial dedicated to him, and even less to the meaning, impact and social history of the civil rights protests held at its site. Christopher Thomas' dissertation is the only work devoted solely to the Lincoln Memorial. It provided a comprehensive biography of Henry Bacon, the reserved and little known architect of the building, and exhaustively recounted events leading up to the erection of the Memorial, as well as its actual construction. Thomas also discussed the symbolic significance of Lincoln to American culture and concluded with an overview of the mainstream criticism of the building written immediately after its dedication.[6] Lucy

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Grace Barber wrote a dissertation on the history and long tradition of protest in the nation's capital, and concluded that while protests were once viewed as threats to political order, they are now accepted as part of everyday life. Her study included two civil rights protests— the 1941 March on Washington which did not take place but was intended to culminate at the Memorial, and the 1963 March on Washington.[7] Kirk Savage devoted a dissertation[8] to the discussion of a number of Union and Confederate Civil War monuments, including the Lincoln Memorial, and proposed that this type of national commemoration is intrinsically an exclusionary "political process" based on race, an argument that he extended in his recent book *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves.*[9] Scott Sandage contributed an important article in which he proposed that two major civil rights protests held at the Memorial— the 1939 Marian Anderson Concert and the 1963 March on Washington— helped activists develop and refine the tactics of mass politics and a "politics of memory" that they successfully adapted to the needs of the civil rights movement.[10] The efforts of these scholars, and particularly Ivan Hannaford's penetrating study on the history of the idea of race[11] as an invented ideology and racialism as a relatively modern phenomenon that developed in the nineteenth century, Benedict Anderson's open-ended discussion of the subjective and sometimes organic development of nation-states,[12] and Sacvan Bercovich's provocative and probing analysis of American exceptionalism as a self-serving cultural mythology,[13] have provided critical background and helpful insights that have contributed to the development of my thesis, confirming an initial assumption that all of these factors are interrelated and that the evolution of a national political culture is dependent on these elements.

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Exceptionalism has proved to be extraordinarily dynamic, enough so to support the concept, to borrow Benedict Anderson's phrase, of an "imagined political community" [14] in which all groups believe themselves to be a part, enabling the nation to affirm and sustain an ideology that is seemingly non-racial and apolitical. Even the great majority of black Americans who have historically been excluded from this community subscribed to such an exceptionalist mode of thinking. Yet, exceptionalism has proved to be a "double-edged sword."[15] On the one hand it is a uniting force for the image the nation holds of itself, and on the other, a myth that disallows the identification of what Taylor Branch has described as the "crisis thread" that runs throughout the nation's history.[16]

Throughout this discussion, the remarkably consistent rhetoric engendered by and about the Lincoln Memorial through the protests there confirms the thesis that exceptionalism served to preserve and cohere prevailing ideas, values, opinions and beliefs that ensured perpetuation of the nation's ideology and the functioning of its national symbols. Regardless of the era or the political persuasion, and whether the rhetoric came from Presidents or political radicals, the concept of exceptionalism was invoked by every major speaker at all of the protests at the Memorial with the exception of the last protest, the Poor People's Campaign, held in 1968. Each proclaimed what was thought to be the unique democratic qualities of the nation and its citizens. When the exceptionalist ideal was abandoned in 1968, the function of the monument changed decisively.

The idea of redemption was also forwarded in the rhetoric and served both as an extension of the concept of exceptionalism and as a countervailing force. It was

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employed primarily by black Americans and by American Communists in the 1940s and 1950s, who used it to justify their demands for economic equality. Redemption posited that race was the critical determinant in the fate of the nation and of democracy itself and that the destiny of blacks and whites was inextricably intertwined. The language used by these groups mixed metaphors of resistance and resignation, but saving the soul of the nation and thereby redeeming it was their mission. When Martin Luther King proclaimed in his "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, that living up to the American Dream was necessary if the nation was to endure, he echoed the words of Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address that a nation founded on the "proposition that all men are created equal" must dedicate itself to the realization of such a proposition. While Vincent Harding has observed that black Americans, historically excluded and subordinated to second-class citizenship, became the "local bearers of the challenges to Western cultural, political and economic hegemony," [17] their mission, to set a new moral standard for the United States and the world, was the same as that of the Puritans who arrived in 1630.

Just as Martin Luther King's dream diverged from reality, so too, the Lincoln Memorial from its inception was posited on a false assumption. The Lincoln Memorial Commission, the body responsible for the site and architectural form of the Memorial, intended that the monument reflect a national bereavement and a victory that were presumed to be communally shared. The narratives of slavery and racism, equally integral to the Memorial's meaning, were consistently and intentionally ignored. This impoverished and ahistorical view (grounded in nineteenth century racialist assumptions) has changed as a result of the civil rights protests. But what has not changed is the

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Memorial's presumed function to reaffirm the values, needs and interests of national leaders and to reinforce institutional priorities, which as Eric Hobsbawn argues, is the function of all commemorative structures.[18] The Marian Anderson Concert and the 1963 March on Washington are examples that support Hobsbawm's argument. Today, they are mistakenly associated with the *achievement* of civil rights (although they were not instrumental in bringing an end to segregation or lynching, or in establishing laws to assure economic, social and legal parity), rather than with their *denial.* Such a positive association is, in part, a testament to the force of the symbolism of the Memorial— that it can effectively ignite and sustain a loyalty to ideal images of the nation despite obvious contradictions. Memorials however, are, not only substitutes for memory, as Pierre Nora has suggested, they are also shapers of memory.[19]

At its extreme, George Orwell in his grim anti-utopian novel, *1984*,[20] shows how the willful shaping of history and the destruction of memory can occur in a totalitarian regime. However, *1984* was also a cautionary tale because it was intended as a warning of what could happen in a democratic society. Orwell could have been talking about the Lincoln Memorial, for while the United States government neither engages in the wholesale destruction of monuments that no longer reflect its ideology nor brutally suppresses protests that are critical of its policies, it nevertheless has engaged in an ongoing effort to shape the way its national monuments are perceived by the public. As a result, certain cultural ideologies have evolved into dogma and the history of the Lincoln Memorial has become blunted and, in some cases, subordinated to the political needs of the moment.

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Nowhere is this more apparent than in the first protest at the Memorial. Held on the day of its dedication, May 30, 1922, the protest was completely spontaneous, sparked by the racially segregated seating arrangements at the event. This protest was a critical moment in the history of Memorial. It could have set the stage for transforming the monument into a dynamic moral site—one that acknowledged its own history with a critical eye to the future, bringing together, in James Baldwin's words, "the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks," in order to "end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world."[21] Instead, the moment marked a lost opportunity to invest the Memorial with a positive function—that of creating a fuller, more accurate and more complete collective memory for the nation—and it foreshadowed the dynamics of the intersection of practical politics and moral principle that would be played out at the Memorial for the next fifty years. At the time of the protest, President Harding, members of the Lincoln Memorial Commission, and the white press, ignored the protest. Today, references to the segregation of the Lincoln Memorial dedication ceremony have been ignored by most historians, and unacknowledged in official celebrations. Instead, these communal rites tend to codify an exceptionalist, mythical view of United States history that stresses the "spirit and ethos of America as a living example of our national patrimony" [22] rather than incorporate painful but vital memories into the fabric of the nation.

Beginning in the 1920s and continuing through the 1960s, a strong anti-communist impulse pervaded American culture. It not only guided nation-building efforts, it distorted and weakened American culture. The protests discussed in this dissertation were, with the exception of the Poor People's Campaign of 1968, organized

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by American Communists, Socialists, left-leaning labor leaders and groups perceived as radical. Anti-communism became an increasingly critical component in determining how these protests evolved, how they were received by the public, media and the government and ultimately what their impact on the meaning of the Memorial would be. These demonstrations show that the extreme reaction against domestic Communism was not only a generalized reaction to the rise of radicalism propelled by the onset of the Depression and a fear of the spread of this ideology, but was also due to the pro-black policies on race of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) that were directly opposed to those of the United States. In the 1920s and 1930s, black nationalism, the rise of the labor movement, and the establishment of a clearly formulated policy with regard to black Americans by the CPUSA gave rise to political agendas that challenged American racialism and set the groundwork for protests at the Memorial that would aggressively attack the underpinnings of U.S. policy toward black Americans. The CPUSA focussed world-wide attention on the plight of black Americans and attempted to build a coalition that would be transparent to race, ethnicity or gender. Their preferred strategy of aggressive legal defense in the courtroom, combined with the pressure of well-publicized mass marches and demonstrations (which they viewed as critical to the success of a mass movement), provided an important model for other civil rights protests in the 1940s and 1950s, including those held at the Lincoln Memorial. These Communist-led protests, without exception, pointedly and negatively spotlighted racism, were critical of American capitalism, and were generally out of step with larger national goals. In contradistinction to the Marian Anderson Concert or the 1963 March on Washington, they were not assimilated into the history of the Memorial nor into the

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dominant public culture. Instead these protests were ignored and forgotten —or dismissed as unfortunate, inappropriate uses of the Memorial that degraded its meaning and were unrepresentative assaults on the ideals of democracy by a dangerous group that threatened the internal stability of the United States.

By the 1930s, "the paranoid style of American politics," [23] as Richard Hofstadter has described the phenomenon, merged with the "American Dream"—a term characterized by cultural self-preoccupation that was inherently exclusionary but fitted perfectly with the mythologized ideals of exceptionalism.[24] Labor radicals and Communists were automatically assumed to be "un-American," an epithet given a curious resonance in the 1930s when positive American values were frequently conflated with both racialism and anti-communism. Protests organized by these groups often met with violent suppression and Congressional bodies such as the Fish Committee, (a precursor to the House Un-American Activities Committee that was established in 1946), emerged to identify and investigate Communist propaganda and activities among black Americans.[25]

These factors, along with a broad expansion of the power of the federal government in all areas, including those of public culture, as a result of a pressing need to deal with the Depression, were to result in much tighter control of protests held at the Memorial in the future. The response of the Roosevelt administration to a march on the Lincoln Memorial planned by black socialist labor leader A. Philip Randolph in 1941 would curtail the use of the Lincoln Memorial for decades in the future as a site of radical protest.

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Randolph, as founder and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and head of the left-oriented National Negro Congress from 1935-1942, had years of experience in helping organize and lead labor protests. He envisioned the 1941 march as a nation-wide, ongoing mass movement of militant blacks designed to achieve a complete end to racial discrimination. Randolph was asked repeatedly by an angry and fearful administration to call off the march but refused. Pressured, he finally decided to compromise with the administration and cancelled the march at the last minute, after President Roosevelt reluctantly agreed to one of his original six demands: an executive order banning discrimination in the defense industry. Roosevelt also established the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to investigate breaches of the order. The cancellation of the march presented an unexpected window of opportunity for the administration, and its subsequent actions set a precedent for the handling of all future civil rights protests at the Memorial. The administration's concession enabled the government to maintain public order, avoid international criticism of its domestic racial policies, and deflate protests that threatened to undermine consensus. This was an especially urgent concern in a nation traumatized by economic collapse, overwhelmed by cynicism and lack of faith in the government's ability to correct inequities, and fearful of the shadow of totalitarian regimes.

In the future, other U.S. Presidents would follow Roosevelt's precedent. They would either work closely with the protesters, playing an increasingly proactive role by helping to organize, plan and finance demonstrations (sometimes at the requests of the demonstrators), or they would purposefully ignore protests, disempowering them with a blanket of silence. Administrations increasingly relied on the Federal Bureau of

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Investigation to covertly undermine antagonistic protests, and depended on District of Columbia police forces to control protests. Presidents also relied on the National Park Service (NPS), (the government agency responsible for issuing permits for demonstrations), through its history programs, to develop an image of the Memorial for the public that was congruent with the political and ideological visions of the nation.[26]

The end of World War II saw the rise of Communism in a divided Europe and the belief in the United States that only Americans could make the world safe for democracy, which led the government to commit itself to a new kind of war—the Cold War. This increased the anticommunist animus and ensured that the Cold War would not only remain a driving force in American public life, but would further skew the meaning of the Lincoln Memorial and restrict its use. As the Cold War evolved, moderation, cooperation and conformity to the larger national and ideological goals were increasingly crucial and the Memorial would be intentionally linked to events that were in harmony with these goals.

Anticommunism was responsible for the Truman administration's negative reception of the American Crusade to End Lynching, whose members held a demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial in 1946. Led by left-wing activist Paul Robeson, they demanded the enactment of federal legislation to end the huge rise in lynching assaults on black Americans (frequently veterans) immediately after the war. Anti-communism was also responsible for Truman's decision to align himself with the far more moderate NAACP, which supported his policy of Communist containment and was an outspoken opponent of Communism. The NAACP's position led Truman to accept an invitation to speak at the Lincoln Memorial during its 38th annual convention, on June

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29, 1947. Truman, while no lover of Lincoln, used the Memorial as a forum to make a historic declaration of a new government policy on racial issues. The gesture was covered by all major newspapers and was used by the Truman administration to advance the claim of moral decency to the international community—an increasingly difficult position to maintain with the issue of lynching foremost in the press.

By 1951, anti-communism had reached a fever pitch in the nation and a list of "subversive" organizations suspected of being run by Communists and considered threats to domestic stability, had grown very long. Included on this list was the Civil Rights Congress (1946-1956), an organization dedicated to protecting the civil rights and liberties of black Americans and suspected communists, and the militant New York International Fur and Leather Workers Union (IFLWU). A demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial on May 6, 1951 that was organized by the Civil Rights Congress and led by workers from the IFLWU to protest the impending execution of Willie McGee, a black man from Mississippi accused of rape, was ignored by the Truman administration. When Willie McGee was executed two days after the demonstration, on May 8, the overwhelming majority of the press (including the black press) blamed it on the interference by Communists—an indication of the government's success in creating a hegemonic view of the cold war and Communism.

The seismic shifts in the political culture of the United States in the 1960s are clearly exhibited in the last civil rights demonstration to be discussed in this dissertation: the Poor Peoples Campaign, which was planned by Martin Luther King and held at the Memorial two months after he was assassinated. Although beset by organizational problems and the loss of King's leadership, the protest nonetheless reflected a sea change

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that had occurred in King's thinking during the last year of his life. The protest was openly and vociferously critical of Capitalism, which the protesters blamed for racism, poverty and militarism, and was vehemently against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The protest alienated the Johnson administration, and almost the entire press represented it as a gross failure. But if it was actually a failure, I argue that it was due primarily to two factors: intentional subversion by the FBI, and a repudiation of the exceptionalist ideology by its leaders and participants that had successfully sustained the idea of a single public until that time.

Arthur Schlesinger has described the concept of exceptionalism as "an issue deep in the historical consciousness of the United States: whether this country is a chosen people, uniquely righteous and wise, with a moral mission to all mankind" that demands not only confrontation but a decision to choose between "messianism and maturity." [27] Ultimately, choosing between the two will determine the cultural legacy of the Lincoln Memorial in the 21st century—whether it will be merely a handmaiden of national ideology or whether it will be a symbol that transcends such ideology and resonates with the history and memory of an entire nation. The possibility of the nation meeting such a challenge is an important question that is addressed in the conclusion.

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Introducton: Notes

1. From Lincoln's Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862. Excerpted from the final paragraph of the Message which reads: "Fellow citizens, *we* cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We *say* we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We—even *we here*—hold the power, and bear the responsibility. In *giving* freedom to the *slave*, we *assure* freedom to the *free*—honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless." See Roy P. Basler, ed., *ABRAHAM LINCOLN: His Speeches and Writings* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1946), pp. 666-688.

2. For a discussion of who and what constitutes an identifiable public see Bruce Robbins, "Introduction: The Public as Phantom," in Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere*, Cultural Politics 5 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). Also useful is Jurgen Habermas's discussion of the public sphere as a lost democratic ideal in *The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989); originally published as Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit (Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962). For debate sparked by Habermas's views, see Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

3. For discussions of the concept of exceptionalism see Deborah L. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1998); Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Michael Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *American Quarterly* 45 (March, 1993), pp. 29-30; Byron E. Shafer, ed., *Is America Different?: A New Look at American Exceptionalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). For a point of view offered by a Canadian scholar see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent, Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York, London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1993).

4. For an overview of the development of the concept of race in the Western world see Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). For studies on the development of the concept of race in America see Yehudi O. Webster, *The Racialization of America* (New York: St. Martin's

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Press, 1992); Gary B. Nash and Richard Weiss, eds., *The Great Fear: Race in the Mind of America* (New York, 1970); Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas, 1963); On the theoretical fusion of race with the concept of manifest destiny see Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981); Edward Saveth, "Race and Nationalism in American Historiography: The Late Nineteenth Century, "*Political Science Quarterly*," LXIV (1939), pp. 421-439. For a recent, synthetic study of the ideology of manifest destiny and especially its religious component see Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York, 1995); For a view of manifest destiny as one of mission rather than expansionism see Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York, 1963); One of the best overall studies of the subject remains Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: *A Study: Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1958); For the landmark historical work on American nativism see John Higham's *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1865-1925* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1955, 1988).

5. Herman Melville, *White Jacket* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 189. For discussions of American's self-perception as a chosen people see Dan D. Nimmo and James E. Combs, *Subliminal Politics: Myths and Myth Makers in America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, c. 1980); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millenial Role* (Chicago, 1968); Russell B. Nye, "The American Sense of Mission," in his *This Almost Chosen People; Essays in the History of American Ideas* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966); Edward McNall Burns, *The American Idea of Mission; Concepts of National Purpose and Destiny* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1957). For the first expression of this idea articulated by John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony, who told the emigrants from England and Holland he was leading across the Atlantic Ocean to an unknown future in America that their journey was sanctioned and led by God himself ("We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be to resist a thousand of our enemies, when he shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for we must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill the eyes of all people upon us"). See A.B. Forbes, ed., *John Winthrop, Papers* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. II, 1931), p. 295.

6. Christopher Alexander Thomas, "The Lincoln Memorial and Its Architect, Henry Bacon (1866-1924)," Ph. D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1991.

7. Lucy Grace Barber, "Marches on Washington, 1894-1963: National Political Demonstrations and American Political Culture," Ph. D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1996.

8. Kirk Savage, "Race, Memory and Identity: The National Monuments of the Union and Confederacy," Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1990.

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9. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

10. Scott A. Sandage, "The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement and the Politics of Memory, 1939-1963," *The Journal of American History* (June, 1993), pp. 135-167.

11. Hannaford, *Race, The History of an Idea*, 1996.

12. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed., (New York, 1991); For a survey of the literature on the subject of nationalism see John Hutchinson, Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); For recent studies of American nationalism in the 20th century see Wilbur Zelinsky, *Nation into State: The Shifting Symbolic Foundations of American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c. 1988); Conor Cruise O'Brien, *God land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988); Also see Charles Alexander, *Nationalism in American Thought, 1930-1945* (Chicago, 1969). Hans Kohn's *American Nationalism: An Interpretative Essay* (New York: Collier Books, 1961) remains the definitive essay on the subject.

13. Sacvan Bercovich, *The Rites of Assent, Transformations of the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York, London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1993).

14. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1991.

15. The phrase is Seymour Martin Lipset's. Lipset employs the phrase to clarify that exceptionalism is not meant to imply that America is a unilaterally superior culture but is simply different from other cultures. See his *American Exceptionalism, A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996).

16. Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1965* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), p. 92.

17. Vincent Harding, *The Other American Revolution* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, 1980), p. 229.

18. See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983). John Bodnar disagrees with Hobsbawm's view. He regards it as one that is hegemonic and disallows for what he sees as the critical role of public discourse and exchange in the invention of tradition. See his *Remaking America, Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1992).

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19. Pierre Nora, "Between History and Memory," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (English edition, 3 vols; New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

20. George Orwell, *1984* (New York: Penguin Books, USA, Inc., 1989).

21. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dial Press, 1963), p. 119.

22. Douglas Lapham, ed., *Celebration Honoring the 75th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial*, Chesterwood Estate and Museum, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, July 6, 1997, (the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997), p. 10.

23. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1965).

24. According to Warren I. Susman the term "American Dream" came into common usage in the 1930s. See his *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 154.

25. The Fish Committee was a special committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, established in 1930 and chaired by Congressman Hamilton Fish.

26. For the NPS's approach to the presentation of history to the public see "Suggested Statement of Principles and Standards Involving National Historical Areas, 1933," Department of Interior Records, files 12-33; Statement by NPS historian Verne Chatelain to A. Demary, April 23, 1933, in Historic Branch files, NPS, Washington, D.C.

27. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Bitter Heritage* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), p. 79

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Chapter 1

Race, Politics and the Origins of the Lincoln Memorial

On April 19, 1865, four days after Abraham Lincoln died from a bullet fired into his brain by John Wilkes Booth, an actor from a famous theatrical family and an ardent defender of the Southern Cause, the cortege of the 16th President of the United States moved slowly up Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue. A riderless horse, boots facing backward in the stirrups and a casket borne on a gun carriage were centerpieces of the sad procession, as they would be in the cortege of another assassinated American President some ninety-eight years in the future.

Crowds of grieving Americans lined the funeral route; *The New York Times* wrote that "the bells are tolling mournfully" and "strong men weep in the streets."[1] In the capital of the Republic, the procession was led by the 22nd U.S. Colored Infantry—but only by accident. The regiment, riding in from Petersburg, Virginia, to take its place in the procession, reached the front of the line at 2 o'clock—precisely the time the march was to begin. The streets and sidewalks, choked with onlookers, made movement against the crowd impossible and the galled parade marshals had no choice but to permit the regiment to lead the way [Fig. 1.1]. In a bittersweet irony, the rest of the black Americans in Washington and all along the rest of the 1,600-mile, 12-day-long route, were relegated to the rear of the processions. Even in New York City, the nation's largest

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and most pro-Union city, the mayor at first banned blacks entirely from marching in the funeral procession, relenting only at the last minute to have them take up the rear.[2]

The separation of the races at the funeral procession of the man who freed the slaves and saved the Union underscores the contradictions embodying the Civil War and its cause, outcome and legacy. Why was the war fought? Was it to end slavery or to preserve the Union? What has the legacy of slavery meant to a country that continues to struggle with visionary ideals of a true democratic community? These and other issues arising from the Civil War and slavery are still unresolved and debated today.[3]

One permanent reminder of the Civil War has been the erection of hundreds of monuments and thousands of statues dedicated to the leaders, heroes and soldiers who fought in the Civil War.[4] Equestrian statues, pedestals and columns dot the North and the South, as do thousands of simple white crosses that mark the graves of the dead in Civil War cemeteries. They serve as silent witnesses to the most violent and most prolonged internal conflict in the nation's short history—a conflict that claimed the lives of more than 625,000 men, and that in the elegant words of Lewis Mumford, "shook down the blossoms and blasted the promise of spring."[5] The war was a turning point for the country. It freed four and a half million slaves from institutional bondage, forced fundamental changes to the constitution, and ultimately expanded the concept of democracy in America.

Yet, there is only one Civil War monument, the national memorial dedicated to Abraham Lincoln in the nation's capital, that is a national icon. It ineluctably draws Americans and foreigners alike. It is still, after almost eighty years, one of the most visited monuments in the country. Hundreds of thousands of people—dignitaries,

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officials, ordinary Americans and travelers from other countries—visit the Lincoln Memorial when they are in Washington. The Memorial represents the high ideals of freedom and democracy long espoused in the United States. But this monuments' active afterlife has distinguished it among all other monuments and illuminates its inherent contradictions. It was from the outset a contentious "memory site,"[6] a place where memory and history not only converge but also clash, and it was and remains today a site where Americans protest and challenge governmental, moral and cultural authority and sometimes celebrate it.

While the monument was intended to honor the memory of Abraham Lincoln, in 1911, the year that the Lincoln Memorial Commission was established by an Act of Congress for the purpose building the monument,[7] Lincoln was viewed as a hero to some, a villain to others. The Civil War, slavery and antagonisms toward Lincoln and his legacy still festered. The monument was envisioned by the Lincoln Memorial Commission as a symbol of reconciliation and reunion between the two sections of the country. But the aftershocks of the war and sectional animosity were still very much alive in 1922, the year the Lincoln Memorial was completed and dedicated. From the day of its dedication to the public the meaning of the Memorial would be contested.

The first national effort to memorialize Lincoln was undertaken by the Federal Government and formalized on March 30, 1867, by an Act of Congress, which incorporated the Lincoln Monument Association.[8] The first president of the association was James Harlan, a Senator from Iowa; its vice-president was John F. Priggs; and its "incorruptible"[9] treasurer was Francis E. Spinner, at the time Treasurer of the United States—all men chosen for their "strongly developed Americanism."[10] The act stated that

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the Association was formed "for the purpose of erecting a monument in the city of Washington, commemorative of the great charter of emancipation and universal liberty in America."[11] It also stated that this monument was intended to honor the legacy of Lincoln as "an eternal sentinel, guarding the era of emancipation—an immortal Herald proclaiming to all races of men, the nation's great civil and moral reforms—slavery blotted from all her codes, and equal civil rights imbedded in her Constitution."[12] Finally, this monument "commemorative of slavery extirpated from American soil" would also symbolize the redemption of the American people.[13]

This charge by Congress was remarkable for its moral fervency and its clarion call for a national monument that would reflect the Union's ideal of civil rights for all. It was also a reflection of the rhetoric and politics of the brief period of Radical Republican Reconstruction[14] and while this Congress could not fully express the moral and political imperatives of a country that was still reeling from the challenge of integrating four and a half million freed slaves into the larger body politic as equals, its intent to do so was clear.

After Lincoln's assassination, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas and Virginia were required by the victorious Union to reconstruct their governments under Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan.[15] They did so, but then immediately passed a series of "Black Codes"[16] designed to ensure the status quo and keep black Americans in a subservient position. The Radical Republican Congress[17] aggressively responded and passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, extended the thin security blanket of the Freedmen's Bureau, and introduced the Fourteenth Amendment. Then, in 1867, the newly elected 40th Congress (1867-1869), with a heavy Republican majority, passed a series of bills known as the First

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Reconstruction Act. This act declared illegal the governments of all the ex-Confederate states except Tennessee (which was exempted because half the state had voted to stay in the Union during the Civil War), and organized them into five military districts, each governed by Union troops. To regain their independent status, these states had to create new state constitutions guaranteeing the civil rights of black Americans and ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment. Whites who had participated in the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy were not permitted to take part in this process. The fruitless ten-year process of attempting to enforce political and social equality in the South—sometimes literally at bayonet point—had begun.

It was this Congress, in this highly inflammatory climate, that created the original Lincoln Monument Association and called for a public monument that would reflect the country's fulfillment of its commitment to the ideology of a race-blind nation. The Association assembled a board of managers that included Frederick Douglass and remained ideologically consistent in its appeal for subscriptions to "the loyal people of the United States of all classes, without distinction as to race or color."[18] By 1880 it had collected over $100,000 for the proposed memorial.

Twelve years earlier, in 1868, the Association had selected a design from the popular sculptor Clark Mills (1815-1883). The design had been conceptualized even before Lincoln's death. Lincoln saw and approved the design, as did Secretary of State Seward, who remarked: "I have seen the principal Monuments in Europe, and I recollect nothing so rich and grand as that would be if carried out. In fact, Europe could not have such a Monument, for she has not such a history."[19] The association was keenly aware of its opportunity to create a monument that would stand as a symbol of America's moral

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superiority. It proclaimed: "No other Nation ever achieved such a triumph—no other people ever had such a history to commemorate—and it is the purpose of the Association to erect a Monument worthy of such a triumph, commensurate with such a history."[20] The Association echoed Seward's boast that this monument would be the largest and most elaborate in the world—a full 25 feet higher than the biggest monument in Europe.[21]

Mills, a self-taught sculptor from Onondoga County, New York, seemed an ideal choice. He established his reputation in 1853 by casting the first rearing equestrian statue in the United States of Andrew Jackson, which was commissioned by Congress and erected in Washington D.C.'s Lafayette Park. Congress was so pleased with the statue of Jackson that shortly after its dedication Mills was awarded a $50,000 commission by Congress to erect another equestrian statue—this time of George Washington.[22] The Lincoln Memorial Association particularly valued Mills because he had not received any formal training in Europe, and it exuberantly characterized him as the American equivalent of the ancient Greek sculptors Praxiteles and Phidias.[23] He was also praised for developing a design for a Lincoln Memorial independent of European sources, although in fact, he did carefully study such works.[24]

Mills' design was ambitious—a 70-foot high, five-tiered sculptural monument that attempted to summarize the major characters and events of the Civil War. It was to be located in Washington on public grounds near the Capitol. A photograph of a plaster model c. 1868 [Fig. 1.2], shows an oversize figure of Lincoln seated at the top of the pyramid-shaped monument while in the act of signing the Emancipation Proclamation. Allegorical figures of Justice, Liberty and Time surround the President. The next tier includes more than two dozen standing portrait statues of Lincoln's cabinet and other

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important figures, including War Minister Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of State William H. Seward, and Henry Ward Beecher, the noted abolitionist. The bottom of the pyramid is anchored by an array of six Union generals on horseback—Grant, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, Howard and Wadsworth—and just above this tier is an Emancipation cycle illustrating the progress of black from the status of slavery to freedom. This is how the Emancipation cycle was described in the text that accompanied the stereo photograph of the monument [Fig. 1.3] (which was photographed with the Capitol behind it) that was sent to subscribers:

> The first... presents the slave in his most abject state, as when brought to this country. Here we behold him nude, deprived of all which tends to elate the heart with any spirit of pride or independence.
>
> The second represents a less abject stage. He is here partly clad, more enlightened, and hence, realizing his bondage, startles with a love of Freedom.
>
> The third... is the ransomed slave redeemed from bondage by the blood of Liberty, who having struck off his shackles, holds them triumphantly aloft. The slave is pictured gratefully bowing at her feet.[25]

Completing the emancipation tier were three low-relief scenes situated between each slave figure that showed the firing on Ft. Sumter, the United States Senate in session and the United States House of Representatives.

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When the final design was submitted in 1870, it contained several significant changes. In the section just below Lincoln, the allegorical figure of Time was replaced by a figure representing Equality, and the low-relief design substituted the surrender of General Lee and Congress "amending the Constitution, abolishing slavery and establishing civil rights"[26] for the less specific United States Senate in session and United States House of Representatives respectively. These changes more coherently conveyed through iconographic means "the great principles embodied in the American Constitution"[27] and the stated goals of the Lincoln Monument Association.

The tier that in 1868 was devoted to the evolving status of black Americans also underwent significant changes. Instead of showing the three stages of progress of the slave's history, as in the description sent to potential subscribers, a single figure (modeled on Frederick Douglass, who at that time sat on the Board of Managers of the Association) represented the "Liberated slave, who, under the influence of American progressivism, stands forth not only freed, but cultured."[28] The remaining two slaves were omitted, replaced by a "Private Soldier" and a woman "caring for her disabled soldiers."[29] The figure of the woman was added at the urging of the Ladies Union Society of St. Louis.[30] The Lincoln Memorial Association, so soon after the Civil War, was, understandably, attempting to satisfy many constituencies and these inclusions served both political and practical needs. The inclusion of the veteran and the woman broadened the project's appeal and increased the funding base needed to construct the monument.[31] And while Frederick Douglass was a logical choice to represent the freed slave in some ways—he was a member of the Association and his brilliant oration, and trenchant intellect must have made him seem the ideal living embodiment of the potential of all freed slaves—

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the Association's statement that attributes his liberation and sophistication to the benefits of American progressivism ("the Liberated Slave, who, under the influence of our American progressivism, stands forth not only freed, but cultured")[32] is revealing. Douglass, who escaped slavery in 1838 and bought his freedom two years later, was an unusual man in an extraordinary position. Free, educated, well traveled and a brilliant spokesman for the black American community, he was closer to a unique hero than to a beneficiary of American progressivism but the belief and optimism in the new born (and short-lived) American concept of equality and universal liberty, forged of the Civil War and expressed by the Association, remains central to the ethos of American democracy today.

Whether consciously or not, neither the original design nor the changes made to it reflected the stated intent of the Association, which was to create a monument that represented the redemption of the American people: "a monument commemorative of slavery extirpated from American soil of universal liberty achieved—of the whole American people redeemed!"[33] In the end, Mills' monument failed to achieve the grand moral vision put forth by the Association. He did not forge a new iconography, which might have represented the leader of the Union and his aides working with the assistance of black Americans, united to help achieve a larger national ideal. On the contrary, the underlying visual and ideological thrust of this representation, reinforced by each independent tier, strikes at the very core of why it was impossible to complete a monument to Lincoln that would adequately encompass the radical transformation wrought by the Civil War and fully reflect the Association's wish that it symbolize "the establishment of national unity, based on universal liberty."[34] The visual language to

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depict the awareness, resolution and acceptance of what Emancipation and constitutional civil rights for all its citizens meant to the country did not and probably could not exist for Mills, who was a slave owner and Confederate sympathizer throughout the Civil War. Moreover, that the Association's members could not have fully embraced these ideals either is revealed in their selection of Mills to create this monument.[35] While financial and political considerations slowly eroded the initial concept, what ultimately destroyed it was the Association's inability to embrace a larger vision.

Some, like Ralph Waldo Emerson, expressed a sense of loss at having failed to grasp a great moment: "We hoped," he wrote, "that in the peace, after such a war, a great expansion would follow in the mind of the country; grand views in every direction—true freedom in politics, in religion, in social science, in thought. But the energy of the nation seems to have expended itself in the war."[36] The drive and commitment to realize the ideals implicit in the emancipation of the slaves and hence the moral emancipation of the entire country, was challenged from the beginning, and when Reconstruction ended in 1877 this ideal was largely dead. So too, it seemed, was any effort to visualize in sculpture or any other medium, such an ideal.

Mills died in 1883, his monument unrealized. There were no other national undertakings to erect a memorial to Lincoln until the second government project of 1911. While there were a handful of smaller-scale regionally sponsored memorials and sculptures that attempted to grapple with the meaning of the Civil War, none were defined by the ideology so explicitly articulated by the Lincoln Monument Association. Indeed, there is a dearth of sculpture (or paintings) that attempt to assimilate the many layers of meaning the war held for the country. This dilemma is understandable. How

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could such a momentous historic event be comprehensively or objectively represented, especially when there was no consensus as to what had been achieved by the country as a result of the war?

What did emerge after Reconstruction was an interpretation and an iconography of Lincoln and the Emancipation moment in sculpture that helped establish a standard for the statue of Lincoln by Daniel Chester French, the primary element in the national memorial in Washington, D.C. The image of Lincoln that evolved was of a wise, compassionate, tortured hero who saved the Union and freed the slaves, though, as we shall see, he was pilloried in other mediums. The image of the black, when used in conjunction with Lincoln, largely remained mired in the pre-Civil War imagery of the slave—a disempowered, non-threatening recipient of "freedom" proffered by whites. Kirk Savage has astutely observed that in the 19th century racism transformed perceptions of the human body and the subjects of slavery and emancipation, dependent upon the depiction of the human form, represented a dilemma to sculptors of the period. Spurious 19th century "scientific" notions of race dictated how the subject of emancipation was depicted and Savage concluded that ultimately it was able to enter into the realm of public sculpture only through the white body of Lincoln.[37] Clearly racism influenced this development. I would add that the intersection of racism and cultural practice was facilitated by the nation-state's clear rejection of the implications of emancipation. Beginning after Reconstruction the nation reverted back to a racial definition of nationality. Ultimately, the nation-state rejected the value and significance of emancipation. As the liberation of slaves ceased to be a virtue in a society that still believed in their innate inferiority, the depiction of the emancipation moment became

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increasingly abstracted until its meaning was de-racialized and de-politicized. By the close of the century emancipation had acquired a far less specific and historic meaning. It became more universal in its application and was finally embedded in the more amporphous concept of American freedom.

A comparison of two works of the same subject, Thomas Ball's *Emancipation Group*, a bronze sculpture located in Washington D.C.'s Lincoln Park dedicated on April 14, 1876 [Fig. 1.4] and Edmonia Lewis' *Forever Free* (1867) [Fig. 1.5] suggests that what was at stake in depicting Lincoln and the freed slave together as equals was a transgression of not only racial space but cultural and political space as well. The political nature of the theoretical issues involved in a visual experience of such sculpture becomes evident: To depict the slave other than as a slave would imply a need to restructure the entire social and political system. Further, such a depiction would imply that political power and cultural practice are closely interrelated and the need for a new discourse that would revolve around the issue of democracy itself would be necessary.

Ball's work, originally conceived and immediately after Lincoln's assassination in 1865 as *Lincoln and the Kneeling Slave* [Fig. 1.6], illustrates a marked contrast between the commanding, dignified figure of Lincoln and the kneeling, semi-nude man just freed from slavery. Ball, aware that the work fell short of capturing the nuances of such a moment, made adjustments to it in an attempt to make the representation more historically accurate and to portray the freed slave with more integrity. In a booklet compiled for the dedication of a replica funded by abolitionist Moses Kimball and installed in Park Square in Boston in 1878, these changes are described as follows: "The artist . . . . [makes] the slave an agent in his own deliverance. He is represented as

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exerting his own strength, with strained muscles, in breaking the chain which has bound him. A greater degree of dignity and vigor, as well as of historical accuracy, is thus imparted." [38] Even after these adjustments, Ball's work echoes the racial presumptions of its day and distills the historic moment of emancipation into a narrowed view that does injustice to the moment, to Lincoln and to the freed slave. Lincoln regarded Emancipation as "an act of justice warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity" not a gesture issuing "from the bosom of philanthropy." Moreover, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and a former lawyer, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation as a war measure written with the intent to withstand legal challenges,[39] yet Ball represents Lincoln as a benefactor.

While black Americans were hardly passive actors in the great drama unfolding around them—more than a quarter of a million fought for the Union in the Civil War—the depiction of the black man as a soldier did not occur to Ball. Instead, he portrays Lincoln as a man of action, clearly in command and superior in every way, while the black man remains a slave fettered, both physically and psychologically. And while Lincoln looks down sternly at the man, his left hand extended in what is intended to be both a blessing and a command for the man to rise, the newly freed slave crouches and gazes up at Lincoln in an obsequious manner, and the gesture with the hand makes it appear that Lincoln is patting the head of a pet. While nominally free, it is clear that in every other way he is still a slave, subservient and inferior to his white master. Even the freed slave's masculinity and apparent physical strength are rendered meaningless by his hesitant, almost groveling position and the chains that still bind him. Freeman Henry Morris Murray offered a particularly insightful observation about the former slave: "In

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his attitude he more exemplifies a man who perhaps has escaped extreme punishment by commutation of sentence, than a man who feels that he is one of those who, as the Declaration of Independence expresses it, 'are, and of right ought to be free'!" [40]

Edmonia Lewis' emancipation group conceived at about the same time presents an entirely different view of Lincoln's freeing of the slaves and another solution to the dilemma of picturing the moment. Lewis, a sculptor of American Native and black-American heritage, created a sculptural group entitled *Forever Free* (1867), [41] that was the conceptual opposite of Balls' work. The figures of a standing man and the woman on whose shoulder he protectively rests his right hand, are ex-slaves who have just gained their freedom. The man triumphantly holds in the air a broken chain in his left hand and stands on a discarded ball and chain. He projects masculinity, strength and power. Both figures convey a sense of controlled dignity and determination as much as gratitude, although the figure of the woman, who kneels with her hands clasped in a gesture of gratitude, remains in a subservient position to the man. Both figures are looking upward, rather than with heads bowed, an attitude that reinforces their newfound status as a long overdue act of justice finally achieved by the helping hand of God. The figure of Lincoln is absent, an exclusion that completely shifts the focus to that of the slaves and qualifies their freedom as an historical event. The inclusion of Lincoln would have fundamentally altered the meaning of the work, as does his exclusion.

Neither Ball nor Lewis were able to combine the figure of Lincoln and the figure of the slave in such a way that would fairly and accurately represent the complexities inherent in grouping the two together. Instead, the most favored approach to the subject that developed in the aftermath of the Civil War was a heroic depiction of a solitary

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Lincoln. Vinnie Ream Hoxies' idealized statue of Lincoln commissioned for the U. S. Capitol in 1866 [Fig. 1.7] and Henry Kirke Brown's straightforward, naturalistic *Monument to Lincoln* in Prospect Park, Brooklyn (1869) [Fig. 1.8] are two such early works. Both sculptors omitted the figure of the slave and symbolized the act of Emancipation through a simple scroll held by Lincoln. [42]

The definitive version of this approach to the subject, in monument form, was created by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White in 1887. Located in Chicago's Lincoln Park, Saint-Gaudens' 11-foot 6-inch bronze statue of Lincoln assimilates and condenses elements from previous representations [Fig. 1.9]. Saint-Gaudens eliminated the figure of the newly freed slave as well as all symbolic references to the act of Emancipation, instead choosing to distill the importance of both the man and the act solely in the figure of Lincoln. The sculptor worked from a live model, Langdon Morse, who was the same height (6'4") as Lincoln and relied on sculptor Leonard Volk's life casts for Lincoln's head and hands made in 1860. Saint-Gaudens conveys a restrained heroism through an eloquent naturalism and also through the deliberate way Lincoln is posed. With slightly bowed head and one foot forward, Lincoln is positioned in front of the chair of state from which he has just risen. This position allowed the sculptor to capture both the moment of decision and the period of reflection before Lincoln's decision to free the slaves. This simple yet reverberative pose lends the figure of Lincoln a psychological edge that does not exist in preceding works, and it brilliantly conveys emotion— the feeling of struggle is palpable. The final element that lends the figure both stature and eloquence is its architectural setting, which was designed by Stanford White [Fig. 1.10]. The statue stands on a granite pedestal, surrounded by a simple sixty-foot

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exedra bench that creates a sense of having entered another environment. Finally, a majestic sweep of steps creates a formal approach to the statue and reinforces the feeling that one is approaching the presence of an important, heroic figure.

In 1897 Saint-Gaudens created another statue of Lincoln for Chicago's Grant Park. This nine-foot, one-inch bronze, called "*Seated Lincoln*" [Fig. 1.11], embodies Lincoln as a tragic hero. Lincoln's resolute stare and slightly lowered head lends the figure both a weary and pensive character. His right hand spread open on his knee and his left clasped around the arm of the chair convey an anguished determination. These aesthetic choices created a potent psychological persona for Lincoln. Moreover, the compact iconography and dense sculptural style conveys the act of emancipation without reference to the slave or the institution of slavery. In its removal of the liberated slave figure and all references to slavery or any attributes that hinted at emancipation or its fuller implications for the nation, this work, like Saint-Gaudens' earlier statue of Lincoln, was without historical specificity. It is this reductionist image that eventually provided the standard by which all other sculptures of Lincoln were measured and that also provided Daniel Chester French with both artistic models and the motivation to capture the pensive, weary but god-like figure of Lincoln that is the centerpiece of the Lincoln Memorial [Fig. 1.12].

Ultimately the abandonment of the ideological instruments that reinforced the authoritarianism of a dominant majority was both impossible and undesirable. French's statue of Lincoln, supported, defined and presented to the public by Federal Government representatives with the conscious intent to represent shared national ideals, reinforced racial ideals of nationhood. French's representation of the Anglo-Saxon Lincoln as

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something akin to a Greek god no longer represented only a heroic figure or the moment of emancipation. Rather, Lincoln had become a personification of power, a physical carrier of a national ideal deeply rooted in the belief of racial determinism and culture as a product of biologically determined factors. As Freeman Henry Morris Murray observed, what is excluded from a sculpture is as important as what is included "because sculpture . . . serves higher purposes than that of mere ornament or the mere picturing of something." [43]

By December 4, 1901, when Illinois Senator Shelby M. Cullom, who had personally known and greatly admired Abraham Lincoln, introduced a bill to Congress "to provide a commission to secure plans and designs for a monument or memorial to the memory of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the United States"[44] a national monument that would express an interracial ideal achieved by the Civil War and as expressed by the Lincoln Monument Association of 1867, was no longer a consideration. The bill, along with many others employing the same pared down language, was shelved until February 9, 1911, when a bill was finally signed by President Howard Taft creating a new organization called the Lincoln Memorial Commission.[45] The Commission was authorized to select a site for the memorial and to choose the artists, sculptors, architects and all other personnel needed for the undertaking and to work closely with the Commission of Fine Arts, also created by an Act of Congress a few months earlier, on May 17, 1910.[46] Two million dollars were set aside for the project.

The CFA was a body of art professionals permanently established by Congress to oversee the architectural development of Washington and to ensure a uniform, coherent development of the capitol. The Lincoln Memorial was their first undertaking.

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Commission members included the architect Daniel Burnham, who was appointed chair; the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr.; noted architect Charles Follen McKim; and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens—the same men who ten years earlier were invited to Washington to study and plan for the growth of the city and the improvement of publicly owned lands. In 1901 these men travelled to Europe to study the plans of several major cities. In 1902 they submitted recommendations that were published in the McMillan Park Commission report that were largely followed in 1910. From the outset, The Lincoln Memorial was conceived as part of the redevelopment of Washington that hinged on the extension of the Mall beyond the Washington Monument to the Potomac River, and a memorial to Abraham Lincoln was to anchor this terminus point.[47]

The redevelopment of Washington D.C. and the construction of the Lincoln Memorial were the first projects undertaken by the Commission of Fine Arts and one of the final projects of the City Beautiful Movement.[48] The site for the city of Washington, coextensive with the District of Columbia, was decided upon by the Continental Congress in 1790. The following year, Congress employed French engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a French officer detailed with the Army Corps of Engineers who was the first officer in charge of public buildings and grounds. He was asked by President Washington to draw up plans for the creation and beautification of the city of Washington. L'Enfant's plans envisioned the capital as a modern city with broad, straight avenues radiating from a central axis and a careful grid of streets. The city would have room for some 800,000 inhabitants when the total population of the thirteen colonies was less than four times that number. L'Enfant was strongly influenced by Versailles and its

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Baroque architecture and he centered the new capital on a mall (baroque designs for a Capitol building and a presidential residence were to be backgrounds) that would extend the eye west to the seemingly infinite vistas of the continent.[49]

There was a constant deviation from L'Enfant's original vision until by the end of the 19th century, the mall had devolved into "an unkempt gardenesque park with no particular symbolic value." [50] The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 helped revive L'Enfant's original vision of the capital and in 1901 a plan for a reconstituted mall was presented to Congress by the Senate Park Commission. The idea was to build on the success of the City Beautiful movement, which reached its zenith in the White City at the Chicago Fair, a city of Venetian lagoons and Parisian boulevards which "crystallized a new sense of civic grandeur."[51] The "White City" of the Columbian Exposition was the Beaux-Arts ideal deified. It "implied links with Classical civilization and made available traditional imperial symbols...in an era when the United States was first sensing its role as a world power." [52] It supplied a blueprint for practically every public building constructed during this period.

This Beaux-Arts avalanche led Congress in 1910 to establish the Commission of Fine Arts to "guide the development of Washington, D.C., and to carry forward the work of Senator James McMillan's Park Commission of 1901-1902."[53] This was more than a reinvention of L'Enfant's original idea for a mall in the capital. It was the first effort at systematic comprehensive urban planning for a major city. It was larger and more cohesive than the L'Enfant plan, and certainly more than the conglomeration of small parks that had emerged from his plan. The Mall was to extend both east-west and north-south over a riverbed to form a contiguous whole. The Lincoln Memorial with its

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implied links with Classical civilization and its use of traditional imperial symbols made it perfectly suited to the Commission planners' attempt to reshape the capitol of the country into a coherent and powerful architectural whole that would reflect America's new-found status as an international political and cultural power. In fact, the planners viewed Washington as the new Rome, the symbolic capitol of American democracy, and the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument and the Capitol formed both a visual and symbolical nexus of democracy.[54]

The formidably talented group of artists, architects and city planners who comprised the CFA were both profoundly idealistic and conservative. Daniel Burnham, the first chairman of the CFA from 1910-1912, whose urban plans reflected the yearning and nostalgia for a pre-industrial culture, nevertheless linked the Lincoln Memorial project to the larger progressivist reform movement sweeping the country and described the project as a reform of the landscape[55] by which he meant a social reform as well as an aesthetic one. He envisioned a populist use of the Mall as "...a place of great popular resort, and which is destined to be the chief center of outdoor reunion in Washington, for people on foot as well as those in vehicles."[56]

Burnham and the rest of the Commission members believed that art should be based on the great traditions of Greek and Roman classicism and the artistic conventions of the Renaissance. They also believed that art should be understandable and that it should play a socially useful role creating a rational, orderly and moral society although the society they envisioned was not the society they lived in. Their views on art and architecture reflected a concern with maintaining continuity and traditions—standards and values that were being seriously challenged not only by the Modernists but by the

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entire culture. Some Modernists viewed Beaux-Arts architecture as regressive and regarded the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 as an unfortunate event that signaled "the Fall from Grace."[57] It was an event Louis Sullivan felt had retarded the development of American architecture by fifty years. But Sullivan, like the members of the CFA, was also concerned about the chaotic impact of the new. In 1896 he wondered: "Problem: How shall we impart to this sterile pile, this crude, harsh, brutal agglomeration, this stark staring exclamation of eternal strife, the graciousness of those higher forms of sensibility and culture that rest on the lower and fiercer passions? How shall we proclaim from the dizzy height of this strange, weird modern housetop the peaceful evangel of sentiment, of beauty, the cult of a higher life?"[58]

The urban landscapes of New York City and Chicago were prime examples of what, toward the end of the 19th century, were transforming America. Sullivan saw "that evolution and integration of social conditions" resulted "in a demand for the erection of tall office buildings."[59] While Beaux-Arts buildings were still a mainstay of public architecture in these cities, more and more tall buildings were beginning to crowd them out. And with new buildings made possible by innovations in construction such as steel-reinforced concrete and the electric elevator (which made structures of twenty-five floors or more feasible), came greater numbers of people to build them, maintain them, and work in them both from the interior of the United States and from abroad, where the great wave of immigration was just cresting.[60]

New York was beacon and magnet, the metropolis on the hill that epitomized the power and might of the nation. But, while the modernists embraced "eternal strife" and "the lower and fiercer passions" that New York seemed to epitomize, believing that the

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artist could bring order to change that was inevitable, the members of the CFA hoped to quell these very same things. Royal Cortissoz, the popular art critic of *The New York Tribune* for more than fifty years who wrote the cryptic inscription that appears behind the statue of Lincoln in the Memorial, believed that a building such as this would always be relevant to the American public. Its classical style embodied Grecian ideas and evoked continuity and timelessness. But the great need and desire for a stability and harmony, in architecture as well as in society, also reflected the anxiety and racism of the age. Cortissoz' dislike of modernism, shared by the members of the Fine Arts Commission, was perversely linked to his fear of immigrants and he saw both as threats to the status quo: "The United States is invaded by aliens, thousands of whom constitute so many acute perils to the health of the body politic. Modernism is of precisely the same heterogenous origin and is imperiling the republic of art the same way."[61] In fact, the goals and ideological premises of the Lincoln Memorial Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts were the exact opposite of those of the Lincoln Monument Association of 1867.

What had occurred during the forty-four years between the original idea for a populist, "democratic" memorial to Lincoln and its final realization that caused such a sea change? What happened to the declaration that a memorial to Lincoln should celebrate an exemplar nation setting the standard of freedom, equality and democracy for all other nations? How, by 1911, did the concept for a national memorial in Washington, D.C. become so ideologically and morally distanced from the aims of "universal liberty" and "equal civil rights?" And, how, after another half century did it come to represent, again, these same ideals?

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While there is no single answer, there is consensus that the United States underwent a social, cultural and political transformation after the Civil War that affected every facet of life. Until the Civil War the country was a slaveholding society, though the more industrialized North, for mostly pragmatic economic reasons, did not make much use of slave labor. Even so, the nation's character, institutions, politics and social life were largely shaped by slavery and the power of the mostly agrarian South was disproportionate to its population. From 1789 to 1861, slave owners from the South were presidents of the United States two-thirds of the time. The majority of the Speakers of the House and Presidents Pro Tem of the Senate were Southerners, and before 1861, Supreme Court justices from the South were always in a majority.[62] The Civil War changed all that, if only temporarily.

As the nation became both industrialized and urbanized, and millions of immigrants came to the United States, Blacks left the South in huge numbers and settled in major urban centers like Chicago and New York City. Corporate capitalism became a reality. Vast industrial fortunes were made by some while many suffered during a nearly two-decades-long depression that finally ended in the 1890s. Social disorder was rampant, and with labor strikes and race riots nearly endemic, the very meaning of American democracy was constantly challenged. Overarching all of these changes, after Reconstruction, the United States as a whole experienced a thorough racialization[63] of its history, politics, social and biological sciences and the arts. Racialization spread steadily, reaching a peak in the 1920s—a decade described by historian John Higham as the "Anglo-Saxon decade."[64] Racialization permeated and degraded the entire culture, and emerges as the single most important factor from the end of Reconstruction to the first

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decades of the twentieth century that significantly defined the nation and shaped much of its literature and art. Painters, sculptors and architects involved in the Lincoln Memorial project reflected, however unwittingly, a pervasive bias, and the Lincoln Memorial, built as a monument to a white "hero," stands in stark contrast to the memorial conceived by the Republican government of 1867. The Memorial was constructed as a monument to a perceived Anglo-Saxon ideal—though this concept was challenged from the outset, mostly by black Americans.

Even before it was built, racialization dictated the selection of the men who would decide what the Lincoln Memorial would look like and what it would represent, as well as how the Memorial would be presented to the American public and world. It even dictated how the races would be represented at the dedication of the monument. Further, racialization largely determined the future usage of the site until the late 1960s as a major gathering ground for civil rights marches and protests. To understand why the Lincoln Memorial took the form of a neo-Grecian temple, the statue of Lincoln became a heroic colossus, why all of the other elements of the Memorial conform to a particular national ideal, and finally, why and how it became both a revered and contested one, one must first understand how racialization fundamentally altered American culture.

At the conclusion of the Civil War, the nation's economic and social structures were turned inside out, especially in the South, which was almost totally dependent on slave labor for its agriculture-based industries. The fiasco and humiliation of Reconstruction created deep anger and resentment among Southerners, and these bitter feelings were most often directed at ex-slaves through the terrorist activities of the Ku Klux Klan formed in 1866 as a secret society to maintain white supremacy.[65] Ex-slaves

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starved, were beaten and lynched. They had no resources. The Freedmen's Bureau Bill, signed by Lincoln in March, 1865 was vetoed in 1866. They were denied ownership of land by Congress. They had no real protection from a Federal Government that had largely abandoned efforts to protect them. In 1872, Congress passed the Amnesty Act which restored political rights to virtually all Southern whites, excluding only about 500 top confederate military and political officials. The result was that white voters outnumbered blacks, thus ensuring white political domination. In 1876 Rutherford B. Hayes, in a compromise that allowed him to win the contested presidential election, withdrew military troops from the South and guaranteed a place for at least one Southerner in his cabinet. By the end of 1877, the governments of the Southern states were in the hands of Southern whites who called themselves the Redeemers and Reconstruction came to an end.[66] Coinciding with this general social upheaval, many white Americans, particularly in the South, feared that Western civilization was degenerating and that their inherited ideals were being eroded. They believed too-rapid urbanization was threatening to destroy what had been a mostly rural nation. Many also feared that white domination was being threatened by Africans, and by the influx of Southern Europeans and Asian immigrants. "Race suicide" seemed real and not at all paranoic.[67]

The timing for a positive reception of Charles Darwin's theories on evolution could not have been better. His *The Origin of Species*, published abroad in 1859, became widely available in the United States after the Civil War and found immediate, enthusiastic champions. His thesis about the evolutionary processes in lower species, grossly distorted, was used to posit that "natural" inequality existed among human

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beings. This, in turn, was used to support notions of racial superiority that already existed but were not articulated under the cover of so-called scientific theories. This thesis of natural inequality helped spawn the pseudoscience of Social Darwinism and was frequently used as a justification for re-instituting, status quo ante, race-based political and social systems in the South.[68] Darwin's evolutionary doctrine of change as a continuous ongoing slow process both in nature and in society, confirmed the view of cultural traditionalists who held a sociological view of art as part of the general culture. They believed that art and architecture should be anchored to and dependent on what had preceded it. Furthermore, they believed that a core of trained artists were needed to produce an art that inculcated moral values to a public dependent on their greater knowledge and more developed aesthetic sensitivity.[69]

Coinciding with the enthusiastic reception of Darwin's ideas was an efflorescence of racial theories worldwide. In some countries such theorizing led to onerous results, including genocide.[70] New sciences, such as eugenics, defined as "the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally,"[71] became widely practiced. In the United States eugenics was regarded as a useful science that could aid in creating a sophisticated industrial nation state by limiting the influx of undesirable immigrant groups and limiting the population of other groups. To this end, eugenics boards were established throughout the country and thousands of males were sterilized in the hope of achieving what the adherents of eugenics called the "measurable man."[72]

Such pseudosciences resulted in a plethora of Anglo-Saxon destiny theories that were coupled with recommendations for creating an ideal nation state. They were

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advanced under the respectable veneer of disinterested intellectual and scientific inquiry and were carried out in the most prestigious institutions in the country. Harvard University historian John Fiske (1842-1901) introduced Darwin's works in the United States with a series of three lectures on "American Political Ideas." They were widely regarded at the time as the definitive statements of the Anglo-Saxon destiny thesis, which forwarded that Anglo-Saxons, because of their presumed natural superiority, were inevitably destined to shape, determine and lead all nations in social, economic and political matters. Fiske's lectures were later published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1885 where they enjoyed wide distribution.[73] William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) another Social Darwinist who wrote the classic of the genre, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883),[74] used the academic forum of Yale University, where he was a professor of Political and Social Science, to articulate his notions about the function of the state and to develop his extermination theory, articulated in his *War and Other Essays.* [75] First published in 1903, his theory recommended that the "uncivilized" which he identified as Native Americans and blacks be exterminated by the state so as to achieve a more orderly society.

Other influential leaders of society, such as Madison Grant (1865-1937), chairman of the New York Zoological Society and trustee of the American Museum of Natural History and the National Geographic Society, proposed in his *Passing of the Great Race*, written in 1916, that black Americans were aberrants. He praised Southerners for reestablishing white supremacy in the South and recommended that the United States adopt the South African apartheid system of segregation and supplement it with the practices of sterilization, selective breeding and "racial engineering." His idea

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of state and nation was defined strictly in terms of a "superior" race that would make all policy decisions.[76]

These theories by Fiske, Sumner, Grant and many others helped lay the foundation for the concept of the state organized and defined by race and regulated by presumed racial superiors. They were also vitally important in helping to shape the idea that the formation and vitality of a culture—in its broadest sense—was dependent on a shared, common set of biological factors and a national identity based on race.[77] Such theories also provided a set of constructs by which the products of the culture were measured and developed. A hierarchical concept of race in which the physical characteristics of Anglo-Saxons were deemed superior resulted in both a narrowed vision of the artist and a reduced canon of artistic themes and subject matter. When art that did not conform to the ideal was attempted, especially when it was public art, it was frequently altered in ways that reflected the beliefs and presumptions of the dominant culture. In the instances of public monuments meant to represent nationally shared ideals, cultural racialization created gaps, omissions or distortions in the representation of historical events and personages.

Theories of race were not confined to a coterie of Ivory Tower intellectuals, nor did they remain theoretical. They were both systemic and endemic in the United States. Such ideas may have initially been formulated by a group of distinguished intellectuals and scientists who either purposefully distorted scientific facts that would disprove their theories, or did so out of ignorance of the true meaning of these facts. But acceptance of racialization by the majority of the society validated racialist ideas and resulted in pernicious laws and policies that were enforced by the Executive branch of the Federal

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Government, by members of Congress, and by rulings of the Supreme Court that encoded them into law. Popular literature, newspapers, periodicals, films and many forms of advertising echoed the more careful "scientifically" constructed arguments made by scholars, scientists, politicians and clergy. The visual arts may have had the longest lasting impact. Derogatory cartoons and illustrations filled newspapers and periodicals, creating a visual compendium of demeaning images of black Americans, who were depicted as sub-human and a threat to the body politic.[78]

While there is a voluminous amount of material reflecting a strong and vigorous tradition of caricature in the American press, even within this tradition, the issue of race dominated the field and was almost always employed to negative ends. Depictions of thick-lipped "pickaninnies" and obese "mammies" were common, as were caricatures of blacks as monkeys. Abraham Lincoln himself was a target of racialization. Alongside images of Lincoln as a hero, martyr and saint, one finds images of Lincoln as devil, destroyer of the Constitution, as a "Negro," and as an advocate of miscegenation. A controversial public figure whose physiognomy was especially well suited for caricature, Lincoln was an obvious target. Beginning with the presidential election of 1860, the print media, primarily in the North, attacked him. Cartoons lampooning Lincoln in newspapers and negative cartoons illustrating articles in popular magazines such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Vanity Fair* flooded the market, as did separate sheet cartoon prints, probably used as advertisements in public places.[79]

During this election campaign, several prints appeared depicting Lincoln as an advocate of racial equality and a threat to the Constitution. Among these were *The Grave of the Union* [Fig. 1.13] and an *An Heir to the Throne* [Fig. 1.14]. In 1862 an etching by

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Adalbert Johann Volck called *Worship of the North* [Fig. 1.15] succinctly provided a synthesis of all of the images being created: Lincoln, mocked as a duplicitous but cunning fool, is shown in the costume of a court jester who oversees the sacrifice of the white race on the altar of "Negro worship" supported by free love, socialism, atheism and an assortment of other radical ideas.[80]

During the 1864 re-election campaign, Lincoln was again frequently depicted as black—with the intent to personally insult him and to discredit his stand on the issue of slavery. To introduce the threat of miscegenation in society, he was shown in the company of black women or was shown giving his blessing to inter-racial unions.[81] [Fig. 1.16]. In the many depictions of Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation, he was frequently shown surrounded by the supposed results of this act including social chaos, moral degeneracy and crude depictions of the "products" of miscegenation—a variation on the traditionally positive attributes of the allegories Truth, Justice and Liberty that often decorated such documents.[82]

After Lincoln's assassination the racialization of this towering figure continued but was more subtle. The South began to develop a voluminous body of anti-Lincoln literature that indirectly attacked him by criticizing his leadership. Some Southern newspapers charged that Lincoln acted illegally in denying their right to secede from the Union and by abolishing slavery. Through these illegal acts, they argued, he disrupted the Southern way of life and jeopardized white supremacy. Other Southern newspapers argued that Lincoln, a Southerner by birth and geography, shared their views on matters concerning the races and frequently used his own words to bolster their arguments, such as his pronouncement during the fourth debate with Stephen Douglas (1858), in which he

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declared that "I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black race."[83]

The use of Lincoln as an unwitting handmaiden in the perpetuation of racist ideas continued into the 20th century. In the early years of that century, Thomas Dixon, a Boston minister-turned-novelist, produced phobic novels that were best-sellers. A great admirer of Lincoln, he developed an elaborate, twisted image of the President as a racist Southerner.[84] During Wilson's administration, James J. Vardaman, a vocal and vociferously bigoted U.S. Senator (1913-1919) publicly insisted that his racial sentiments were "substantially identical" to those of Lincoln to justify racist proposals he forwarded in the Senate.[85]

By the time ground was broken for the Lincoln Memorial, the racialization of American culture and of Lincoln was entrenched and Woodrow Wilson, who served as President from 1913-1921, spanning the years the Memorial was built, helped solidify the racialization of the culture and, ultimately, how the Memorial would be perceived. His views on race had deep roots. Born in Virginia and reared in Georgia and the Carolinas, he was by temperament and inclination a Southerner. He grew up in the war-devastated South and sympathized with the aims of the Confederacy. Intellectually, Wilson's thinking on race was based in part on Barthold Georg Niebuhr's (1776-1831) racialization of history. A Prussian diplomat and historian, Niebuhr offered a reconstruction of the interpretation of history that was based on the role race played in the formation of a culture. Niebuhr concluded that "the order of the history of the world" was to "fuse the numberless original races together, and to exterminate such as cannot be amalgamated."[86] Wilson did not espouse such draconian race cleansing, but he did

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develop his political concept of the state and how to govern directly from Niebuhr, and his ideas on the subject are clearly expressed in his text titled *The State* (1899).[87] He also produced a five-volume textbook, *History of the American People*, commissioned by the United Confederates Association for Southern schools that was a sympathetic interpretation of the South's Lost Cause.[88]

While president of Princeton University (1902-1910), Wilson discouraged black Americans from attending the elite university,[89] and as governor of New Jersey (1911-1912), his Progressive platform excluded blacks. Nevertheless, in October, 1912, while running for President, he sent Bishop Alexander Walters, president of the Colored Democratic League, a letter stating his " earnest wish to see justice done the colored people in every matter; and not mere grudging justice, but justice executed with liberality and cordial good feeling. . .I want to assure them that should I become President of the United States they may count upon me for absolute fair dealing, for everything by which I could assist in advancing the interest of their race in the United States."[90] Black leaders, even skeptic W.E. B. Du Bois, threw their weight behind Wilson, who won the election and was also elected to a second term, thanks in part to the support of many black Americans, who for the first time broke away from traditional Republican affiliations.

Wilson was to disappoint them. The first man from one of the seceded Southern states to occupy the White House since Zachary Taylor sixty-four years earlier, his Cabinet reflected his racialist views. It consisted almost entirely of sons of the Confederacy,[91] and many of his colleagues and political supporters in Congress were rabid racists. Mississippi Senator Vardaman aggressively pursued a white supremacist policy and felt free to publicly declare that black Americans would never become full

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citizens in the United States.[92] Another racist supporter was Senator Benjamin R. "Pitchfork" Tillman of South Carolina, who described the black American as "a fiend, a wild beast, seeking whom he may devour,"[93] and considered lynching "an acceptable form of law-enforcement."[94]

The racial tenor of the Capital quickly worsened under Wilson's stewardship. He told "darky" stories in Cabinet meetings.[95] He rejected the proposal for a presidentially appointed, privately financed, biracial commission empowered "to promote realization of democracy in America" and investigate the abject conditions under which most black Americans lived.[96] He steadfastly refused to intervene to prevent the lynching of American citizens (most of whom were black), maintaining it was not the domain of the Federal Government but of the states,[97] which reflected his party's historic commitment to states' rights and limited Federal power. He drove several blacks from official positions they had traditionally held in previous administrations. Particularly insulting to black Americans, his administration instituted a new requirement that photographs be submitted with all civil service applications, making it easier to weed them out as candidates for these positions. [98] Segregation of Federal Government offices was extended to toilets, lunchroom facilities and other working areas in the Department of the Treasury and the Post Office.[99] As NAACP correspondent John Palmer Gavit noted to the organization's chairman, Oswald Garrison Villard (the grandson of the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and the editor of the progressive magazine, *The Nation*): "Never before has there been an Administration that dared to cater to this feeling, except in surreptitious ways. There has always been in the Departments in Washington, a wish to do it, but not the courage."[100] May Childs Nerney, who compiled a series of reports on

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segregated race relations in Federal departments for the NAACP, wrote to Villard in 1913, commenting on the changed atmosphere under the Democratic Administration: "In saying they favor segregation, many white employees seem not to be expressing their own convictions so much as to be reflecting what they regard as the spirit of the new administration. Those who have been appointed in previous administrations apparently think that if they do not put themselves on record as approving this policy, the danger of losing their positions is thereby increased."[101]

Nerney was correct in observing that segregation was a policy encouraged by the Wilson Administration, for in a letter to the editor of the *Congregationalist and Christian World*, Wilson justified segregation as beneficial to black Americans:

> I would say that I do approve of the segregation that is being attempted in several of the departments. I have not always approved of the way in which the thing was being done...but I think if you were here on the ground you would see, as I seem to see, that it is distinctly to the advantage of the colored people themselves that they should be organized, so far as possible and convenient, in distinct bureaux where they will center their work. Some of the most thoughtful colored men I have conversed with have themselves approved of this policy. I certainly would not myself have approved of it if I had not thought it to their advantage and likely to remove any of the difficulties which have surrounded the appointment and advancement of colored men and women.[102]

Wilson voiced the same opinion to Oswald Garrison Villard who incisively observed that the President "fails utterly to see that to discriminate in his democracy against anyone, is to bring his whole carefully reared edifice crashing to the ground."[103]

As a result of Wilson's segregation policies, the NAACP, less than six months after Wilson entered office, decided that it would mount a public "campaign of making the White House as uncomfortable as possible."[104] To this end it filed an official protest

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at the White House on August 15, 1913 against the "drawing of caste lines" and called for a "public response to their appeal for social justice."[105] Archibald H. Grimke, head of the Washington chapter of the NAACP, followed up with a letter to Wilson on October 29, 1913, protesting against these "reactionary and undemocratic practices."[106] The NAACP also organized nationwide protest meetings and called for a letter-writing marathon.[107] All of their protests, demands and resolutions were drawn up as legal documents, couched in legal language and rationalized and justified by the laws of the land. The organization determined that, as Lincoln did in writing the Emancipation Proclamation, the best way to effect and ensure civil rights would be by this method.

The NAACP continued its pressure unabated, but when the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917, even the most vociferous critics among the black American leaders supported Wilson's war efforts. They did so because they did not want to be viewed as unpatriotic. However, their criticism continued, though now the organization shifted its focus from segregation in the Federal Government to segregation in the military. The NAACP organized protests against the hypocrisy of Wilson's battle cry of "making the world safe for democracy" when safety, let alone democracy, did not exist at home. In 1917, after a race riot in St. Louis, the latest of many, 1,500 black Americans marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City in silent protest against lynching and carried banners that read: "Mr. President, Why Not Make AMERICA Safe for Democracy,?" "Patriotism and Loyalty Presuppose Protection and Liberty," and "Bring Democracy to America Before You Carry It to Europe."[108] These parades and protests became part of the NAACP's arsenal and were the precursors of the larger

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Washington marches that were to occur in the 1940s, and they provided the NAACP with valuable organizational and tactical experience in mounting demonstrations.

Throughout the war, Wilson's relationship with the black American community remained difficult. He increasingly relied on Robert Moton, the President of Tuskegee Institute, who was to help dedicate the Lincoln Memorial to the public, as a liason between the White House and the black American community. Wilson considered Moton a friend (albeit in the classic, qualified Southern sense in which unquestioned subservience and inferiority was presumed). It was in fact by a bizarre and chance incident, grounded in the racism of the day, that Moton became a quasi-official consultant on black issues for President Wilson.[111] He relied on Moton to recommend qualified blacks for political positions, including vacancies in Federal judgeships in the South and he depended on Moton to function as the principal liason with the black community. With Wilson's backing Moton used Tuskegee Institute's resources and manpower to vigorously support the war effort.[110] He was instrumental in establishing a training camp for black officers in the 92nd Division at Des Moines, Iowa, and in securing the appointment of Emmett J. Scott, secretary of Tuskegee Institute, as Special Assistant to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. In this capacity, Scott was to serve on matters specifically related to black soldiers.[111]

At Wilson's request, Moton also traveled to France to investigate complaints of discrimination, hardships of the soldiers, and to address several rumors and accusations circulating about the 92nd Division and its black regiments. Moton left on December 2, 1918 "with authority to go anywhere and get any information from any source, so far as the American Expeditionary Force was concerned."[112] Once in France, he spoke directly

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to the soldiers, urging them to "endure sacrifices and return home, find a job, buy a home and marry and settle down."[113] He also spoke to white soldiers and urged them, upon their return to the United States, "to make democracy safe for mankind, black and white."[114]

But Wilson was fearful of racial strife at home, and despite the fact that such fears were largely unfounded, anti-black paranoia pervaded his administration and the country at large. In one confidential memorandum directed to the President, this paranoia is evident: "Unfortunately the true attitude of the Negro remains unseen. He must not be judged so much by what he says publicly, as by what he is thinking and doing in secret. This tendency towards secrecy is growing. The Negroes are not telling the white man all the truth about what they think of present conditions, and what they expect when the war is over."[115]

Wilson was particularly fearful of returning black veterans. He confided to Cary T. Grayson, the White House physician, that he was concerned that black soldiers posed a serious threat of spreading Bolshevism upon their return.[116] The soldiers posed no such threat. On the contrary, it was they who were threatened—more than 70 black American servicemen were lynched by mobs of whites in the first year after the war.[119] In 1919 alone, when most black troops returned to the United States, there were 26 race riots. More than a hundred black Americans were killed, and thousands more were wounded and left homeless, causing James Weldon Johnson to call 1919 the year of the "Red Summer."[120]

During the "Red Summer" Robert Moton was again called upon by President Wilson to help restore racial peace, but with the upcoming Presidential election of 1920

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and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment (something Wilson worked hard to enact) extending suffrage to women, including black women, racial violence spiraled out of control. Despite the pleas of the NAACP directed to Wilson to protect polling sites during the Presidential election, more than 30 blacks were murdered while attempting to vote on November 3, 1920, the day of the election.[121] Shortly after the election, in December 1920, the NAACP demanded a congressional inquiry into black disenfranchisement during the election[122] but disenfranchisement remained a reality throughout the decade and race rioting continued.

Throughout this turbulent period, the Lincoln Memorial slowly rose on the east end of the Potomac, and the nation, like the colossal statue of Lincoln that would sit in silent splendor on a throne inside a colonnaded temple, was blind to its own agonies. By the time Woodrow Wilson left office in 1920, American democracy had devolved into a more negative concept, assimilating nativism, Americanism, and racism—all of which had absorbed a flood of materials by racialist theorists. American democracy had also became politicized, its tenets employed with equal skill by politicians like Senator Vardaman and organizations like the NAACP, and it served as a palliative ideal to rationalize the demands of the many separate strands of American society.

Alongside the overwhelming abuses and an avalanche of unscientific and spurious information on race, there also developed other voices, views and images that to some extent mitigated misconceptions about black Americans. Foremost among these was the NAACP, which had become the most important civil rights organization in the nation. Wilson's Democratic Administration was the first to confront such a unified and powerful political organization, and it was to be a constant thorn in the side of the

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President and a constant presence in the politics of protest that would evolve over the next four decades, finding their locus at the Lincoln Memorial. It was during Wilson's administration that the NAACP established precedents and refined the strategies and tactics that would be successfully employed in dealing with future administrations for promoting civil rights. Indeed, the seeds of massive, public protests on a national level were sown during this turbulent period. They were also woven in the contentious history of the Lincoln Memorial, for even before the monument was dedicated, the NAACP had demanded that a black American representative speak at the dedication ceremonies. The organization's first choice was the firebrand, Harvard-educated intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois but Robert Moton was the compromise.

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Chapter 1: Notes

1. *The New York Times*, April 19, 1865, p. 1.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Thirty-eight years ago, when the state of South Carolina decided to fly the Confederate battle flag over its state capitol building, it sparked an immediate controversy. Proponents claimed the flag was merely a historic symbol and a proud part of the state's heritage. Opponents, especially black Americans, denounced the flag as an affront and demanded that it be removed. After years of protests, it was only in 2000, when the NAACP voted to launch a national boycott of South Carolina goods, that the state sought a compromise. It was agreed that South Carolina would remove the flag from the capitol dome. It now flies at a Confederate soldiers monument on the capitol grounds.

4. There are no encyclopedic inventories of Union and Confederate monuments. Pictorial catalogs of Union and Confederate monuments include: Ralph W. Widener Jr., *Confederate Monuments: Enduring Symbols of the South and the War between the States* (Washington, D.C.: Andromeda, 1982); and Mildred C. Baruch and Ellen J. Beckman, *Civil War Union Monuments, Markers, and Memorials of the American Civil War, 1861-65* (Washington, D.C.: Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1978). For a general history of monuments see Howard Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1991); and Nikolaus Pevsner, *"National Monuments and Monuments to Genius," A History of Building Types* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1976), pp. 11-26. For a comprehensive survey of American sculpture that includes Civil War statuary see Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984); For sculpture in Washington, D.C. see George Gurney, *Sculpture and the Federal Triangle* (Washington, 1985).

5. Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades, A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895* (New York, 1955), p. 5

6. The term "memory site" is employed by Pierre Nora in "Between Memory and History," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (English edition, 3 vols; New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Nora uses the term to describe a physical site that, because of its condensation of a multitude of symbols, creates a conflict between memory and actual history. The term is ideally suited to the description of the Lincoln Memorial because so much of its potency as a national symbol is a result of an inability to successfully reconcile memory and history.

7. Edward F. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial, Washington* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office: 1927), p. 19.

8. Immediately after Lincoln's assassination dozens of associations sprang up across the country, formed for the purpose of memorializing the President. Many of these associations went

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under the same name—the Lincoln Monument Association. The one formed by Congress on March 30, 1867 (its records do not survive but it documented most of its activities in pamphlets that it published through 1870), absorbed three other smaller associations that preceded it: The Freedmen's Memorial, a campaign initiated and financed by free blacks, the Western Sanitary Commission of St. Louis (a war relief agency), and the National Lincoln Monument Association in Springfield, Illinois, which was formed by a group of Illinois politicians. However, there were only two federally sponsored associations, the one in Illinois and the one formed by an Act of Congress in 1911. For an account of the formation of these early associations, see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War and Monuments in 19th Century America* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 89-104.

9. The National Lincoln Memorial Association. Organization and Design. Proceedings of the Board of Managers. Plan and Prospects. Progress of the Work. Representative Men Selected. Appeal to the Public. Appendix. (Washington, D.C., September 1870), p. 3

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Congressional Globe*, March 26, 1867, pp. 345-46.

12. The National Monument Association. Organization and Design. . . (Washington, D.C., September 1870), p. 6.

13. *Ibid.*, unpaginated, synopsis following p. 6.

14. For a thorough and balanced account of the period of Reconstruction, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, 1988); other accounts include Akhil R. Amar, *The Bill of Rights: Creation and Reconstruction* (New Haven, 1998); Robert J. Kaczorowski, "To Begin the Nation Anew: Congress, Citizenship, and Civil Rights After the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, 92 (February 1987), pp. 47-49; La Wanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom, A Study in Presidential Leadership* (University of South Carolina Press, 1981); a perspective offered by a black scholar, W.E.B. Du Bois, *is Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York, 1935, 1995).

15. In 1863, as Union forces regained control over much of Tennessee, North Carolina and Louisiana, Lincoln announced his Ten Percent Plan for restoring the South to the Union. Under this plan, most Southern citizens would be given amnesty when they took an oath of loyalty to the Federal Constitution. When ten percent of the number in a Southern state who had voted in the election of 1860 took the oath of loyalty, that state was permitted to rejoin the Union. Slaves were to be freed, but their future was to be left in the hands of individual states.

16. The so-called Black Codes were numerous laws enacted in the states of the former Confederacy after the Civil War. These codes were designed to replace the social controls of slavery that had been removed by the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Blacks were usually forbidden to bear arms, to vote, or to hold public office. In Mississippi, they could not rent or lease land.

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17. The Radical Republicans, notably Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, disagreed with Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan. They wished both to guarantee the rights of the newly-freed blacks and to punish white Southerners for the war.

18. National Lincoln Monument Association (Washington, D.C.: Great Republic Office, 1867), p. 3.

19. The National Lincoln Monument Association. Organization and Design. . . (Washington, D.C., September, 1870), p. 6.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 4

21. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

22. See Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (1968; rev. ed., Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), pp. 168-172.

23. The National Lincoln Monument Association. Organization and Design. . . (Washington, D.C., September 1870). P. 4.

24. *Ibid.*

25. See Fig. 1.3. The stereo photograph is in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

26. The National Lincoln Monument Association. Organization and Design. . . (Washington, D.C., September 1870), p. 5.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. See Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monuments in 19th Century America*, (Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 111-12; Ladies Union Aid Society, Minute Book, 1865-1868, pp. 91-92 (Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis); Paula Coalier, "Beyond Sympathy: The St. Louis Ladies' Union Society and the Civil War," *Gateway Heritage* 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 38-51.

31. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves. . .*, pp. 111-12.

32. National Lincoln Monument Association. Organization and Design. . ., p. 5.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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34. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

35. The most complete biographical and professional history on Mills to date is Rosemary Hopkins, *Clark Mills: The First Native American Sculptor* (Master's Thesis, University of Maryland, 1966). Other helpful biographical information on Mills during the Civil War can be found in Michael Edward Shapiro, *Bronze Casting and American Sculpture, 1850-1900* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), pp. 33-44.

36. Quoted in Mumford, *The Brown Decades. . .*, p. 13.

37. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, see p. 8-9 and p. 65.

38. Freeman Henry Morris Murray, *Emancipation and the Freed Slave in American Sculpture. A Study in Interpretation.* (Published by the author, Washington, D.C., 1916), p. 28. This work is also called the "Freedman's Memorial," reflecting its original sponsorship and funding by a group of freedmen established immediately after Lincoln's assassination. For a detailed account of the evolution of this group, see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves. . .*pp. 89-93. In an effort to lend historic authenticity to the group, Ball modeled the head of the slave from a photograph of Archer Alexander, the last man to be recaptured under the Fugitive Slave Law. It was cast at Von Muler's Royal Foundry in Munich and was unveiled in Washington, D.C., on April 14, 1876, with the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court in attendance. The oration was delivered by Frederick Douglass. Two years later, a duplicate of it was made and installed in Park Square in Boston, a gift to the city by the abolitionist Moses Kimball.

39. Lincoln used these words —"an act of justice. . . . upon military necessity"—when he issued the final Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. See Roy P. Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings* (Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing Company, 1946), p. 691; This statement (that the Emancipation Proclamation was a war measure, not a gesture issuing from the bosom of philanthropy) was attributed to Lincoln by a Washington correspondent of *The Tribune*, reprinted in *The New York Times*, December 31, 1862. See La Wanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p. 13 and p. 188, footnote 18.

40. Murray, p. 28.

41. The title of Lewis' work is taken from Article Two of Lincoln's Annual Message to Congress, delivered on December 1, 1862, in which he called for immediate emancipation. The article, part of an amendment to the Constitution that Lincoln proposed, called for the permanent freedom of all slaves who became free as a result of the war, regardless of the circumstances. See Basler, *Abraham Lincoln...*, p. 680. The bibliography on Edmonia Lewis is still slim. The primary biographical studies can be found in Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (New York, 1968), pp. 333-35; D.C. Driskell, *Two Centuries of Black American Art* (New York, 1976), pp. 48-49; S. Lewis, *Art: African-American* (New York, 1978), pp. 39-43; M.W. Davis, ed., *Contributions of Black Women in America* (Columbia, S.C., 1982), pp. 108-11.

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42. Depictions of Lincoln standing, holding a scroll (an attribute signifying Emancipation) or seated in the act of writing, were standard solutions chosen by many sculptors during the 1860s and 1870s. It was not until the 1880s that other conventions were introduced.

43. Murray, p. xix.

44. Edward F. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C., 1927), p. 18.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

46. Congressional Record, 61st Congress, 2nd Session, May 17, 1910, Public Law No. 181.

47. On the McMillan Plan, see Jon A. Peterson, "The Nation's First Comprehensive City Plan: A Political Analysis of the McMillan Plan For Washington, D.C., 1900-1902," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 51 (Spring, 1985), pp. 134-150; George Gurney, *Sculpture and the Federal Triangle* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), pp. 37-41; Richard Longstreth ed., *The Mall In Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

48. On the City Beautiful Movement, see Jon A. Peterson, "The City Beautiful Movement: Forgotten Origins and Lost Meanings," *Journal of Urban History* 2, no. 4 (August 1976), pp. 415-435; Mario Maniera-Elia, "Toward An Imperial City: Daniel H. Burnham and the City Beautiful Movement," in Giorgio Ciucci, Francesco dal Co, Mario Maniera-Elia, Manfredo Tafuri, *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, trans. Barbara Luigia La.Penta (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979), pp. 1-242; Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

49. Robert A. M. Stern with Raymond W. Gastil, "A Temenos for Democracy: The Mall in Washington and Its Influence," in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington*, p. 263.

50. Richard Guy Wilson, "High Noon on the Mall: Modernism versus Traditionalism, 1910-1970," in Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991*, p. 143.

51. Quoted from Richard Guy Wilson, "Expressions of Identity," p. 21 in *The American Renaissance: 1876-1917*, Brooklyn Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue (New York: Pantheon books, 1979).

52. Sue A. Kohler, *The Commission of Fine Arts*, p. 1.

53. Ibid.

54. Robert A. M. Stern and Raymond W. Gastil, "A Temenos for Democracy: The Mall In Washington and Its Influence," in Longstreth, *The Mall In Washington, 1791-1991*, p. 263.

55. Longstreth, *The Mall in Washington. . .*, p. 95.

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56. Concklin, p. 36

57. According to some cultural critics, among them Lewis Mumford, the Chicago Columbian Exposition initiated an unfortunate resurgence of interest in retrograde styles of architecture, thereby undermining the flowering of the more modern developments of American architecture at the turn of the 19th century. See *The Brown Decades, 1931*, pp. 141-142. For the Exposition, see Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago University Press, 1984); Carolyn Kinder Carr and George Gurney, *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair* (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1993).

58. William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1982), p. 144.

59. Louis Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," *Lippincott's Magazine*, March 1896, p.18.

60. In 1890 more than eight million people emigrated to the United States. The population of New York City almost tripled between 1850 and 1890, jumping from 515,547 in 1850 to 1,515,301 in 1890. Of this number in 1890, 42% (mostly German and Irish) were foreign born. See U.S. Census Bureau Statistics.

61. Royal Cortissoz, *American Artists* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1923), p. 18.

62. James McPherson, *Images of the Civil War* (New Jersey, 1992), p. 172.

63. The term "racialization" is used in Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of An Idea in the West* (The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, D.C., 1996). Hannaford's study is, to date, the most comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of racialization. Gunnar Myrdal's work, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy* (Harper and Row, New York, 1944), written more than half a century ago, was a landmark study in the field. More recent works include Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Schocken Books, New York, 1965); George M. Fredrickson, "Toward a Social Interpretation of the Development of American Racism" in Nathan Huggins, Martin Kilson, and Daniel Fox (eds.) *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience: Vol. 1 to 1877* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1971), pp. 240-257; David Goldberg (ed.), *Anatomy of Racism* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1990).

64. The description is from John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1865-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1988). Higham's landmark work forwarded that three types of nativism—anti-Catholicism, anti-radicalism, and racial nativism—were important factors in the shaping of modern American history. In particular, he contended that these three types of nativism converged in the 1920s, creating a decade of unparalleled racial and ethnic animosity in the United States. Although developments in social history, especially since the 1960s, have

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offered expanded alternatives to Higham's model, its basic formulation of nativism remains unchallenged.

65. For accounts of activities of the Ku Klan Klan formed in 1866 see Otto H. Olsen, ed., *Reconstruction and Redemption in the South* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1980); and Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York, 1971).

66. For the treatment of blacks after Reconstruction see esp. Rayford Logan, *Betrayal of the Negro from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York, 1965).

67. For whites fear of and reaction to political and social change, especially in regards to race, see Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991); and T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). The idea of "race suicide" as a real and imminent threat to Anglo-Saxon civilization was widely accepted and promulgated not only by racial theorists and restrictionists, but by heads of state (including Theodore Roosevelt), and by statisticians who offered evidence of a declining birthrate among those of Northern European ancestry (See: Francis A. Walker, "Immigration and Degradation," *Forum* 11 (August 1891), pp. 633-44; and Fredrick L. Hoffmann, "The Decline in the Birth Rate," *North American Review* 189 (May 1909), p. 675. For Roosevelt's attitudes on race see Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge, 1980).

68. For an account of Social Darwinism and social evolutionism in the United States, see Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). Hofstadter maintains that "Anglo-Saxonism in politics was limited both in scope and in duration" (p. 183). For an opposite viewpoint to that of Hofstadter, see Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, pp. 297-319. Also see A.J. Beitzinger, *A History of American Political Thought* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1972).

69. Michelle Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930.* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1989), p. 223.

70. Hannaford, pp. 277-324.

71. The term was coined by Francis Galton (1822-1911), a cousin of Charles Darwin, in 1883. See: "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims," *Nature* 70 (1904), p. 82.

72. See Morton Keller, *Regulating A New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 14, 34-5.

73. See Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, rev. ed., (Beacon Press, Boston, 1955), p. 177.

74. William Graham Sumner, *What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1883).

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75. William Graham Sumner, *War and Other Essays*, (New York, 1903).

76. Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York, 1944 ed.).

77. Hannaford, pp. 325-368.

78. On the development of white perceptions of black Americans, see: Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1815* (New York, 1960); Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (London, 1965); George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York, 1971). For the portrayal of black Americans in popular journals, see: Lawrence Milton Bott, "The Negro As Displayed in Harper's Magazine, 1901-1924," Master's Thesis, Howard University, 1951; Daniel D. Simmons, "The Negro As Portrayed in 'Century Monthly' and 'Forum and Century,' 1901-1932," Master's Thesis, Howard University, 1951. The tenor of the popular portrayal of black Americans in the teens and twenties can be followed in *The Saturday Evening Post*, probably the most popular magazine in the nation at this time.

79. Harold Holzer, *Lincoln Seen & Heard* (University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 115.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

81. Mark E. Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer, *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p. 155.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-121.

83. The quote is from the fourth speech of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, delivered at Charleston, Illinois, September 18, 1858. See: Roy P. Basler, editor, *The Collective Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1953), p. 145. The Southern newspapers consulted were the *Louisville Times*, the *Birmingham News*, the *Asheville Citizen*, and the *Atlantic Constitution*.

84. His novels include *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865-1900* (New York, 1902) and *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York, 1905). In *The Clansman* (which D.W. Griffith based much of his 1915 film *Birth of A Nation* on), the novel's anti-hero is based on Lincoln.

85. Congressional Record, 51, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session, Senate, February 6, 1914, p. 340.

86. See Barthold G. Niebuhr, *The History of Rome*, vol. 1,p. xxix. Vols. 1-2, translation, Julius Charles Hare and Connop Thirlwall (Cambridge and London, Longmans, 1835), vol. 3, translated by William Smith and Leonhard Schmitz.

87. Woodrow Wilson, *The State* (1899; reprint, Boston; Washington, D.C., Heath and Co.,

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1904).

88. Woodrow Wilson, *A History of the American People*, 5 vols., 1902.

89. See letter from Stockton Axson (Wilson's brother-in-law) to Ray Stannard Baker, October 31, 1928 in Baker Papers, Library of Congress.

90. See Bishop Alexander Walters, *My Life and Work* (New York, 1917), p. 195.

91. Wilson's cabinet consisted of: Secretary of State, William J. Bryan (1913-15); Robert Lansing (1915-20), Bainbridge Colby (1920-21); Secretary of the Treasury, William G. Adoo (1913-18), Carter Glass (1918-20), David F. Houston (1920-21); Secretary of War, Lindley M. Garrison (1913-16), Newton D. Baker (1916-21); Attorney General, James C. McReynolds (1913-14), Thomas W. Gregory (1914-19), Alexander M. Palmer (1919-21); Postmaster General, Albert S. Burleson (1913-21); Secretary of the Navy (Josephus Daniels (1913-21); Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane (1913-20), John B. Payne (1920-21); Secretary of Agriculture, David F. Houston (1913-20), Edwin T. Meredith (1920-21); Secretary of Commerce, William C. Redfield (1913-19), Joshua W. Alexander (1919-21); Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson (1913-21).

92. For Senator Vardaman's statement, see: Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate, vol. 51, part 12 (July 8), p. 1798.

93. Senator Tillman is quoted in Francis Butler Simpkins, "Ben Tillman's View of the Negro" (*Journal of Southern History, III*, May 1937), p. 166.

94. Francis B. Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman* (Baton Rouge, 1944), pp. 394-96.

95. Josephus Daniels, *The Cabinet Diary of Josephus Daniels 1913-1922*, ed. E. David Cronon (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1963).

96. The proposal was entitled "A Proposal for a National Race Commission to be Appointed by the President of the United States. Suggestion by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People" [undated], and is in the Oswald Garrison Villard Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

97. See *The New York Times*, February 11, 1917, p. 191, and May 8, 1917, p. 88.

98. Laurence J.W. Hayes. *The Negro Federal Government Worker: A Study of His Classification Status in the District of Columbia* (Washington, 1941), p. 51.

99. See Henry Lincoln Johnson, *The Negro Under Wilson* (Washington, D.C., 1916). W. Hayes, *The Negro Federal Government Worker: A Study of His Classification Status in the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C., 1941); Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (Evanston, 1958); Copies of the segregation orders for the Treasury Department can be found in the Villard Papers. See also: August Meir and Elliott Rudwick, "The Rise of

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Segregation in the Federal Bureaucracy, 1900-1930," in *Phylon* 28 (1967), pp. 178-184; Desmond King, *Separate and Unequal: Black Americans and the U.S. Federal Government* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995), pp. 3-14.

100. Arthur Stanley Link, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States, Vol. 28* (Letter from John Palmer Gavit to Oswald Garrison Villard, October 1, 1913 (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985).

101. *Ibid.*, p. 403. Letter dated September 30, 1913.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 265. Letter from Wilson to Howard Allen Bridgeman dated September 4, 1913.

103. Oswald Garrison Villard, *Segregation in Baltimore and Washington* (1913), p. 8. See also: "The President and the Segregation at Washington," *North American Review*, CXCVIII (1913), p. 805. Villard was probably the most influential spokesperson for the black American community—one of a small but extremely important educated, liberal, reform-minded whites who worked closely with black leaders to effect social and political change.

104. NAACP Papers, Part II, Reel 19, 1913 (New York, Schomburg Archives).

105. Villard Papers, *NAACP to Wilson*, Correspondence of August 15, 1923.

106. Quoted in *Logan*, p. 361.

107. NAACP, Fourth Annual Report (New York, 1914), p. 59.

108. Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-21* (New York, 1985), p. 217 and Link, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 43, pp. 342-343.

109. Moton was invited as one of the American delegates to an international gathering on race relations at a resort in upstate New York. One of the hostesses for the gathering was Eleanor Wilson, President Wilson's daughter. Moton was waiting in the lobby of an inn at the resort for a room—an awkward moment because under normal circumstances, he would not have been allowed to stay in the inn. Miss Wilson sensed his embarrassment and sat down to talk while he was waiting for a room. A newspaperman who saw the two talking, approached Moton later and said: "I notice that you were talking with the President's daughter. What were you talking about?" Remembering the brouhaha over the Booker T. Washington and Theodore Roosevelt incident, Moton immediately realized that talking to the President's daughter could be easily sensationalized if he said the wrong thing. To rid himself of the reporter, he replied: "The President's family used to have some servants that lived in the South, and some of them had been about Tuskegee, and she was asking me about the old family servants." Moton may have thought that a potentially prickly situation was behind him. But that evening at dinner, to his dismay, he found that he had been assigned to the table that Miss Wilson also would occupy. He promptly asked an employee at the inn to change his table, explaining, "I don't want to embarrass the President or even take a chance of embarrassing him. Moton's table was changed, but the incident was reported to Miss Wilson, who in turn recounted it to her father. "The President was

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"touched. . .very deeply" and immediately wrote to Moton, "You needn't have been concerned about that because neither my daughter nor I would have had any concern about it. But the fact that you were that thoughtful of me and of her we both appreciate very much—the spirit in which you did it, although it was entirely unnecessary. I'd like to meet you sometime. Sometime when you are in Washington I'd like you to come to see me." See interview 7 with Dr. Will W. Alexander by Dean Albertson on August 7, 1952, at New Hope Farm, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, pp. 299-324. In Columbia University, Oral History Transcript of Will W. Alexander.

110. Robert Moton, *Finding a Way Out, An Autobiography* (Garden City, New York, 1920), p. 247.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

112. *Ibid.*

113. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

114. Link, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 51, September 14-November 8, 1918), p. 136.

115. Cary T. Grayson diary, March 10, 1919, Office of the Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey.

116. See record kept by Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. Tuskegee Institute began keeping lynching statistics in 1892. In 1912 the NAACP also began keeping records of lynchings. Neither source is completely reliable as both were dependent on newspaper reports, which were frequently inaccurate or incomplete.

117. Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, *Seeds of Southern Change* (University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 56.

118. NAACP Papers, Part II, Series B, Special Subject Files, 1912-1939 (New York, Schomburg Archives and *Negro Yearbook*, 1919), p. 74.

119. See NAACP Annual Report, 1920, pp. 27-28. Shortly after the Presidential election, in December 1920, prominent black Americans demanded a Congressional inquiry into black disenfranchisement during the election. James Weldon Johnson, then assistant secretary of the NAACP, and Walter F. White, the organization's executive director, appeared at a hearing before the House Census Committee to present evidence, including copies of letters sent by the Ku Klux Klan, of violations of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the onstitution. (See *New York Call*, December 24, 1920). George H. Tinkerman of Massachusetts was the only Congressman to act. On May 6, 1921, he introduced a resolution calling for a formal investigation into this charge and demanded enforcement of the second section of the Fourteenth Amendment, which provides for reduction in representation of any state in which the right to vote is denied. (See *The New York Times*, December 6, 1920, p. 3; December 30, 1930, p. 7; and December 31, 1920, p. 2; NAACP Annual Report 1920, pp. 27-8). Tinkerman introduced the resolution and claimed Constitutional privilege, hoping to secure its immediate

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consideration, but the Speaker of the House ruled unfavorably on this point of order. As a result, the resolution had to be reintroduced as a regular resolution and was subsequently buried in committee. (See *Journal of Negro History*, July 1964). In October 1921, Tinkerman unsuccessfully attempted to amend the reapportionment bill in order to reduce the representation of the disenfranchising states. (See Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 61, Pt. 2, pp. 1124-1130, 1144 and Pt. 6, pp. 6311-6316).

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Chapter 2

Allegory and Symbolism in the Lincoln Memorial

It was against the violent, divisive background of the United States in the first decade of the 20th century that the Lincoln Memorial slowly took shape on the west end of the Potomac—construction that continued throughout Woodrow Wilson's tenure as President. The shape the Lincoln Memorial would ultimately take—its architecture and iconography—rested in the hands of two groups whose members were prominent politicians, architects and artists: the Lincoln Memorial Commission (LMC) and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). While the LMC was ostensibly bipartisan and national in scope, and the members of the CFA were presumably concerned solely with aesthetic decisions, in reality both groups constituted a small and formidable elite that shared the same objective in the realization of the Lincoln Memorial: to reaffirm the presumed unity of the nation. They brought to this undertaking a severely circumscribed concept of unity impoverished by a pervasive racism that was continually fostered by the Taft, Wilson and Harding administrations. However, one critical element of the Memorial undermined their intent: the speeches of Lincoln carved on the massive stone tablets set in the walls from floor to ceiling in the central chamber of the Memorial. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address serve as literary evidence that his concept of union bore no resemblance to the ossified concept of union posited by the men who oversaw the development of the Memorial. Saving the union at the sacrifice of democracy was not Lincoln's objective. He saw as his ultimate task the preservation of the union *and with it* democracy, as

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one was inconceivable without the other. His view of democracy was organic, vital and dynamic, dependent on a continual progressive improvement of all mankind. To Lincoln the fulfillment of the proposition that the country dedicated itself to—that "all men are created equal"—was democracy.

Yet, William Howard Taft, a lily-white Republican, who was silent on the issue of lynching, favored Jim Crow education, and refused to appoint blacks to political positions in communities where whites objected was the active, hands-on chairman of the LMC from its inception in 1911 to its conclusion in 1921. The other Republican members of the Commission included Illinois Senator Shelby M. Cullom, a contemporary of Lincoln who had diligently worked for many years to get a bill passed in Congress for the establishment of a Lincoln Memorial Commission; and Joseph G. Cannon, the autocratic ex-Speaker from Illinois and the only other contemporary of Lincoln on the Commission, who was also involved in the early efforts to establish a Commission. These men and the other Republican members of the Commission were standpats who belonged to the reactionary wing of the party.

The two Democrats on the LMC were "Champ" (James Beauchamp) Clark of Missouri, who was the minority leader in the House and would become its speaker in 1911; and Hernando de Soto Money, a Senator from Mississippi who had been a soldier in the Confederate Army and had represented Missouri in the Federal Congress since the demise of Reconstruction. (Money died on September 18, 1912, and was succeeded on the Commission by another Southerner, Thomas S. Martin of Virginia).

The Lincoln Memorial was one of the first projects to come before the Commission of Fine Arts, which was established to create a more orderly method of organizing, funding and carrying through a federal project and to ensure a uniform, coherent development of the Capitol

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that would project an image of the United States as a "world power."[1] To this end a permanent body of painters, sculptors, architects and landscape architects were engaged specifically to "advise upon the location of statues, fountains and monuments in the public squares, streets and parks in the District of Columbia. . .and upon the selection of artists for the execution of the same."[2] The Commission was to advise the President and any committee of either House of Congress on all aesthetic decisions regarding the architectural development of Washington.[3]

The Commission's charge was to impose objectivity when undertaking projects like the Lincoln Memorial. While this, in turn, meant eliminating politics and other sectional considerations from the decision making process the long and byzantine wrangling over the selection of Henry Bacon rather than John Russell Pope as architects dispels any such notion.[4] More importantly, the conservative politics and underlying social and racial preconceptions of the Commission members obviated the possibility of bringing a fuller, more complex and comprehensive richness to the Memorial. Understanding and embracing the original rationale for a monument dedicated to the President who wrote the Act of Emancipation, which was articulated in the first project proposed in 1867, was lost by 1911, the year the Lincoln Memorial Commission was established. No correspondence or any other written document in the records of either of these commissions indicates that the fulfillment of the intent of the original Lincoln Monument Association was ever entertained. The concept of what the Memorial should represent had taken a critical step away from a symbol of the fulfillment of one of the crucial premises of the country—universal liberty—to a monument that would stand as a symbol of a harmonious, unified nation, victorious in its efforts to preserve the Union. The Memorial was also intended to heroize a martyred President who, by 1911, had become a mythic figure that bore little relation to the real-life Abraham Lincoln. The purpose of this ideology was both

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political and cultural and hinged on the mythology that surrounded the figure of Lincoln as well as the concept of American democracy.

The architecture, sculpture, murals and iconography of the Memorial form a remarkably coherent ideological message. All of these features reflect the grand ideals of an elite European classical ideological and artistic tradition as well as an official government program of national unity. The Memorial's overarching theme of union was also part of the larger Progressivist impulse for reform—the catchword of Progressivism—that depended on more government regulation and adjustments to the existing social order that these reformers hoped would result in greater social stability and harmony.[5] The well-developed body of Lincoln mythology, from the log-cabin-to-White House success story to Lincoln's persona as hero, emancipator and savior, fitted well with the larger national saga of opportunity, progress and freedom.

The theme of union required that the officials overseeing the development of the Memorial avoid becoming entangled with controversial issues or contradictory symbolism. That such constraints were manifest in Federal Government buildings, and especially in monuments, was not new; the precedent had been set in sculpture, painting and iconography when the extension of the Capitol building was undertaken from 1853 to 1857 and the depiction of the divisive issue of slavery was thought to be a threat to national unity.[6] The government's primary concern in the development of the nation's capital and its buildings and other structures was to solidify the concept of national unity. This decision had been made long before Lincoln was assassinated.

The idea of presenting Lincoln as the savior of the Union was a logical extension of the national ideology that had been established years earlier. Sectional antagonism over the cause and purpose of the Civil War, slavery and Reconstruction, even after half a century, were still

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delicate matters that had to be avoided for the sake of forwarding an ideal of progress, unity and democracy—although to many Southerners, the idea of anything dedicated to Lincoln, however presented, was anathema.

The Mall, the axial landscape between the Lincoln Memorial and the Capitol building,[7] was largely undeveloped when construction of the Lincoln Memorial began. The dredging of the swampy 394 acres was not completed until 1912, and the only monument on the grounds at that time was the Washington Monument.[8] As a self-contained and largely undeveloped space, it was ideally suited for use as an official symbolic space and coincided with a surge of interest in making Washington the capital with architecture modelled after ancient Rome.[9] Pierre l'Enfant's 1791 plan of for the capital area [Fig. 2.1] makes clear that very early in the republic's history this was the intent and the public land that now constitutes the Mall area was set aside for this purpose. The Lincoln Memorial Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts coupled l'Enfant's concept with the principles of the City Beautiful movement to create a Mall that formed both a monumental symbolic core and a recreational space for residents and tourists.

When ground was finally broken for the Lincoln Memorial on February 12, 1914[10] [Fig. 2.2], Lincoln's birthday, architect Henry Bacon viewed the hard-fought-for site as perfect.[11] The Memorial, along with the Capitol building and the Washington Monument, would form an important visual nexus: The Capitol building, topped by Thomas Crawford's *Statue of Freedom* (1863), symbolized the United States Government; the Washington Monument (1885) symbolized George Washington, the founder of the Federal Government; and the Lincoln Memorial, once built, would honor the savior of the nation and symbolize the realization of national unity. Tying all of these elements together would be a memorial bridge connecting the Lincoln Memorial with Arlington Cemetery. The bridge would not only physically link the

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District of Columbia with Virginia but would also serve as a symbol of reunion between the North and the South.[12] Additionally, the site was thought to be especially well suited to honoring Lincoln himself. John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries and biographers, expressed his opinion about the site from a perspective that was shared by many:

> As I understand it, the place of honor is on the main axis of the plan. Lincoln, of all Americans next to Washington, deserves this place of honor. He was of the immortals. You must not approach too close to the immortals. His monument should stand alone, remote from the common habitations of man, apart from the business and turmoil of the city, isolated, distinguished, and serene. Of all the sites, this one, near the Potomac, is most suited to the purpose.[13]

By 1914 the City Beautiful movement was almost over, Modernism had emerged as a potent but largely unrealized force in American architecture, and to some the Memorial was a throwback to another time, another culture. Lewis Mumford bemoaned what he regarded as a regression from the architectural acuity of Henry Hobson Richardson (the John H. Pray & Co. Building, Boston, Massachusetts, 1886), John Wellborn Root (the Monadnock Building, Chicago, Illinois, 1889-1891) and Louis H. Sullivan (the Wainwright Building, St. Louis, Missouri, 1890-91).[14] The Lincoln Memorial, a peripteral neo-Greek Doric temple of white marble designed by Henry Bacon [Fig. 2.3], was based on the Parthenon and intentionally evoked the universal significance and timelessness of classical structures. It was perfectly suited to the aims of the Lincoln Memorial Commission and Commission of Fine Arts. Henry Bacon had a Greek temple in mind from the outset. His choice was a foregone conclusion, for as a protégé of Charles McKim and an employee of the McKim, Mead and White New York firm, he was an architect who had absorbed the tenets of Classicism that the firm championed. Bacon's intent was not to merely echo the art of the past but to create a distinctly American art form that would both memorialize Lincoln and celebrate America's status as a world power. He envisioned

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a Memorial that would function as a shrine—a reverent place of seclusion and isolation that would hold great moral lessons for all who entered its colonnaded spaces. Visitors (regarded as pilgrims by Bacon) were even expected to maintain silence and men were expected to remove their hats.[15]

While hewing to an architecture of the past, Bacon rejected any direct reference to actual historical events or circumstances (as did everyone involved in the project) with one significant exception: the inclusion of two tablets on which Lincoln's Second Inaugural address and Gettysburg speeches were incised. This approach served at least two purposes. Aesthetically, it meant that Bacon was able to concentrate on the qualities and achievements of Lincoln solely; politically, he would avoid the still-festering issue of slavery and the cause of the Civil War. This largely unspoken but understood decision among all of the Lincoln Memorial Commission members and artists involved in the project was both practical and consistent with the larger ideological program of union and reunion, progress and democracy.[16]

As Bacon refined his design for the Memorial, it evolved into a nationalistic, secular shrine that bears a striking resemblance to John Russell Pope's Lincoln Birthplace Memorial in Hodgenville, Kentucky which predated the Lincoln Memorial by thirteen years. Designed to house the log cabin Lincoln was supposedly born in, it is as imposing in its formality and inherent symbolism (with an approach of 56 steps, one for each year of Lincoln's life) [Fig. 2.4] as Bacon's design. Bacon determined early on that the exterior of the Memorial should stand as "a symbol of the Union."[17] The 36 columns that surround the walls of the Memorial Hall symbolize the number of states in the Union in 1865. Apparently, this was a serendipitous accident, for Bacon wrote, probably sometime in 1911:

> At the time of Lincoln's death there were 36 States (according to the World Almanac) that had been admitted to the Union counting

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> the 13 original thirteen (sic) States. It is a curious coincidence that I happened to draw 36 columns around the building without counting them though I had an idea after making the drawing of having them represent the States. At that time I didn't know the number of States at the close of the war.[18]

This symbolism was repeated intentionally throughout the rest of the Memorial, as the idea of unity is literally carved in stone. The names of each of the 36 states in existence during Lincoln's lifetime are carved on the frieze above the colonnade. The attic walls above the colonnade are inscribed with the names of all 48 states, along with their dates of ratification, that composed the United States in 1922. The platform leading to the entrance to the Memorial has thirteen steps, each step carved with the name of one of the original thirteen colonies. The wreaths of the main frieze are interwoven with carvings of Northern pine and Southern laurel, signifying reunion, while ornamental carvings of wreaths and eagles (the latter a specifically American symbolic connotation) create a potent iconographic whole [Fig. 2.5].[19]

The elements of the interior of the Memorial remained consistent with its ideological program. It is divided into three chambers. A visitor first enters the central chamber, but only after a long and imposing approach via the 58 granite and marble steps which are interspersed with a regular series of landings. The central chamber, although restrained and unornamented with walls of limestone and a floor of marble, is overwhelming because of its sheer monumentality. This imposing space is reserved for the nineteen-and-a-half foot high white Georgian marble statue (twenty-two feet high including the pedestal) of a seated, almost slumped, Abraham Lincoln [Fig. 2.6]. Bacon considered the central chamber "the place of honor"[20] and "the most important object in the Memorial."[21] He left the chamber empty, except for the statue, in order that visitors would be able to study the statue of Lincoln without

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distraction. He assumed, mistakenly, that each visitor might enjoy this experience with a measure of privacy.

Bacon's choice of a sculptor for Lincoln's statue was from the outset Daniel Chester French although several other artists vied for the commission, including Henry Kirke Bush Brown and Gutzon Borglum.[22] The strongest recommendation from several quarters was that a replica of Augustus St.Gaudens' statue of Lincoln in Chicago be placed in the Memorial. St. Gaudens' wife, Augusta F. Homer, in fact, met with Bacon and put considerable pressure on him in this regard.[23] Bacon, however, was adamantly opposed, writing about the proposal in 1913 that "in the first place the idea is repugnant to me of having a replica in the Lincoln Memorial, and in the second place, the Chicago Lincoln is not large enough for the Lincoln Memorial."[24] In addition to these objections, Bacon also wanted the commission awarded to someone he felt comfortable working with: "There is one important point that must not be overlooked in this matter. The personal relations between me and the sculptor, who is to do the statue, will have an important bearing on the success of the combined work. . .There is much at stake in this collaboration or partnership that cannot be covered by a contract or pre-arranged understanding."[25]

Bacon prevailed in selecting French as the sculptor. French, who also served as chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, recognized the potential conflict of interest and wrote to William Taft about his quandary: "Both the subject and the exalted position that the statue is to occupy, as the chief feature of the interior of the splendid monument to Lincoln, make it the greatest opportunity that could come to a sculptor."[26] French quickly made his choice, resigned his position at the Commission in 1915, and began work on the sculpture almost immediately.

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Bacon and French had collaborated on another memorial to Abraham Lincoln that was erected in Lincoln Nebraska in 1912 [Fig. 2.7], at the behest of the state's Abraham Lincoln Centennial Memorial Association. This project led to their later collaboration for the Lincoln Memorial and permitted both architect and sculptor to develop their thinking about commemorating Lincoln in an official way. In late 1909 Bacon and French went to Lincoln, Nebraska, to visit the site and to determine the basic layout and design of the undertaking. Both men believed that collaboration was important. Bacon regarded the sculpture of Lincoln as the centerpiece of the project and French felt that the architectural setting was critical to its success. Over the next two years the two men worked together amiably toward a common goal.

Many of their ideas were later integrated into the more complex architectural setting of the Lincoln Memorial. In one preliminary drawing for the Nebraska memorial the architectural setting that Bacon designed did not include the all-important stone wall behind the statue that is incised with Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech [Fig. 2.8]. The architect eliminated the wraparound exedra and decided on a stepped approach leading up to the statue instead [Fig. 2.9]. His decision to include Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech and the imposing approach are critical elements that were integrated into the early designs for the national Memorial.

While Bacon refined the architectural setting for the Nebraska monument, French consulted the photographs of Abraham Lincoln by Civil War photographer Matthew Brady and the life mask of Lincoln's head, originally cast by Leonard Volk in 1860 in Springfield, Illinois [Fig. 2.10]. French also bought a commercially reproduced plaster of the Volk life mask and cast it in his own studio and used it for the Nebraska statue. He later used the same mask for the seated Lincoln in the national Memorial. By early 1911, French had completed a three-foot tall clay model of a standing figure of Lincoln (at about the same time that Bacon finished his final

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specification drawings). The final statue was an over-life-size figure (270cm or 8.6 feet) of Lincoln with his jaw set and his head bowed in a serious, meditative manner [Fig. 2.11]. His hands clasped tightly together in front of him reinforce a feeling of strain, strength and resolve. Standing on a pedestal, in front of the granite tablet inscribed with the words of the Gettysburg Address behind him, it is an intimately focussed and moving statue. Of this sculpture, French wrote to a friend, Newton Mackintosh: "I do really think I have struck it rather rich this time."[27] Several years after the statue was unveiled in Lincoln, Nebraska, on September 2, 1912, French wrote that he had "purposely tried to represent Lincoln bearing the burdens and perplexities and problems of the Great War."[28]

This statement gives some insight into French's thinking about the statue of Lincoln that he created for the Lincoln Memorial a few years later. Like the Nebraska statue, the statue in the Lincoln Memorial is a solemn, grave and moving personification that captures a pensive but heroic seated Lincoln at, presumably, the critical moment of his decision to free the slaves and thereby save the Union. Lincoln's status as a hero is assured. It is massive. Carved in white Georgia marble, it is two feet thick, twenty-seven feet high including the pedestal, and weighs almost one hundred tons. [29]

The fasces (emblems of authority) carved on the front of the arms of the Roman chair in which Lincoln is seated underscore his heroic stature. But this quality is made more subtle, more poignant because of the human weariness of the man—the same quality that French strove for in the 1912 statue and that is evident in Adolph Weinman's larger-than-life bronze statue of Lincoln in a square in downtown Hodgenville, Kentucky (Lincoln's birthplace), that was dedicated by the local Ladies League for the centennial of 1908 [2.12]. French's statue, like Weinman's, is charged with a sense of heightened emotion conveyed largely by the hands gripped around the

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arms of the chair. The tension is clearly not only of a physical nature but also because of a struggle that the viewer senses in Lincoln. Shortly before the dedication of the Memorial, French wrote to Bacon: "What the statue expresses is not for the sculptor to say, but what I wanted it to express was the strength of the man and confidence in his ability to see his job through. I think, perhaps, the hands express this as much as the face."[30] In this, French was quite successful: Lincoln's hands, with their long, slender fingers, are remarkably expressive, conveying both tension and resolve.

A brief dedicatory inscription located on the wall behind the statue was written by Royal Cortissoz, another protege of the offices of McKim, Mead and White. Cortissoz was a great admirer of Lincoln and considered the chance to write an inscription for the national memorial to be "the ambition of my life."[31] He gave the inscription much consideration and finally expressed his thoughts to Bacon in a letter. He felt the inscription should be brief and easily committed to memory, should embody the idea of Lincoln's saving the Union, and should have dignity, simplicity and feeling. Cortissoz wished to emphasize Lincoln's bonds with the American people: "He saved the Union for the people. The people were forever in his mind. It is his phrase that refers to government of the people, by the people, for the people. A sense of his devotion to the people is inseparable from our love of his memory. We love him because he was one of us, lived for us, fought for us, died for us. It is that idea which I have done my best to express in the inscription, evoking it suggestively but surely. I want the every-day American who stands before that statue to look up and murmur to himself:

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IN THIS TEMPLE

AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE

FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION

THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

IS ENSHRINED FOREVER

'For whom,' he murmurs, 'For us.' 'For me'."[32]

In a more pragmatic vein, Cortissoz struck the core rationale espoused by all who had a hand in the Memorial, when he wrote to Bacon: "The memorial must make a common ground for the meeting of the North and the South. By emphasizing his saving the union you appeal to both sections. By saying nothing about slavery you avoid the rubbing of old sores." [33] Bacon wrote back to Cortissoz the very next day: "I think your inscription for the Lincoln Memorial is a masterpiece!. . . Your inscription must go on the wall over the statue."[34] But a considerable fuss ensued and President Harding at one point even proposed rewriting the inscription to read:

IN THIS TEMPLE

AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE

OF THE UNION WHICH HE SAVED

THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

IS ENSHRINED FOREVER[35]

By the end of April, Cortissoz, frustrated, wrote to Bacon again: "The change proposed [by Harding] drives at the very core of my inscription. The one thing that concerned me was to affirm the alliance between Lincoln and the people, to wake in the reader a consciousness of the deep and tender tie between them. I wanted to make the inscription calm, dignified, absolutely

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lapidary, but to also make it as spiritual as a prayer in its expression of a simple, universal emotion."[36] Finally, after more discussion, Cortissoz's inscription was incised on the wall just in time for the dedication, and just as he had originally written it.

The other two chambers, to the left and right of the central chamber, are equally severe. They contain Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and The Second Inaugural Address, each incised on stone tablets set in the south and north walls of the chambers respectively [Figs. 2.13 & 2.14]. Above the Gettysburg Address is the 60-foot-long and 12-foot-wide mural entitled *The Emancipation of a Race* [Fig. 2.15] and above the Inaugural Address *Reunion* [Fig. 2.16], of the same dimensions by Jules Vallée Guerin (1866-1946). A free-lance artist who lived in New York City, Guerin was a true Renaissance man. He was a cityscape painter, a draftsman and a travel illustrator for books and magazines including *The Century Magazine, Scribner's* and *Harper's.* He produced presentation drawings for architectural firms and worked frequently with architect Charles Follen McKim. He produced colored perspectival drawings for numerous architectural projects, including the Lincoln Memorial [Figs. 2.17 & 2.18] and received his first important commission when he was retained by McKim, Mead & White to prepare large-scale watercolor drawings to illustrate the Senate Parks Commission Plan for the improvement of Washington in 1901. In 1903 he also produced renderings for the restoration of the White House; and in 1909 made renderings for Daniel Burnham's and Edward Bennett's plans for the city of Chicago. In addition, he painted the large-scale topographical maps of the old New York Pennsylvania Railroad Station, and was, just before he received the Lincoln Memorial commission, director of color and decoration for the Panama Pacific International Exposition.[37] All of these projects led to his being the ideal candidate for the most complex urbanistic scheme of his career, the murals for the Lincoln Memorial, but when Guerin, recommended personally by his friend Henry

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Bacon, entered into a contract with the Secretary of War on October 24, 1916,[38] to execute the Lincoln murals, they were his first undertakings of such size and complexity. The Commission also contracted him to decorate the bronze ceiling beams so that they would coordinate in a harmonious way with the mural decorations.[39] Although he did not receive the commission for the murals until 1916, he was involved in the project almost from the outset, beginning in 1911 when the Lincoln Memorial Commission was empowered to select a site and design for the monument. At that time, Guérin was retained by Bacon to produce several colored perspectival drawings for the Potomac site. Guérin's conceptions emphasized the long east/west axis from the Capitol to the Potomac River, anchored by Bacon's design for an enclosed temple.

The Lincoln Memorial Commission required that Guérin submit scaled drawings of the murals for its approval. One-twelfth scale sketches were duly submitted and accepted. But before the design was finalized, photographic enlargements (solar prints), were made from the scaled drawings. The prints were transported to Washington and placed in the Memorial building itself. The purpose of this was to determine if the size and scale of the murals was appropriate to the space. Bacon and Guerin together determined that the figures in the mural should be eight-and-a-half feet tall.[40] To ensure that the murals would be visible, Guerin also decided to paint the canvasses very thickly to add dimensionality and to apply a "cutting line" around the edge of each figure to make them stand out.[41]

Guerin had a studio built on the roof of a brownstone in New York City specifically suited to accommodate the immense murals, which were 85 feet long, 32 feet wide, and 25 feet high [Fig. 2.19]. The artist then began work his work in earnest. He had both canvases stretched and had them put in place side by side. He then squared up each canvas, in the tradition of fresco painting, and set about reproducing his design. He worked on both canvasses at the same time in

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order to ensure a uniformity of color. Finally, to ensure that the murals would last indefinitely and be weatherproof, he mixed the paint with white wax and kerosene to the consistency of vaseline.[42]

Guérin had available a great civic tradition of decoration of public buildings that had been established years earlier at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, the Library of Congress, completed in 1897, with sculptures by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French and murals by Elihu Vedder, Kenyon Cox and Edwin Blashfield and the Boston Public Library (1887-1895) with murals by John Singer Sargent, Edwin Abbey and Puvis de Chavannes. Like most artists who shared his enthusiasm for the American Renaissance, Guérin's murals were intended to impart great moral lessons and to reinforce the values and ideals of the dominant culture. Although the iconography was incomprehensible to the average viewer in the 1920s he neverthelesss incorporated the aesthetic traditions of the past, fusing traditional Classical imagery with the cultural and political needs of the present and set them in a progressivist historical framework. Heroism, progress and nationalism took on a new layer of meaning in the Lincoln Memorial.

In keeping with the spirit of the Beaux-Arts tradition, Guérin thought of the murals as decorative adjuncts intended to complement the work of the architect and sculptor. He followed Bacon's overall concept of union already worked out in the Memorial, choosing forty-eight figures to be included in the murals so as to remain consistent with Bacon's analogy of the forty-eight states of the Union when the Memorial was completed. He also adhered to Bacon's specific intent of "representing in allegory Lincoln's qualities such as Charity, Patience, Intelligence, Devotion to High Ideals, and Humaneness" to emphasize the effects of the speeches.[43]

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Emancipation of a Race, located on the south wall, consists of three groups of vaguely Egyptoid, vaguely Classical, static figures, although he used live models. He arranged the rigid figures laterally across the canvas with a background of cypress trees (emblems of Eternity) in an "enchanted Grove." The central group in this panel is entitled FREEDOM AND LIBERTY. The Angel of Truth dominates the composition with outspread wings and raised arms and "is giving Freedom and Liberty to the Slave." The shackles of bondage are falling from the arms and feet. They are guarded by two sibyls." The left group is JUSTICE AND THE LAW: "The central figure in the Chair of the Law has the Sword of Justice in one hand; with the other she holds the Scroll of the Law; seated at her feet are two sibyls, interpreting the Law. The standing figures on each side are the Guardians of the Law, holding the torches of Intelligence." The right group, called IMMORTALITY consists of a central figure ". . .being crowned with the Laurel Wreath of Immortality. The standing figures are Faith, Hope, and Charity. On each side is the Vessel of Wine and the Vessel of Oil, the symbols of Everlasting Life."[44]

In keeping with its purely abstract symbolic function in the classical tradition, there are no references to the actual historical event of Emancipation. Lincoln is not present. Slaves are shown, but their identification might be interpreted in any number of ways. They are dressed in a curious combination of Greek/Roman/Egyptian garb, that seems to reflect the influence of Guérin's travels more than a clear iconographic focus. There is no reference to the Emancipation Proclamation. Although Guérin strove for a larger, more universal meaning,[45] he essentially restates emancipation as a philanthropic gesture. Kenyon Cox offered the opinion in 1913 that such a complex subject could not be represented adequately, that the act of emancipation simply could not be pictured.[46] Guérin's murals seems to confirm this opinion, yet in an undated sketch he made of two freedmen standing in the central chamber of the memorial looking up at the

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statue of Lincoln Guérin conveys an empathy that suggests he understood the larger meaning of Emancipation both for the freedmen and for the country at large that is not represented in the murals.[47]

But is Emancipation really the subject of this panel? The visual message is, at first, not clear. In the central panel an Angel of Truth (with her hair cut short and parted on the side in a style fashionable at the time) bestows freedom on a group of slaves. She is in an extremely awkward position with upraised arms and palms flattened, that is intended as a gesture of blessing, although the overall effect makes her look as if she is about to topple over. She clearly dominates this panel. Standing on a platform, she is elevated above the other figures (this position echoes the same hierarchical arrangement found in most 19th century slave/emancipator images). Her attitude of moral beneficence and physical stature imply a superiority that is further emphasized by her outstretched, snowy white wings that protectively shelter the figures of the slaves. These attributes suggest that this figure is not only a bestower of freedom but also represents the embodiment of spiritual, physical and intellectual enlightenment. Although she is a curious fusion of allegorical attributes, when this panel is read in conjunction with the left panel, the meaning becomes clear. In the left panel the law, its interpretation, and its proper dispensation, are firmly in the hands of a white guardian. It is an imagery consistent with the political and social assumptions of the day and it conforms with the nationalistic view that American elites had both a right and an obligation to be leaders of the world and to spread democracy, specifically American democracy, around the globe. And, in the right-hand panel, the central figure is crowned with the laurel wreath of Immortality, associated with victory. The fusion of these two attributes makes perfect sense: the rewarding of immortality to this figure

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ensures the uninterrupted continuation of benign guidance and control over those she is destined to lead and protect.

The decoration entitled *Reunion* also has three groups of figures arranged laterally along the canvas. The women are again dressed in flowing garments and all the men look remarkably the same (with the exception of Bacon who is the fourth figure from the right of the Angel). The central group represents UNITY. The Angel of Truth anchors the composition, occupying the central position on the canvas as she does in the Emancipation mural. She is "joining the hands of the laurel-crowned figures of the North and South."[48] The wings of the Angel of Truth are rendered in a downward, protective position sheltering allegorical figures that represent Painting, Philosophy, Music, Architecture, Chemistry, Literature and Sculpture—the foundations of civilization. Through her protective ministry we see that these arts and disciplines will continue and flourish. Behind the figure of Music is the veiled, somewhat menacing figure of the Future.

The left group is called FRATERNITY. The seated, central figure of Fraternity encircles the Man on the right and the Woman on the left, symbolizing the "developing abundance of the Earth."[49] Vessels of Wine and Oil, symbols of Everlasting Life, are on each side. The final group on the right side is called CHARITY. This is the figure standing in the center attended by handmaidens, "giving the Water of Life to the Halt and the Blind and caring for the Orphans."[50] Placed 28 feet above eye-level, they are difficult to see. Aside from their placement (they are so high up on the walls that the viewer must step back and then lean backwards in an attempt to see them) and intentionally light coloration (now in faded condition), which makes them even harder to see, they are too crowded. The stiffness of these figures, the numbing arrangement, combined with overwrought symbolism and allegory make for a dull, nearly indeciperhable visual experience.

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Although Emancipation and Reunion are treated as two separate and distinct events (the clearest evidence of this is that in the *Reunion* mural the slave figures are omitted and it is implied that the process of reconciliation and reunion is one taking place between white Northerners and Southerners),[51] the murals relate thematically, tied together by the dominating female figure present in each of these panels. She functions as an omnipotent white presence representing social and cultural authority. She further ensures the smooth and inevitable march of progress and a continuation of social classes and institutions based on tradition and precedent. Viewed together, these murals are a paen to the progress, spirit and continuation of an Anglo-Saxon civilization and reflect a central premise of the American Renaissance mural movement—that the United States was the logical inheritor and preserver of Western civilization.

Less than a year after the Lincoln Memorial opened to the public, Charles Moore, speaking at a dinner given at the Architectural League Galleries in New York City to honor "the men of 92" (the organizers of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893) provided the audience with a summary, defense and lament of the mural movement in America: "The world no longer has a set of universal beliefs. Neither Olympus, nor Gethsemane make a comprehensive appeal to the world of culture. What then are the substitutes? What language must the painter speak in delivering his message of beauty?" He mused about Guérin's murals: "Time, at once the preserver and destroyer of the works of man, must pass final judgement on these paintings."[52]

Despite the problems with the murals, these and all of the other elements of the Lincoln Memorial were meant to present a unified iconographic and symbolic whole. But this carefully wrought symmetry was skewed by Lincoln's speeches, which clashed with the Commission's stated intent to highlight union over slavery and illuminated the inherent contradictions embodied in the carefully chosen symbols of the Memorial. With unclouded clarity Lincoln's

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Gettysburg Speech states the premise upon which the nation was founded, and the Second Inaugural Address explicitly posits slavery as the cause of the War (although elimination of slavery eventually became the purpose of the Civil War, it was not during the war). Bacon regarded the speeches as critical elements of the Memorial: "I believe these two great speeches by Lincoln will always have a far greater meaning. . .than a portrayal of periods or events by means of decoration."[53] (He did briefly entertain other inscriptions, including the funeral oration delivered by Pericles in memory of the Athenians slain in the first year of the Peloponesian war).[54]

The blood on the battlefield of Gettysburg was barely dry when Lincoln delivered his speech on November 19, 1863. The occasion was the dedication of the Civil War cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The immediate task of the speech was to honor the memory of the dead. This he did. But the real thrust of the speech, laid out in his opening sentence, was both a reminder and a challenge to his listeners: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new Nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." In this one careful sentence Lincoln stated the fundamental rationale for the existence of America and in one word—"proposition"—he succinctly reminded his listeners that this "proposition" was yet to be realized. He continued: "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that Nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." The central concept of Lincoln's political philosophy—the continuation and progressive development of democracy (the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery were both means to this larger end)—was then elaborated upon: "It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—

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that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." He is careful to lay the fate of democracy—a beleaguered concept and form of government with only a handful of democracies in 1863—with the people. He concluded the speech with a concept that is fundamental to the ideology of democracy and that was used as the battle cry of many thousands of Americans in the protests and demonstrations that were later held at the Memorial: "that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."[55]

In his Second Inaugural Address, on the north wall, Lincoln stated with characteristic restraint a simple fact: "One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding." Lincoln continued with harsh logic that must have been palatable at the time only because it was couched in religious phraseology: "It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged." Lincoln then nearly threatened his listeners with the wrath of God for the evil of slavery and made clear the culpability of both the North and the South: "The Almighty has his own purposes. . . .Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs

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be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! . . . If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to him?" Lincoln at this point removed himself from the role of decision-maker and put the outcome of the war squarely in the lap of providence: "Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God Wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgements of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.'"[56]

That this straight-forward condemnation of slavery appears in the Lincoln Memorial at all represents a paradox in the American psyche: a pride in democracy that co-existed with institutionalized slavery, and later, with policies designed, often from the top down, to ensure its perpetuation. Although the Government body that oversaw the erection of the Lincoln Memorial politicized Lincoln's ideal of Union, refused to acknowledge slavery (the above noted exception notwithstanding), glorified Lincoln's role in this history, and presented freedom as an inevitable outcome of democracy, Lincoln did not. As his words clearly demonstrate, he stands at the ideological center of the rhetoric and protests that have swirled around the Memorial since its inception. It is Lincoln's words that are the most potent symbolic element of the Memorial. His words hover there— charged, threatening and comforting as moral counterpoints to all of the Memorial's other elements.

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Early Criticism of the Lincoln Memorial

Although common ground was sought between the North and the South, it was not to be found. Most especially not in the Memorial that, it was hoped, would embody the notion of an undivided Union. While there was mostly unanimity among the politicians, Government officials, artists and architects directly involved with the project, the portion of the public that was engaged enough to offer opinions about the Memorial expressed doubts all along the way. The style of the Memorial was questioned, along with its site, the amount of money earmarked for construction, its purpose, even its meaning. These doubts were raised by Southerners and Northerners, white and black Americans, and by artists, architects, historians, scholars and journalists of every political orientation and school of thought.

Some of the criticism was motivated by self-interest. Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor who fashioned the monumental Presidents' faces on Mount Rushmore, and who had been agitating for the Lincoln Memorial commission himself, sarcastically criticized Bacon's design in 1912, calling it a "Greek temple with Lincoln on the doormat."[57] He then suggested the following treatment for the interior walls to Illinois Senator Shelby Cullom:

"That first wall should carry upon its entire length, in heroic scale and in high relief, such incidents as would simply and comprehensively explain the agitation for state rights—the Lincoln-Douglas debates and pre-war events. The central wall should carry a frieze, strangely and wonderfully composed, illustrating the nature of that modern human conflict, complete in its great story. It should include the great men Lincoln called to his aid and who served him in the field. The third wall should carry a frieze representing reunion—peace, Grant and Lee and the

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great actors and masses of men together reuniting in peace. In the center of it all, in the great hall, I would place Lincoln alone, deep in thought, absorbed, conscious of all that was passing about him but sitting alone."[58] Bacon immediately wrote to Cullom, complaining bitterly. He insisted that the Lincoln Memorial was "unlike any of these temples (in Greece)."[59] Nor did he agree with Borglum's suggestions for the interior: "I do not, for instance, think that an illustration of his debates with Douglas or incidents of the Civil War will be as fitting subjects as a portrayal of great qualities rendered by means of allegory. Charity, Patience, Patriotism, Devotion to High Ideals and Humaneness are subjects far more beautiful and powerful in their meaning than guns or battle scenes." [60] Both men agreed, though, on how Lincoln should be represented and this gives some indication of the strength of the sentiment that surrounded the martyred President.

Other, less self-serving, criticism questioned the underlying purpose of the monument. The *Washington Post* queried with probing insight "for whom and for what purpose such a memorial is to be erected?"[61] The paper complained that the Lincoln Memorial Commission did not address the question, though this was basic to the success of the monument.

One vociferous editorial objected to the style of architecture both because of what such a style represented symbolically and because it was out of step with the twentieth-century United States—an observation that resonates throughout much of the criticism. The complaint appeared in the editorial column of *The Independent* in February, 1913: "He [Lincoln] who looked with a genial eye on all the follies and ineptitudes of men, how he would have enjoyed the joke on himself which Congress has perpetrated. . .Why should the Great Liberator be commemorated by an edifice characteristic of the people whose wisest men upheld the institution of slavery as natural, indispensable and eternal? The first American, as he has been called standing for the

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new type of manhood which the union of the streams of Puritan and Cavalier may produce upon this new continent, surely he is deserving of a form of architecture more American than that of the Parthenon and more modern than 2,300 years ago?"[62]

The Independent also reprinted a protest lodged by the Illinois chapter of the American Institute of Architecture, which also objected to the Memorial because of its lack of historicity and its inability to capture the uniquely American qualities of Lincoln and the war—a reflection of the intensity and pervasiveness of Americanism shared by the general public and art professionals at the time.[63]

In the Southern states critics were largely antagonistic or indifferent toward the Memorial. Much of the commentary came from black Americans who frequently urged a more moral conception of the Memorial or a more practical monument. Some thought the monument should not be built at all, arguing that two million dollars could be better spent, and in ways more in keeping with Lincoln's ideals. One suggestion included applying the money for the Memorial toward desperately needed black schools: "It was not Lincoln's idea to turn the slaves free and leave them no means of support or ways to educate themselves...Our country is already so full of marble statues, which benefit not the living—and certainly the dead don't appreciate them." [64] William H. Davis, stenographer of the National Negro Urban League, whose parents were ex-slaves, suggested that the Memorial take the form of a temple of Justice that would house the Supreme Court of the United States.[65]

Since much of the public simply was not convinced that the Memorial was a compelling representative of the ideals of Lincoln or of the country, the question remains: Why did so many Americans over the years come to believe that the Memorial was the stellar symbol of national

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unity and American democratic ideals? This perception began with a conscious reshaping of a twentieth-century image of Lincoln that took on new life during the presidential election of 1920.

Reshaping the Lincoln Symbol: Racial Politics, Harding and the Lincoln Memorial

Sectional antagonism was virulently alive throughout the early decades of the twentieth century and the Presidential election of 1920 was driven by racial politics as was Warren G. Harding's campaign. In short, it appeared to both parties that the black American vote might decide the election. The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, granting women the right to vote, created a new group of voters as did the migration of blacks to northern urban centers that created another concentration of new voters.[66] This increased electorate presented a grand opportunity for the Republican Party—the party of Lincoln—and it was determined to retain and attract the increased black American electorate. Even Democratic organizations, historically hostile to the black vote, paid more attention to their voting power, especially in the North, than ever before.[67]

The invocation of Abraham Lincoln's name and ideals dominated the Republican campaign. Harding was frequently likened to Lincoln. Entertainer Al Jolson stumped the nation for Harding, singing songs that compared the candidate to Lincoln Seizing the moment, Harding often likened himself to Lincoln as well. The Republican ballot was identified with Lincoln, and with the rights and freedom of black Americans. Lincoln's speeches and phrases were frequently borrowed by politicians of both parties to bolster arguments and demonstrate concern and compassion for all Americans.

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Black organizations also employed and exploited the symbolic usefulness of Lincoln. They made demands of the candidates by creating a constant pressure front, politicizing rights issues that heretofore had been marginalized, and they frequently did so by justifying their demands based on the historical associations of the Party of Lincoln. The moderate NAACP was a constant presence and churned out a steady stream of written and visual material that often relied on the symbolic connotations of Lincoln, as did the more militant Equal Rights League and The Liberal Party, headquartered in New York City, that called for an independent political movement.[68]

These pressures forced Harding to develop a stand on rights for black Americans and to determine a strategy for dealing with their demands. Thus, the Republican Party mounted a vigorous and costly publicity program in which Lincoln played a key symbolic role. To this end, the National Republican Committee spent over $600,000 in 1920. It sponsored Negro Republican Clubs throughout the North that were organized and run by Henry Lincoln Johnson, Georgia member of the Republican National Committee. Its aim: to convince other blacks to vote Republican. Lethia C. Fleming, wife of Cleveland city councilman Thomas W. Fleming and chairwoman of the Colored Women's Bureau of the Republican National Committee, appealed directly to black women voters.[69] Each of these organizations used campaign pamphlets produced by the Republican National Committee specifically aimed at the black voter in which Harding was presented as the successor to Abraham Lincoln.[70]

Sometimes the tactics were more direct. *The New York Times* reported that migrants from the South, many of whom were illiterate, were "being coddled by the Republicans, who have had them and their women folk herded to the registration places to qualify for the right to vote, because without exception they can be depended upon to vote the 'straight' Republican ticket."[71]

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They often employed the image of Abraham Lincoln in the voting area and printed flyers urging the voter to "Vote the straight ticket under Abe Lincoln's Picture" [Fig. 2.20].

There was bribery: "Every four years the disgrace of the buying up of certain delegates for the Republican convention is repeated in the Southern South. . . Republican candidates begin their campaign by sending men into the South to buy the support of these men. . .Not only is the party and its candidates willing and eager to buy up this support, but they have repeatedly refused to support or countenance to the better class of colored leaders who seek to oust these thieves."[72]

The Republican Party sponsored Colored Voters Days. One such event was staged in Marion, Ohio (Harding's hometown), on September 10. This bit of "front porch politicking"[73] was, of necessity, carefully controlled. Johnson, the committee representative from Georgia, wanted things to go smoothly for Harding. Only carefully selected politically moderate blacks were chosen to form delegations to meet with Harding on that day. The "wild-eyed" Monroe Trotter, co-founder of the Boston *Guardian*, was not invited. As Johnson said: "...we do not want to be bothered with any more delegations coming up and asking how a man stands about things."[74] Harding's central Ohio hometown was segregated and this posed a practical problem. Blacks who went there had no place to eat and no place to sleep. To get around this, organizers carefully arranged through local officials, including the Marion chief of police, to have all of these delegations transported to the local A.M.E Church in Marion where dinner and supper would be prepared for them.[75] For a day, Marion was papered with leaflets, advertisements, and billboards using Lincoln's image to announce the days events, directions to the event, and to tout Harding as the next Lincoln.

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The Republicans forwarded more black candidates for political office than ever before.[76] But while they appointed five blacks to the platform committee it adopted only one formal platform plank addressing the rights of black Americans, a plank that was considered politically safe and was adopted by the Democrats as well: "We urge Congress to consider the most effective means to end lynching in this country, which continues to be a blot on our American citizenship."[77]

Although Harding was committed to a "lily white" Republican Party, he went out of his way to secure the black vote, and while campaigning he made several speeches that appealed directly to this electorate. His July 22nd acceptance speech was especially forceful: "No majority shall abridge the rights of a minority . . .I believe the Negro citizens of America should be guaranteed the enjoyment of all their rights, that they have earned their full measure of citizenship bestowed, that their sacrifices in blood on the battlefields of the republic have entitled them to all of freedom and opportunity, all of sympathy and aid that the American spirit of fairness and justice demands."[78] This acceptance speech was well received by the black community and Henry Lincoln Johnson even likened it to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.[79]

Harding also made a conscious decision to align himself with the moderate and conservative black leaders, and although he had never heard of Dr. Robert Moton, nor even of Tuskegee Institute,[80] where Dr. Moton served as president from 1915-1930, he agreed to an introductory meeting. This meeting was set up at the urging of Dr. Moton, who was accompanied by Dr. Will Alexander of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation; John J. Eagan, president of the American Cast Iron Pipe company and chairman of the Interracial Commission; the Reverend James Ashby Jones, who was custodian of the Robert E. Lee papers after Lee's death;

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and Dr. Thomas J. Woofter from the staff of Commission on Interracial Cooperation. Harding, unprepared and unaware of who these men were or why they asked for an audience with him, mistakenly presumed that they were politicians seeking government positions. Acutely uncomfortable with an interracial delegation, he embarrassed them with his rambling discussion of politics interspersed with profanities. He never gave the group an opportunity to broach the subject for which they had come. At the conclusion of the meeting Dr. Moton commented to his associates: "I'm afraid we'll have to see the President-elect again sometime. We have completely failed."[81] Dr. Woofter added, "If you'd eliminate damn from that fellow's vocabulary he couldn't do anything but stutter."[82] Although the meeting was a failure, it was the beginning of an association between Harding and the conservative civil rights leaders, most especially with Dr. Moton, and it eventually led to Dr. Moton being chosen as the representative of the black community at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial.

As the presidential campaign wound down and prospects for a Democratic victory looked bleak, the Democrats alleged that Harding himself had African ancestors and that the Republican Party challenged white supremacy.[83] Playing the race card in a close campaign was nothing new in American politics; Harding had contended with such an allegation throughout his life and in every political campaign that he had entered.[84] But it was James Middleton Cox, the Democratic candidate, who observed quite correctly that the Republicans, too, played their own racial game, and he used Lincoln's words to make his point:

> An attempt has been made by our opponents to distract from the issue by setting up racial groups each with a selfish purpose. To each of these groups something has been promised. Nor has there been any consideration about the conflict in promises that have been made. Promises have been made to the Afro-American Party which I do not believe the promisers have any intention of carrying out. There are some classes of social equality which cannot be, to quote the words of the immortal Lincoln, 'We do not want the Negroes to be slaves, but that does not mean that we want Negro women

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> for our wives.' I know no better way to express the wiles in the attempt to carry class against class in America.[85]

Cox's statement proved to be prophetic. Harding became president with almost every black vote going to him. . . and he did not keep his promises. A few months after taking the oath of office, he, according to one source, knelt on the floor of the oval office and took another kind of oath: that of the Ku Klux Klan.[86] Unaware of this event, black Americans were sure that this victory meant a repudiation of "Wilsonism and Southern domination in national affairs,"[87] and they expected "a greater recognition in a political way than has been granted them since Reconstruction."[88] They were to be sorely disappointed. After a year in office, Harding appointed just three blacks to posts of any consequence, civil service jobs were more fully segregated and Washington's public recreational facilities more rigidly segregated than during the Wilson's tenure.[89] Even so, positive comparisons between Lincoln and Harding persisted.

Shortly after Harding took office the *New York Times* observed that "For some time it has been well understood in inner Republican circles that President Harding was entirely sympathetic with an effort to reorganize the party in the South so as to eliminate the objection of so many white people that it encouraged the Negro to have hopes of social equality and to believe that he was a strong group factor in American politics."[90] To that end, less than a year after Harding entered office, white leaders had outmaneuvered Henry Lincoln Johnson, preventing him from playing any part in distributing patronage under the Harding Administration by exercising the old Theodore Roosevelt plan of appointing a political referee (white) to dictate appointments. The Republican National Executive Committee then traveled to several Southern states to discuss with Republican State leaders questions of future Southern representation in Republican national conventions and Southern patronage.[91] Soon after, the national committee acknowledged that a lily-white Republican organization in the South would be effected by

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"the adoption of a rule of the Republican National Committee to the effect that no delegate will be received in any national convention who is not himself a qualified voter and who has not actually voted in his home state; and, further, that no delegate will be received in whose selection, by primary or convention, any person has taken part who is not a qualified voter of the state, or who has not actually voted in an election under the laws of his state." [92] This policy, in effect, validated the laws which disenfranchised most blacks and many poor whites, who were unable to pay so-called poll taxes. By June the Republican National Committee called a meeting in Washington, to openly propose this change in the Southern delegate representation, as by then it was common knowledge that its purpose was to eliminate the black voter. In January 1921 William Howard Taft, by now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, publicly offered advice in a newspaper editorial to Harding that reflected the further remove of the Republican Party from the black voter. He asserted that the best hope of building up the Republican party in the South was still dependent on being "lily-white" and that Harding should not give "party plums" to blacks in the South. He further suggested that they be recognized officially only in Washington or the North.[93]

Ultimately, it was hoped that this plan would dissolve the historic Democratic and Republican parties and their sectional association and would recast them as "national" parties. This was a change that the black newspaper *New York Call* bitterly described as ". . .two brokerage firms doing business for the capitalist class in general regardless of the geographical location any section of that class would represent. With the consummation of this treaty between the two sections the last remnant of the old traditions of Lincoln will go into the garbage can."[94]

Harding was more than willing to rid the Republican Party of the black voter, since he wanted to strengthen the party in the Democratic-solid South but he could not quite reconcile

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giving up the black vote. Further motivated by the fact that two in five voters in the South in the election of 1920 had cast their votes for him, Harding tried to have his cake and eat it too. He had been invited by the business community of Birmingham to speak on October 26, 1921, at the semicentennial celebration of the founding of the city. Ten thousand blacks confined to a fenced off section of Capitol Park and 20,000 whites assembled at Woodrow Wilson Park in Birmingham for the event. In his speech, Harding proposed political equality but the maintenance of social inequality. He proposed the latter to placate the white South, making it possible for them to permit political equality between the races (and for him to retain the black vote which helped him win the election) and yet still maintain the status quo of social and racial inferiority. In Harding's opening statement he asked that blacks be allowed to vote when "fit," and that equal economic and educational opportunity be available to all. He then announced as national policy that "Men of both races may stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality. Indeed, it would be helpful to have the word 'equality' eliminated from this consideration; to have it accepted on both sides that this is not a question of social equality, but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal and inescapable difference." [95]

W.E.B. Du Bois, editor of *The Crisis*, was appalled at such a suggestion, finding it "so utterly inadmissable in the twentieth century, in a Republic of free citizens and in an age of Humanity that one stands aghast at the motives and the reason for the pronouncement."[96] Yet the speech was again compared to speeches by Lincoln and has been variously described by historians as "the most important presidential utterance on the race question since Reconstruction days," [97] "the first time since the Civil War that an American President had been bold enough to mention the subject [civil rights for blacks] below the Mason-Dixon line," [98] "Harding's most extensive public statement about the race problem in the United States," [99] and "the most notable

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and courageous expression on the race question made by any President of the United States since Lincoln."[100]

The speech was widely covered by newspapers across the nation, revealing a mixed reaction that while it broke down along geographic, political and racial lines, nonetheless confirmed that a broad spectrum of the country embraced Harding's views. *The Crisis* reprinted much of the commentary. Southern newspapers primarily focused on the "social equality" portion of the President's speech and were overwhelmingly in support of this pronouncement. *The Louisville Times* declared that "Bravery was required for the utterance that 'men of both races may well stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality.'" *The Birmingham News* stated: "The South will have no quarrel with President Harding upon his address." The Kingston, N.C. *Free Press* concurred, saying that his views were "entertained by the best thought in the South." The *Raleigh News and Observer* expressed an alarming slant on the President's words: "Mr. Harding has not contributed a single constructive thought to the solution of the race problem, but there is encouragement in this statement that the people of other sections of the country are coming around to the Southern view of the matter." Mississippi Senator Harrison authorized this remark in *The New York Tribune*: "The President's speech was unfortunate, but to have been made in the heart of the South, where in many States the Negro population predominates, was unfortunate in the extreme. Of course, every rational being desires to see the Negro protected in his life, liberty and property. I believe in giving him every right under the law to which he is entitled, but to encourage the Negro, who in some states, as in my own, exceeds the white population, to strive through every political avenue to be placed upon equality with the whites, is a blow to the white civilization of this country." Senator Watson, of Georgia, in a statement appearing in the *New York Tribune* also thought it was unfortunate that

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the President made the Birmingham speech and likened the "Negro problem" to the Japanese question which is "vexing the Pacific."

Northern white opinion was divided. The *Hartford Times* opined that blacks and whites felt exactly the same about social equality: "Social equality of Negroes and whites is no more likely to be recognized in the North than it is in the South. There are differences among races that are 'fundamental, eternal and inescapable,' as the president said. We doubt if the intelligent Negro has any desire to mingle as a social equal with the whites; he undoubtedly prefers to be in the upper stratum of his own race." [101] The *New Republic*, however, offered the opposite opinion: "You can't draw a sharp line between politics and social life. That one reference to social equality fell like a lash upon every thoughtful Negro and offset much of the good Mr. Harding did." [102]

The black press expressed a number of divergent opinions, but doubt, cynicism and antagonism were prevalent. *The Oklahoma City Black Dispatch* dismissed the speech as politically calculated: "Viewing President Harding's speech from the angle of the purpose for which it was intended, it was a pretty good speech." The purpose, the editor concluded, was to win over the white South.[103] The *Boston Chronicle* was more vociferous and more probing: (Harding's speech) is "an asinine attempt to help the Negro and not offend the South. What the Negro race wants is the same that the Anglo Saxon race wants—economic, political and social equality." [104] The *New York Crusade* was outraged and protested that "The President's speech supports the worst Negro-phobist element of the South."[105] Professor Kelly Miller, dean of Howard University, in an open letter denounced Harding's emphasis on racial differences as "calculated in the long run to do the Negro as great harm as the Taney dictum."[106] Marcus Garvey, President General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, praised the speech

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as did Dr. Moton, although for very different reasons. Garvey agreed with the proposition that the races should stay socially separate, but because blacks ought to stand on their own and not depend on whites for support, [107] while Dr. Moton considered the speech "the most important utterance on this question by a President since Lincoln" which contained a platform that could be supported by both whites and Negroes."[108]

Although the party of Lincoln had moved far from its traditional platform and would never return to these historic alignments, the politicization of Lincoln had been raised to an art form that would provide endless possibilities for rhetoric, symbols and images that would serve many interests. The most immediate example of this was the speeches that were delivered on the day that the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated to the American public.

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Chapter 2: Notes

1. Kohler, *The Commission of Fine Arts. . .*, p. 1.

2. Legislation that created the CFA was approved on May 17, 1910, in Public Law No. 181, 61st Congress, H.R. 19962, 40 U.SC., 104, 36, Stat. 371.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Kirk Savage suggested that the decision to concentrate exclusively on formal issues was deliberate — a way of circumventing the difficult questions of "what Lincoln stood for and how a monument should define his legacy." See "Race, Memory and Identity: The National Monuments of the Union and the Confederacy." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1990), p. 97. For accounts of the competition process see Steven McLeod Bedford, *John Russell Pope, Architect of Empire* (New York: Rizzoli International Publishers, Inc., 1998), pp.127-130 and Christopher Thomas, pp. 458-514.

5. Many scholars have suggested that beginning shortly after the close of the Civil War there was a strong, widespread impulse in American society to reestablish social order and political stability—a rational and predictable response. However, social order and political stability frequently meant reinstitution of the status quo and had the effect of actually retarding social harmony. By the first decade of the twentieth century, in art and architecture, this impulse resulted in a reaction against the individualism of Modernism and a trend toward the universality and harmony of Classicism. The grand classical buildings in Washington, D.C. are examples of this tradition. This trend also spawned reform movements and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the social and political reforms of Progressivism were often informed by the negative side of this desire for stability. The practice of sterilization to control an increasing immigrant population, is one example. For a discussion on the emphasis of social order see T.J. Jackson Lears, *Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981) and Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967; For an analysis of the origins of cultural hegemony see Peter Dobkin Hill, *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality* (New York: New York University Press, 1982). For the traditionalist viewpoint of three art critics see H. Wayne Morgan, *Keepers of Culture: The Art-Thought of Kenyon Cox, Royal Cortissoz, and Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1989). On Progressive era politics and the negative impact on women, immigrants and black Americans, see especially: Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994) and Eileen L. McDonagh, "The 'Welfare Rights State' and 'Civil Rights State': Policy, Paradox and State Building in the Progressive Era," *Studies in American Political Development* 7, 2 (Fall, 1993), pp. 225-274; Stephen J. Diner, *A Very Different Age, Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

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6. Vivien Green Fryd, *Art and Empire, The Politics of Ethnicity in the United States Capitol, 1815-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 177.

7. The Mall area is officially defined by the National Capital Planning Commission as the land bounded by Constitution Avenue on the north, Independence Avenue on the south, the Capitol on the east, and 14th Street, NW, on the west.

8. Dr. George J. Snyder, an in-house study of the history of the development of the National Parks System for the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region. In the office of Gary Scott, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

9. Kohler, Commission of Fine Arts. . ., p. 1.

10. Concklin, p. 23.

11. Various other locations were suggested, the most important of which were Meridian Hill, on the axis of Sixteenth Street and Fort Stevens, five miles north of the city of Washington, D.C.; a memorial bridge connecting Potomac Park with Arlington (this was built but as an addition to the Memorial); and a road from Washington to Gettysburg. While each site recommended had to be reviewed by the CFA, only the Potomac Park site was seriously considered.

12. Concklin, p. 41.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

14. For Mumford's views see his, *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America 1865-1895*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1931), esp. pp. 113-158. For the most complete biography on the life and career of Henry Bacon, see Christopher Alexander Thomas, "The Lincoln Memorial and its Architect, Henry Bacon (1866-1924)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1990).

15. Henry Bacon, memo, n.d., Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Libray, Wesleyan University.

16. Kirk Savage has suggested that commemoration and sectional reconciliation were social processes of Civil War monument building, and that they eventually converged "upon a shared, if disguised, racial politics." See Savage, *Race, Memory and Identity. . .*, p. 17.

17. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 41.

18. Quoted in Thomas, *Bacon and the Lincoln Memorial. . .*, p. 482.

19. For a full description of the memorial see Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, 1913.

20. Concklin, p. 41.

21. Architect's report of 6/28/12, reprinted in L.M.C. Report, 1912, App. G.

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22. Letter from Henry Kirke Bush Brown to the L.M.C., dated March 18, 1914. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

23. Henry Bacon to Franklin W. Hooper, May 23, 1913. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. Daniel Chester French to William Howard Taft, January 15, 1914, French Family Papers (Box 22), Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

27. Daniel Chester French to Newton Mackintosh, January 3, 1911, Box 1, French Family Papers.

28. Daniel Chester French to Robert Treat Paine, April 12, 1929, Box 14, French Family Papers.

29. Michael Richman, *Daniel Chester French, an American Sculptor* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1976).

30. French to Bacon, May 12, 1922. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

31. Cortissoz to Bacon, April 6, 1919, Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. Bacon to Cortissoz, April 7, 1919, Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

35. Taft to Bacon, April 25, 1919, Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

36. Cortissoz to Bacon, April 28, 1922, Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

37. Biographical sources on Guérin include *Biographical Sketches of American Artists* (Lansing, Michigan, Michigan State Library, 1924), p. 137; Mantle Fielding, *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers*, rev. ed., (New York: Carr, 1965); *The New York Times*, June 15, 1946, p. 21; *A.I.A. Journal*, v. 6, September 1, 1946, p. 140; *Architectural Forum*, September 1946, p. 148; *Time Magazine* 47, June 24, 1946, p. 79; for the most current and comprehensive summary of Guérin's life and work see Mark A. Hewitt, *Jules Guérin: Master Delineator.* Exhibition catalogue organized for The School of Architecture, Rice University, October 10-December 4, 1983, Ferish Gallery, Rice University, Houston, Texas, 1983.

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38. Records of the Lincoln Memorial Commission, Record Group 42 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

39. Bacon to Col. William W. Harts, September 29, 1916, Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

40. See Jesse Lynch Williams, "The Guerin Decorations for the Lincoln Memorial: How They Were Done," *Scribners Magazine*, vol. LXIV, October 1919, p. 421.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

43. Bacon to Lincoln Memorial Commission, n.d. (May, 1912?), Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

44. The description for both murals is from Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial. . .*, p. 45.

45. This statement was attributed to Lincoln by the Washington correspondent of *The Tribune*, reprinted in *The New York Times*, December 31, 1862. See LaWanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p. 13 and p. 188, footnote 18; For an expression of the universalist intent of mural painting see "Mural Painting—An Art for the People and a Record of the Nation's Development," *The Craftsman*, 10, April, 1906, pp. 54-56.

46. Kenyon Cox, *The Classic Point of View* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980), pp. 66-67.

47. The drawing is in the Henry Bacon Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

48. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial. . .*, p. 46.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. Kirk Savage observed that black Americans were excluded from this healing and unification process. See Savage, "Race, Memory and Identity. . .", p. 32.

52. Speech presented by Charles Moore to the AIA members at the Architectural League Galleries, undated, 1923. Charles Moore Papers, Archives of American Art. After the Lincoln Memorial commission Guerin received several other commissions for murals including The Union Trust Building in Cleveland (1924),The Cleveland Terminal Building (1926-1931), and the Merchandise Mart and Lyric Opera Buildings in Chicago (1929). However, mural painting by the 1920s was an anachronism and Guerin never achieved recognition as a serious painter of the caliber of John Singer Sargent or Kenyon Cox.

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53. Bacon to Sen. Cullom, June 1, 1912. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

54. The oration, from the second book of Thucylides, was suggested by Henry C. Maine, Rochester, N.Y.: "For illustrious men, the whole earth is the sepulchre; and not only does the inscription upon columns in their own land point it out, but in that also which is not their own there dwells with every one an unwritten memorial of the heart, rather than on a material monument." Maine to Bacon, February 18, 1913, The Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

55. For the complete text of the address and drafts, see Basler, pp. 734-737.

56. Delivered March 4, 1865. For the complete text, see Basler, pp. 792-793.

57. Borglum to Sen. Cullom, May 26, 1912. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University. For a compilation of much of the criticism of the Memorial written immediately after its completion see Christopher Thomas, *Lincoln Memorial*, pp. 684-687 and the Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Bacon to Cullom, June 1, 1912. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

60. *Ibid.*

61. Editorial, June, 1912. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

62. See "How Lincoln Would Have Laughed," editorial in *The Independent, A Weekly Newsmagazine*, Vol. LXXIV, February 6, 1913. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

63. *The Independent* reprinted the AIA's protest in full. See vol. LXXIV, February 6, 1913. Henry Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

64. Thomas Jefferson to Lincoln Memorial Commission, March 31, 1912. Entry 362, Vol. 3, Records of the Lincoln Memorial Commission, Record Group 42, NARA, Washington, D.C.

65. William H. Davis to the Lincoln Memorial Commission, no date. Record Group 42, entry 362, Vol. 1, 38, NARA, Washington, D.C.

66. Potential black American votes in the North doubled from 1917-1920. See Randolph C. Downes, *the Rise of Warren Gemaliel Harding* (Ohio Sate University Press, 1970), p. 535.

67. *The Nation*, June 5, 1920, p. 758.

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68. NAACP Papers, Part II, Series B, Special Subject File, 1912-1939, Reel 19 (New York: Schomburg Archives).

69. Downes, p. 539.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 540.

71. *The New York Times,* October 22, 1920, p. 2

72. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Republicans and the Black Voter," *Nation,* Vol. 110, (June 5, 1920), p. 758.

73. Downes, p. 539.

74. Henry Lincoln Johnson to Daugherty, August 9, 1920, Harding Papers, Box 618, Folder 4516-1, No. 282967.

75. Howard Mannington to H.L. Johnson, September 2, 1920, Box 590, Folder 4421-1, No. 209093; and H. Mannington to D.R. Crissinger, September 8, 1920, Box 590, Golder 4421-1, No. 269-91. Harding Papers, Ohio Historical Society. Howard Mannington was on Harding's staff in Marion, Ohio, and D.R. Crissinger was the master of ceremonies for "Colored Voters Day."

76. NAACP Papers, Part II, Series B, Special Subject Files, 1912-1939, Reel 19 (Schomburg Archives).

77. Ralph M. Tyler to Harding, June 17, 1920, Box 606, Folder 4472-1, No. 277462. Harding Papers.

78. Reprinted in Richard G. Frederick, *Warren G. Harding, A Bibliography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992).

79. H.L. Johnson to Rev. J.G. Robinson, August 31, 1920, Harding Papers, Box 618, Folder 4516-1, No. 282966.

80. Richard B. Sherman, "The Harding Administration and the Negro: An Opportunity Lost," *The Journal of Negro History,* Vol. LXIX, July 1964, p. 156.

81. Interview 7, "Reminiscence," with Dr. Will W. Alexander, conducted by Dean Albertson on August 7, 1952 at New Hope Farm, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, p. 304. At Columbia University Oral History Research Center, Transcript of Will Winton Alexander.

82. Sherman, "The Harding Administration. . .," *Journal of Negro History,* July 1964, p. 156.

83. See Downes, *Rise of Harding,* p. 550.

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84. Harding and his family had been plagued for generations by rumors that his heritage included black American blood. These rumors created havoc in Harding's family, which they vehemently denied (they are still sensitive about the point today). According to some scholars, the rumors created a psychological dilemma in Harding's own psyche. For two accounts of these rumors, see Francis Russell, *The Shadow of Blooming Grove: Warren G. Harding and His Times* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1968), esp. chapter II; and Downes, *Rise of Harding*, pp. 553-558.

85. *The New York Times*, October 27, 1920.

86. Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 165.

87. Correspondence from Harry Davis to the Acting Secretary of the NAACP, NAACP Papers, Part II, Series B, Special Subject Files, 1912-1939, Reel 19 (Schomburg Archives).

88. *Ibid.*

89. See Sherman, "The Harding Administration and the Negro. . ." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. XLIX, July 1964, No. 3, pp. 151-168.

90. *The New York Times*, October 27, 1921, p. 11.

91. *The Georgian*, Atlanta, Georgia, March 10, 1921. n.p.

92. *New York Call*, April 11, 1921. n.p.

93. William Howard Taft, "The Negro in Politics," in *The Philadelphia Public Ledger*, January 8, 1921. n.p. Some schemes to rid the Republican Party of its dependence on the black American vote were bizarre. One such plan came from a former governor of Shreveport, Louisiana, who proposed a plan for "insuring suffrage protection, with guarantees of white supremacy, without limitations being directly specified as to race, color or sex" by barring from the electorate all people from certain geographic areas. Specifically, those ". . .coming from the south of the twentieth degree or north latitude," which, the governor stated, "is credited with none of the civilizations of the world." Any potential electorates from this geographical area would be denied suffrage because of "intellectual limitation." See the *Commercial Appeal*, Memphis, Tennessee, February 2, 1921. n.p.

94. *New York Call*, April 11, 1921. n.p.

95. For a text of the complete speech, see *The New York Times*, "Address of the President of the United Sates," October 26, 1921, p. 1 and 11.

96. *The Crisis*, Vol. 23, No. 2, December 1921, p. 54.

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97. Robert K. Murray, *The Harding Era, Warren G. Harding and His Administration* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 399.

98. Francis Russell, *The Shadow of Blooming Grave: Warren G. Harding and His Times* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 470.

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Ibid.*, p. 472

101. Quoted in *The Crisis*, Vol. 23, No. 2, December 1921, p. 127.

102. *Ibid.*, p.131.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

104. Quoted in *Current Opinion*, December 1921, p. 707.

105. Quoted in Elbert Lee Tatum, *The Changed Political Thought of the Negro, 1915-1940* (New York, 1951), p. 76.

106. *Negro Year Book*, 1921-22, p. 50.

107. *The New York Times*, October 27, 1921, p. 11.

108. Quoted in *Current Opinion*, "President Harding Discourses on the Color Line," December 1921, p. 707.

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Chapter 3

Dedication Day— Protest and Promise

Five months after the Birmingham Speech, Moton and Harding shared the same platform as they dedicated the Lincoln Memorial to the American public. This milestone in American history occurred on a "bright and beautiful" Memorial Day[1] in 1922, in the capital of a war-weary, disillusioned and frighteningly fragmented America. The dedication ceremony encapsulated one of the most ingrained and compelling characteristics of American society: a schizophrenic tension of economic, social, aesthetic and ideologic forces, driven by racial politics. The segregation of black guests attending the dedication ceremony was but one concrete reminder of such politics. More onerous were the lynching statistics. From the beginning of the year to dedication day on May 30th, thirty Americans had been lynched: two white, twenty-eight black. Five of these black Americans were burned alive, three of whom were first killed and then their bodies burned.[2] When the year ended the total would be 57.[3]

The Lincoln Memorial Commission was responsible for organizing the dedication day ceremonies. The Commission met on January 28 and during that meeting, chairman Taft, Major Douglas Weart (representing Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, who as Superintendent of Public Buildings was responsible for the day to day operations of Washington's monuments) and other commissioners chose the day, date and time the ceremony was to begin (exactly at 2:30), drew up an invitation list, and selected the speakers. The main speakers were to be Taft, who was to make an address on behalf of the Commission

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that he had presided over since its inception; and President Harding, whose speech would officially acknowledge reception of the Memorial. Ex-President Woodrow Wilson was also invited to make a brief address but declined the invitation.[4] The poet Edwin Markham was invited to read a dedication poem. The Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, Pastor Emeritus of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church of Washington, D.C., the church that Abraham Lincoln had attended while President, was invited to offer the benediction.[5]

It was not until the final meeting on April 5 that Taft was authorized by the Commission to invite Robert R. Moton to speak at the dedication ceremony as well.[6] Moton's invitation was not planned; it was offered under pressure, at the instigation of the NAACP. On March 7, Shelby Davidson, Executive Secretary of the NAACP's District of Columbia Branch, wrote to the New York Executive Secretary of the NAACP, *New York Age* columnist and educator James Weldon Johnson, that the NAACP's Executive Committee had met and urged that the members of the Lincoln Memorial Commission be advised that the organization wanted a prominent black American to represent their community at the ceremony. The Washington branch proposed W. E. B. Du Bois, a founder of the NAACP and the outspoken editor of the organization's *Crisis* magazine as their choice.[7] Johnson agreed with Davidson that a black American representative should be present at the ceremonies and promptly wrote to Taft making the request suggested by the District of Columbia Branch. Taft acknowledged Johnson's letter and promised to present it to the committee.[8]

Further details of the Dedication Day program were left to chairman Taft, the Special Resident Commissioner, John Temple Graves, and Col. Sherrill. Taft and other members of the Commission, as well as other important officials, sent to Sherrill names of those to be invited. In turn, Sherrill's office mailed more than 3,500 engraved invitations. [Fig. 3.1] At the top of the

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invitation list were men representing the full spectrum of American government: the President and his Cabinet; members of the Congress and the Diplomatic Corps; the Judiciary, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and other high officials of the Government, both civil and military. Also on the guest list were foreign dignitaries and officers of various patriotic societies, including the Grand Army of the Republic and the American Legion and Civil War veterans.[9]

As Harding's "military secretary," Colonel Sherrill was also asked to organize the seating arrangements—a careful and, as it would turn out, highly controversial, hierarchy—in conjunction with the Harding Administration and Chairman Taft. Invited guests were arranged according to their status in government. The most important guests were on the uppermost platform of the Memorial. Seated there were President Harding; Vice President Calvin Coolidge; Taft, Robert Todd Lincoln (Abraham Lincoln's only surviving son); Robert Moton; Edwin Marham; and Henry Bacon, Daniel Chester French, and Jules Guérin. These notables were joined by members of the Diplomatic Corps and the Supreme Court and members of the Lincoln Memorial Commission, including Col. John Temple Graves and Col. Sherrill. One tier below the speakers platform, on the upper terrace of the Memorial, was the platform on which 1,250 members of Congress were seated.

While the speakers and other dignitaries were being shown to their seats by a detachment of Marines, the first of many protests was taking place at the Lincoln Memorial. It was entirely spontaneous, and was a direct result of the seating arrangements. Seating accommodations were provided for all of those invited, including blacks. But there the similarities ended. Whites were seated in chairs in close proximity to the speakers. Blacks, on the other hand, were sent to a weed-filled area beyond the Reflecting Pool about a city block from the Memorial. The section

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was roped off from the white section and the seating consisted of backless benches[10] [Figs. 3.2.& 3.3].

Some prominent black Americans who had been invited and who learned beforehand of the Jim Crow arrangements, stayed away from the event in protest. Others, who upon their arrival discovered that the ceremony was segregated, left in protest before the ceremonies began. Among those who intended to stay were Mr. and Mrs. Whitfield McKinley. McKinley was Collector of Customs for the Georgetown District under President Taft. They took their seats in the segregated section. Shortly after they were seated, a marine approached them and rudely told them to move more to the center. When they hesitated, the marine swore at them. At this point, McKinley and his wife left the grounds.[11] The *Chicago Defender*, a widely circulated black American newspaper, reported that McKinley's hesitation prompted one marine to order him to "....think damned quick," and when chastised by another marine for his belligerent manner he replied, "That's the only way you can handle these damned 'niggers.'"[12]

While this treatment might have been expected of Woodrow Wilson's Southern Democratic administration, blacks expected better of Republican Harding and hoped that at least under this special circumstance, segregation of the races would be set aside. It was a bitter disappointment among many blacks to see that Harding had put into practice the racial segregation policy enunciated in his Birmingham speech. Beyond this, the racial taunts and segregated seating were especially insulting because these actions stood in such stark contrast to the implied meaning of the Memorial. Although black Americans were always divided in their assessment of Lincoln he was at the time the only national hero whose actions and words could serve as a symbolic voice for their community. Lincoln's final stand on slavery was clear and unequivocal[13] and the NAACP recognized the rationale for associating the cause of civil rights

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with the Civil War president. His symbolic role as the father of Emancipation made such a grievous insult on this particular occasion different not only in degree but also in meaning from the Jim Crow humiliations blacks were forced to accept daily under other circumstances. One outraged guest, Clyde G. Mc Duffie, wrote a trenchant protest to Sherrill that struck at the core of the slight: "Your disgusting and degrading act shows us that we colored citizens stand in need of another emancipator to free us from the petty nagging and insults of those whose eyes see only the physical significance of that wonderful temple to Lincoln, but see not the real majesty of Lincoln who had charity, love for all and malice toward none."[14] Undoubtedly, not everyone would agree with McDuffie's assessment of Lincoln's benevolence but he accurately pinpointed the reason the Memorial was more than a magnificent example of neo-classic architecture.

The day after the dedication ceremony, W.E.B. Du Bois fired off an angry letter to James Weldon Johnson describing what had occurred and he attacked those blacks who stayed despite the segregated arrangements: "Some of our people, be it said, to their credit, as soon as they saw the situation, turned and left the dedication rather than submit to the abuses offered. Many, we are sorry to say, of our reputable colored citizens accepted without a protest the indignities heaped upon them. You would be surprised if I should mention the names of some of those among this number."[15] He closed stating, "We think the National Office [of the NAACP] should take up this matter and thoroughly enter into an expose of the situation and make a fight on those responsible for, as well as those who accepted without protest, this segregation."[16] Shelby Davidson also wrote letters to James Weldon Johnson on May 31 and June 1, 1922, protesting the segregated seating.[17]

The National Office of the NAACP decided to attack this incident vigorously by giving it nationwide publicity, though Du Bois' suggestion to censure those who stayed at the ceremony

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was not pursued. [18] The Washington branch drew up a resolution of protest that was sent to the President, Chief Justice Taft, Secretary of War John Wingate Weeks, and Col. Sherrill.[19] The resolution clearly linked the importance of Lincoln to the act of Emancipation for black Americans and universal liberty for all peoples: "Unless the world and we greatly misconceive the true and lasting greatness of Abraham Lincoln, his title to the gratitude of his countrymen and the rest of mankind rests upon the act of Emancipation."[20] The resolution also historicized segregation by linking it to slavery, invoked the name of Lincoln and blasted Sherrill:

> Freedom of man is something greater and more comprehensive than mere exemption from being bought and sold. The act of buying and selling a human being is but a single attribute of the institution of slavery. The principle of segregation with all of its implications, physical, mental, moral and social when applied to a human being is far more degrading than making such beings the subject of legal traffic and transfer. It is the knowledge of this fact that renders the act of the Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds so offensive when considered in connection with the occasion he selected to perpetrate it. . . This act of segregation by the Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds is further aggravated by the fact that it was perpetrated under the administration of national affairs by the political party through which Abraham Lincoln achieved the things which made his name a world symbol of freedom and gave to that party its title of 'the party of freedom'. [21]

The NAACP resolution also included a threat to withdraw black support of the Republican Party, foreshadowing the shift in party loyalty that was to occur once the Harding Administration ended: "It would be a rude awakening and a painful disillusionment to us to realize that this party was approving and following a practice which was an incident of the institution of chattel slavery. Such a realization, in the case of self-respecting people, could result only in the severing of ties which until now have bound us to that party."[22]

The resolution closed with a call for the removal of Sherrill from his job. It was sent to Chief Justice Taft as well as to Secretary of War Weeks. Weeks responded directly to Archibald H Grimke, who was president of the District of Columbia branch of the NAACP (Taft by then

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was on his way out of the country). At first Weeks tried to place the blame elsewhere. He wrote the NAACP that "The seating arrangements at the Lincoln Memorial were handled by the Lincoln Memorial Commission and not by the War Department. It is, therefore, suggested that your protest be directed to Hon. John Temple Graves, the Special Resident Commissioner of the Lincoln Memorial Commission."[23] Weeks, in an almost immediate reversal, went on to say that since Sherrill was an officer of the Army, he was responsible for Sherrill's official actions and therefore had made a "full investigation of the case" and determined that there was no act of discrimination at the Lincoln Memorial Dedication Day ceremony.[24]

Taft later contended that the seating arrangements did not have official sanction.[25] The NAACP rejected this excuse, countering that it rang hollow and failed to ameliorate the situation.[26] Nevertheless, Sherrill was forced to reply to floods of criticism by the black community. One of the strongest criticisms came from James A. Cobb, an ex-assistant U. S. district attorney and a professor at Howard University Law School as well as a Washington D.C. lawyer, who attended the ceremony: "The arbitrary separation of citizens on the basis of race at a public celebration is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the Constitution. It cannot be justified upon any legal grounds. . .such unnecessary, mean, and inhuman spectacles, as is alleged to have been caused by you at the Lincoln Memorial Exercises, have more to do in bringing about race hatred than anything else in this country."[27] Sherrill offered a familiar rationale to Cobb:

> I regret very much to hear that the seating of a number of colored people next to each other has aroused the resentment mentioned in your letter. Colored people were by no means restricted to the section to which you refer, and I can see no reason why any colored person assigned to a seat in this section should object so strenuously to sitting next to other colored people. Objection might just as readily have been made by the newspaper people that they were all seated together in a similar section, or by the members of Congress that they were seated in a section exclusively for them.[28]

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Despite this explanation, the purpose of the seating arrangement was transparent to James Weldon Johnson who, in his capacity as a contributing editor to the *New York Age*, commented on Sherrill's mental gymnastics:

> In offering such a line of reasoning Colonel Sherrill shows himself either stupid or insincere. We are inclined to think it is due to insincerity, because the argument which he uses is the old stock argument intended to confuse colored people when they protest against segregation. Certainly, colored people do not object to sitting next to each other, but they do and have a right to object to being herded off to one side as though they were pariahs. . .What they resented was the compulsory segregation which could not carry with it anything less than a badge of imputed inferiority.[29]

Andrew F. Kilyer, another guest at the ceremony, honed in on the heart of the matter: "Congress is the highest and most honored tribunal in our governmental system. It is the source of all law and authority. The Negro is on his knees appealing for simple justice. To segregate Congress is to honor it. To segregate Negroes is to further humiliate them, to place upon them the badge of inferiority; to make it more difficult for them to win the respect and confidence of the other race groups, who are never segregated anywhere or on any occasion. Why are Negroes segregated? It is to keep them in an inferior status, to ligate them, cut them off from the body politic where they will slough off and form a color caste, a pariah class, in our civilization."[30]

Sherrill, in a memorandum to Secretary of War Weeks, protested that the controversy was invented by "colored newspapers of Washington. . .intended not only to arouse hostility and violence against myself personally, but also, in my opinion, designed to incite a riot on the part of the colored people against the administration of the parks under the Secretary of War."[31] Sherrill asked for a formal investigation into the possibility of certain papers being guilty of sedition and of criminal libel against himself.[32]

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In light of the difficulties Sherrill had been experiencing for the past several months as Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds in the Capital, which included all public parks and beaches, this protest was especially disingenuous. Just two months earlier he had been forced to back away from an attempt to impose segregation in Washington's Rock Creek Park on Easter Sunday. Visitors to the park saw the "FOR WHITE' and "FOR BLACK" signs in the park and notified the NAACP's Shelby Davidson, who then called Sherrill's office the following morning to determine who was responsible for the placards being posted in the park. The NAACP branch followed up with letters to Weeks, Sherrill and to the Executive Secretary of the White House. On the same day, Davidson received a call from Sherrill's office requesting a meeting with his committee the next morning. At the meeting, Sherrill pre-empted further criticism, informing those with Davidson[33]—Dr. A.M. Curtis, Dr. James A. Cobb, Garnet C. Wilkinson, Judge E.M. Hewlett, A.H. Grimke—that the offending signs had been removed.[34]

Not everyone objected to Sherrill's seating arrangements for the dedication. He received congratulations from the Daughters of the Confederacy[35] and from attorney Guy Weaver from Asheville, North Carolina: "Please accept hearty congratulations from a 'Tar Heel' Republican, for your action in the segregation of the Negroes in the City of Washington, on Lincoln Memorial Day, and otherwise. I know of no City where something of the sort is more needed, than in our Capital City, and you are entitled to the gratitude of all of the South."[36] One kudo came from a member of the black community. The day after the dedication, Melium J. Chisum, the publicity agent for Tuskegee Institute, writing at the behest of Moton, flattered Sherrill when he wrote: "The efficiency with which you do things is most admirable, it was a real inspiration to me to watch Maj. Weart yesterday morning as he directed getting the platform and stage seats arranged together with other details, all of which reflects very clearly the fitness with which you,

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Col. Sherrill, do things."[37] And he added: "Dr. Moton has instructed me to ask you to personally thank Maj. Weart [for extra tickets to the ceremony] and to tell both of you gentlemen, that he hopes to have the honor of greeting both of you in a general's aepulets [sic] and that it will be a great pleasure."[38]

A month later, at Sherrill's request, Chisum sent a letter to Robert S. Abbott, editor of *The Chicago Defender*. He was clearly in Sherrill's corner, but his tone was so strikingly different from that of his letter to Sherrill that it is more notable than for what he wrote to Abbott: ". . .I am going to urge upon you to give a general order that henceforth Col. C. O. Sherrell's [sic] name be not published in your paper until you personally have seen the COPY. All of this hil'er bellew about Col. Sherrell [sic] is rot. . ."[39] But as one newspaper observed, Sherrill was merely Harding's mouthpiece[40] and ultimately, Sherrill was never in danger of losing his job. Repercussions for such actions were far off in the future.

Robert Moton's Speech

The day of the Lincoln Memorial dedication was almost like an inaugural, so many important Government officials were in attendance. Chief Justice Taft presided over the ceremony, which began with the invocation offered by the Rev. Wallace Radcliffe. This was followed by the Presentation of the Colors in which General Lewis Pilcher and his command of the Grand Army of the Republic presented the country's flag to sounding bugles followed by the emblems of the Army and Navy being placed in their proper position. An unintentionally ironic Prayer of Dedication was then offered by Bishop Samuel W. Fallows: "We thank thee that the wrath of war has been stilled, that brother no longer strives against brother, and that the whole

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people have come to realize the excelling greatness of Abraham Lincoln. That once again we have one country, one flag, and one destiny."[41]

Following these preliminaries, Moton as the keynote speaker addressed the invited dignitaries and officials clustered on and near the memorial, and the "swelling tide of humble people"[42] stretching to the Washington Monument, among whom "were thousands of Negro men, women and children whose fervent interest was indubitable."[43] [Fig. 3.4] Carefully drafted, Moton's address was filled with subtleties and nuances dictated by circumstance. He had to balance himself on a verbal tightrope, as he was in the precarious position of being a spokesperson for a divided black community that was far from united in its reception of Lincoln and his role as emancipator and ambivalent about the conservative position that Moton represented. But he was more constrained by the presumption of black-American racial inferiority on the part of many whites, so he had to be careful not to offend the white community, to strike a tone that would not alienate or antagonize. Despite these impediments, his speech, so eloquently restrained, articulated a major ideological position that was to be repeated by many civil rights protesters over the years. The speech also reveals Moton as a careful reader of Lincoln's speeches—especially those carved on the walls of the Memorial. Throughout his address, Moton employed the metaphors of birth, death and spiritual rebirth[44] that Lincoln employed in the Gettysburg Address inscribed on the walls of the Memorial. This connection to Lincoln's words provides both the verbal and spiritual framework of Moton's speech.

Moton began his address by invoking freedom, one of the fundamental ideological principles of America. Freedom, from the beginning of American history, from the landing of the 'Pilgrim Fathers' through revolution and war to the present day. " has been the common bond of our united people." "Freedom," he expounded, "is the lifeblood of the Nation. Freedom is the

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heritage bequeathed to all her sons. It is the underlying philosophy of our national existence." [45] With this opening, Moton established the presumed unity of America's citizens premised on an abstract idea, thereby lifting his statement from the personal to the philosophical. He then subtly presented the country's self-imposed dilemma of its ideology of freedom: slavery. He developed a compact historical paradox by paralleling the arrival of passengers on the Mayflower in 1620 as "pioneers of freedom of thought and conscience" with those of passengers that arrived on a Dutch slave ship in Jamestown in 1619 as "pioneers of bondage"—a nuanced verbal equalization of the two groups of arrivals united by physical passage to a common country whose ideological binding agent was the same for both: freedom. But Moton observed that the passengers on the Mayflower were able to exercise this right, while those on the slave ship were denied it. "Here, then," Moton told the audience, "upon American soil within a year met the two great forces that were to shape the destiny of the Nation."[46]

Moton had now established the perimeters of his argument. He went on to assert that the Civil War was fought to free the slaves and carefully intertwined the fate of the slaves with the fate of the nation: "The claim of greatness for Abraham Lincoln lies in this, that amid doubt and distrust, against the counsel of chosen advisors, in the hour of the Nation's utter peril, he put his trust in God and spoke the word that gave freedom to a race and vindicated the honor of a Nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."[47]

The health of the nation, Moton suggested, was dependent upon its adherence to the moral implications of its founding documents. Moton employed a device often used in rhetorical arguments (and later adapted by civil rights activists as a political tool):[48] He assured the audience that "Negroes owe an obligation to justify so dear a price for our emancipation" [49] but then immediately reminded the audience of black Americans' loyalty, evidenced by their service

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in all of the country's wars. He further reminded the audience how blacks, despite their tremendous handicaps, helped build the nation—and rebuild it—after the Civil War. He offered an overview of their accomplishments: The acquisition of 22 million acres of land and 600,000 homes; the establishment and operation of business enterprises including banks and insurance companies, with a combined capital amounting to more than 150 million; the establishment of schools and churches; the reduction of illiteracy to 20 per cent; and the flowering of exceptional individuals such as Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington in the face of overwhelming odds.[50]

Moton then picked up the beginning thread of his speech by again suggesting that Lincoln's freeing of the slaves also freed the nation—another implicit linking of the fate and health of black Americans with that of the nation, an idea that was to become one of the most important elements associated with the Lincoln Memorial.[51] Moton posited, in essence, that black Americans were the new Puritans, the redeemers of the nation who would effect the salvation of the entire community.

Moton stated that America was being watched (a sensitive point because the nation's leaders were defensive about international criticism of their racial domestic policies). "The whole world turns with anxious heart and eyes toward America" to see if the "experiment" that Abraham Lincoln established—"in principle. . .that a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal can endure and prosper and serve mankind"—would succeed.[52] He elaborated on the nature of this experiment and identified its core:

> In the providence of God, there has been started on these shores the great experiment of the ages—an experiment in human relationships, where men and women of every nation, of every race and creed, are thrown together. Here we are engaged, consciously or unconsciously, in the great problems of determining how different races can not only live together in peace but cooperate in working out a higher and better civilization than has yet been

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> achieved. At the extremes, the white and black races face each other. Here in America these two races are charged under God with the responsibility of showing to the world how individuals, as well as races, may differ most widely in color and inheritance and at the same time, without humiliation or embarrassment, make themselves helpful and even indispensable to each other's progress and prosperity. This is especially true in the South, where the black man is found in greatest numbers and the two races are brought in closest contact. And there to-day are found black men and white in increasing numbers who are working together in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln to establish in fact what his death established in principle—that a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal can endure and prosper and serve mankind.[53]

After this bold extrapolation of Lincoln's famous words, Moton gently chided his listeners when he said: "And I like to think that here today, while we dedicate this symbol of our gratitude that the Nation is dedicated anew by its own determined will to fulfill to the last letter the task imposed upon it by the martyred dead, that here it firmly resolves that the humblest citizen, of whatever color or creed, shall enjoy that equal opportunity and unhampered freedom for which the immortal Lincoln gave the last full measure of his devotion."[54] Moton reassured the audience once more that black Americans were grateful for their freedom, and would remain loyal and cooperative in realizing these rights.

Moton concluded his speech by reiterating, "I somehow believe that all of us, black and white, both North and South, are going to strive on to finish the work which [Lincoln] so nobly began to make America an example for the world of equal justice and equal opportunity for all who strive and are willing to serve under the flag that makes men free"[55]—a reminder that blacks as well as whites fought and died, most recently in World War I, but also a plea that the country live up to its stated ideals and a foreshadowing of Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" oration delivered at the Memorial in 1963.

This was not, however, Moton's original speech. While it was a strong speech, especially given the many social and cultural restraints imposed on him, and while many of his major ideas

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and his majestic sense of cadence were retained, the speech had in fact been revised by Taft. The changes made by Taft reflect a larger cultural divide, as well as of a very different perception of the country's history, ideals and policies. Sharp edges were smoothed, pointed observations and demands were softened or eliminated. Some changes were minor, some were not.[56] It is useful to compare original passages with revised ones, for the changes clearly indicate the message and tone that Taft and the Commission at large sought.

Moton's original speech aggressively condemned the country's racial policies and its general orientation was more contemporaneous. It criticized the government for not taking stronger steps to stop lynching: "A government which can venture abroad to put an end to injustice and mob-violence in another country can surely find a way to put an end to these same evils within our own borders. The Negro race is not insensible of the difficulties that such a task presents; but unless we can together, North and South, East and West, black and white, find the way out of these difficulties and square ourselves with the enlightened conscience and public opinion of all mankind, we must stand convicted not only of inconsistency and hypocrisy, but of the deepest ingratitude that could stain the nation's honor."[57] Additionally, a sub-text throughout the speech was that of the hypocrisy of a nation that had not lived up to its stated ideals. Then there was the matter of slavery. In his first reference to this disgrace of the nation, Moton had included the sentence characterizing slavery as "degrading alike to body, mind and spirit."[58] This line was omitted as was the pointedly critical closing sentence of this paragraph, which read: "They who for themselves sought liberty and paid the price thereof in precious blood and priceless treasure, somehow still found it possible while defending its eternal principles for themselves, to deny that same precious boon to others."[59]

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Whenever Moton's speech focused on national policy in regard to blacks, the text changed substantially. In the original version, Moton wrote: "But be it recorded to his everlasting credit, that no failure on the part of the nation to deal fairly with [the black] as a citizen has, in the least degree, ever qualified his loyalty."[60] The revised version completely alters the intent and meaning of Motion's words, incorrectly emphasizing the uncritical and unwavering loyalty of black Americans: "But be it recorded to his everlasting credit that no failure to reap the full reward of his sacrifices has ever in the least degree qualified his loyalty or cooled his patriotic fervor."[61]

Moton stated that blacks had demonstrated that they deserved equal opportunity: "Any race that could produce a Frederick Douglass in the midst of slavery, and a Booker Washington in the aftermath of reconstruction has a just claim to the fullest opportunity of development."[62] The revised version suggests that achievements of blacks were not a result of their own abilities and initiatives but flowed from the beneficence of the nation. Thus, the "sacrifices" were justified because the nation helped the black American. The revised version recasts those sacrifices in an entirely new framework suggesting that the nation is the instrument of salvation and the agent of change: "A race that produced in the midst of slavery a Frederick Douglass and a Booker Washington in the aftermath of reconstruction has gone far to justify its emancipation. And the Nation where such achievement is possible is full worthy of such heroic sacrifice."[63]

The most assertively pointed portions of Moton's address were simply omitted. In referencing Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Moton emphasized (by underlining in the original text) that when Lincoln called for "government of the people, for the people and by the people," he meant *all* the people. [64] Moton continued: "So long as any group in our nation is denied the full protection of the law; that task is still unfinished. So long as any group within the nation is

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denied an equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that task is still unfinished. So long as any group is denied the fullest privilege of a citizen to share [in] the making and the execution of the law which shapes its destiny—so long as any group does not enjoy every right and every privilege that belongs to every American citizen without regard to race, creed or color, that task for which the immortal Lincoln gave the last full measure of devotion—that task is still unfinished. . ." [65] And again, using Lincoln's words, "This nation cannot endure half slave and half free: it will become all one thing or all the other." [66] He emphasized that point by using a repetition of Lincoln's cadence: "No more can the nation endure half privileged and half repressed; half educated and half uneducated; half protected and half unprotected; half prosperous and half in poverty; half in health and half in sickness; half content and half in discontent; yes, half free and half in bondage."[67] This passage in particular, with its repeated, stentorian cadences, prefigured civil rights speeches by the Rev. Martin Luther King, who in turn borrowed this rhetorical device from Lincoln. Moton ended his original speech with a challenge to his listeners that the nation live up to its ideals so the Memorial would not become a "symbol of hypocrisy."[68] This, too, was eliminated. What is curious is what was allowed to stand in Moton's speech. For while the speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial dedication was not as aggressive as the original, its tone was careful not pandering, cautious but not optimistic.[69]

William Howard Taft's Speech

Moton's speech was followed by a Dedication Poem, composed and read by Edwin Markham. He prefaced the poem with the following: "On this great day of dedication, I

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humbly inscribe. . .my Lincoln poem to this stupendous Lincoln Memorial, to this far shining monument of remembrance, erected in immortal marble to the honor of our deathless martyr—the consecrated statesman, the ideal American, the ever beloved friend of humanity."[70] Called "Lincoln, The Man of the People," the poem predictably joined the mythic Lincoln with the earthly Lincoln: A man of "Mystic Powers" fashioned from the "Heaven of Heroes," he "was a man to hold against the world/A man to match the mountains and the sea." Yet, "The color of the ground was in him, the red earth, the smack and tang of elemental things." The poem acknowledged Lincoln's rise "up from log cabin to the Capitol" and praised Lincoln's resolve and the strength he possessed to end slavery. And Markham used the analogy of the ax that Lincoln presumably wielded in his log cabin days with ". . .the pen that set a people free." Markham concluded his poem by likening Lincoln's death to that of a "lordly cedar" cut down in its youth, still "green with boughs," that "goes down with a great shout upon the hills, and leaves a lonesome place against the sky."[71]

The poem was followed by "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the Union's war song, played by the United States Marine Band. Chief Justice Taft then made his Presentation address [Fig. 3.5]. Taft, like Markham, reiterated the mythology of Abraham Lincoln that was firmly in place by 1922. He attributed a long list of qualities to Lincoln, ranging from "mercy" to "simplicity" to "intellectual honesty" to "supreme common sense," and even saw in Lincoln "a poetic rhythm of Psalms."[72] He repeated the well-known words of Edwin McMasters Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War, that Lincoln "now belongs to the ages." He likened Lincoln's global influence to that of a Christ-like character, noting that "the oppressed and lowly of all peoples, as liberty and free government spread, pronounce his name with awe, and cherish his assured personal sympathy as a source of hope. . ."[73]

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At this point, Taft shifted his attention from Lincoln to the Lincoln Memorial Commission and provided the audience with a condensed history of its inception and the construction of the Lincoln Memorial, as well as the general progress of American art. This was an important point to Taft and the Commission. The lowly status of American art—at that time considered inferior to art produced in Europe—was a sensitive issue, as it was reflective of both national identity and cultural sophistication. The Lincoln Memorial and its sculpture and art, in addition to honoring the memory of Lincoln, was also meant to serve as an example of America's growth into a world power and its evolution from a rough frontier society into a "new Athens."[74] Taft recounted this development by citing the country's expositions, particularly the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, which "marked the steps in that progress" by bringing together the leading figures of American art, among them Daniel H. Burnham, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Augustus Saint Gaudens, and Francis D. Millet (many of whom sat on the Fine Arts Commission). He also recalled the significance of the establishment of the American Academy of Rome in 1894 by these same men, allowing American students to study Greek and Roman art: ". . .the greatest of antiquity, which is at Rome," and where "the noble buildings are a forest, the animals of bronze, a herd; the statues, a population in marble."[75]

He told the audience that the Lincoln Memorial was a successful culmination of the McMillan Plan conceived in 1901, and acknowledged those members of both commissions who had carried the plan forward. Taft ended his speech by reiterating the reconciliation between the North and South, and concluded with unintentional irony, since at that very moment, black Americans were boycotting the Memorial ceremonies in protest of institutionalized segregation, that "Here is a shrine at which all can worship. Here an altar upon which the supreme sacrifice was made in the cause of Liberty."[76]

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President Harding's Speech

President Harding concluded the day's ceremonies. The tone, content and purpose of Harding's speech was in stark contrast to that of Moton's. He opened with a strong counter argument to Moton's. He immediately established his ideological alignment with the position of Lincoln as Savior of the Republic versus Lincoln the Emancipator of American slaves—two positions hotly contested from the moment Lincoln was assassinated.[77] Throughout the speech Harding, like Taft, repeated the canon of myths associated with Lincoln, the cause of the war and the intent of the South: Lincoln as "the savior of the Republic"; the "master martyr"; "the superman"; the "apostle of humanity."[78]

Harding also, in a departure from his prepared address, pressed the aura of unity between the North and the South: "May I digress but for a moment? How it would have rejoiced the great heart of this sympathetic and inspired American if he could but have lived to see the picture before me of the veterans of the blue flanking the Flag on the one side, and the veterans in gray flanking it on the other. Yet each with common pride and all of them with common confidence in the future of this reunited republic."[79] At which point, according to the reporter who recorded these comments, the Union and Confederate veterans attending the ceremony raised their voices in unanimous cheer.[80]

Harding also qualified the significance of Emancipation, stating that it was not "the supreme chapter in history" but "a means to an end," which had "maintained union and nationality."[81] However, when he attempted to reconcile Lincoln's decision to emancipate four and a half million people from two hundred years of institutionalized enslavement, with the need to preserve the Union, his rhetoric became politic. In the same paragraph in which he praised the

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Emancipation Act as an "achievement that would have exalted Lincoln throughout all the ages," he qualified that achievement by asserting that, even though Lincoln hated slavery, he recognized it as an "established order" and would have left it alone, leaving eventual abolition to the "developing conscience of the American people."[82]

Curiously, Harding based the heart of his speech on Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, rather than the Second, which is carved on the walls of the Memorial, and which forcefully places the Union on the side of freedom and the abolishment of slavery. In quoting these words from the First Inaugural Address—"I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. . .I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so"[83] — Harding skewed the meaning of the words inscribed on the walls of the Memorial. And while he employed Lincoln's analogies to allude to the most pressing domestic crisis that was facing the country and the administration at the time, that of violent racial strife, he focussed on Lincoln's equation of secession with anarchy (Lincoln was, of course, referring to secession of the Southern states from the Union), and the imposition of a minority will as unacceptable if government was to survive, to make his own point: "Here spoke the statesman, proclaiming deliberate public opinion as the supreme power of civilization, easily to be written into law when conviction should command. It ought to be a tonic to the waning confidence of those of to-day who grow impatient that emphasized minority views are not hurried into the majority expressions of the Republic. Deliberate public opinion never fails."[84] Harding's words seemed to be a veiled suggestion to Moton and to other black guests in attendance that day (and many others, listening to the speech on the radio) that white Americans constituted the majority and therefore they would maintain the status quo.

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At the time of the dedication, Harding was under tremendous pressure from several fronts—from the North and South, from blacks and from whites—and all of these pressures had to be balanced against the political need to keep the Southerners from bolting from his party. The increase in lynching crimes was one of his greatest problems. May was one of the worst months for this crisis, ending with a record number of people lynched and interracial conflicts erupting throughout the country. The ten-year long fight of the NAACP and other organizations for a Federal anti-lynching bill was at a critical stage. Congress and Harding were being pressured with a constant barrage of telegrams and letters.[85] The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill which would have punished those who participated in or failed to prosecute lynch mobs passed the House of Representatives on January 26, 1922. While Harding supported the bill, intense opposition from Southern senators made him move cautiously out of fear for other parts of the Administration's legislative program. This provoked a storm of criticism.[86] When the bill finally reached the Senate floor in November 1922, it was blocked by a group of Southern senators in the Democratic minority who organized a week long filibuster and successfully killed the bill.[87] Congress never passed an anti-lynching bill. The closest it came was in the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which established fines and jail terms for those who injured or killed persons seeking to exercise their rights.[88]

Another source of pressure came from Walter Lippmann, editor of the *New York World*, the most influential Democratic newspaper in the nation. After an exhaustive investigation, the daily paper ran a series of articles on the Ku Klux Klan, beginning in September, 1921, exposing the secret organization as a moneymaking scheme that was anti-black, anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Japanese.[89] Harding now found himself being attacked not only by the NAACP but also by a mainstream white newspaper which demanded that he endorse a Federal

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investigation of the Klan's activities and take Federal action against the organization as well as against lynching, mob violence and ongoing riots throughout the nation. An additional irritant, if not pressure, was the publication of another book circulating at this time alleging that Harding had black ancestors.[90] Perhaps in an effort to deflect this allegation, Harding became a member of the Ku Klux Klan and took the oath of the Invisible Empire of the Knights in the Green Room of the White House.[91]

Harding was acutely aware of the storm of criticism he was enduring. During his Dedication Day speech, he choose to quote another portion of Lincoln's First Inaugural Address in which Lincoln reacted to the storm over Secession: "If I were trying to read, much less answer all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the best I know how, the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing it to the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me will not amount to anything. If the end brings me out all wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."[92] Harding attributed the "lampooning" and "unjustifiable abuse" that Lincoln endured to the "abused privileges under popular government," and suggested that the same foe was responsible for the criticisms directed at him.[93]

Harding then shifted the focus of his speech and attributed the blood bath of the Civil War, in which 625,000 Americans were killed, to "passion" and an "ambiguity in the constitution," and the South's decision to secede was attributed to "misdirected Patriotism."[94] Whether Harding was motivated by a desire to present an image of harmony and reconciliation between the two sections of the country or whether he believed what he was saying, such a distortion of history and facts reduced the Civil War to a neutered episode, stroked the South's "Lost Cause" myth and belied the intensity, viciousness and purpose of the war.

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When the ceremonies concluded with a brief benediction by Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, Harding inspected the statue of Lincoln, greeted members of the Senate and "gripped hands with Robert Lincoln at the foot of his father's statue."[95] At this point, according to one news account "the public broke over the barriers and swept unchecked up the wide steps to see for itself the things that have been wrought in the people's name."[96]

The only person at the Lincoln Memorial ceremonies who openly acknowledged slavery as central to the Civil War was Robert Moton. While his words may have been dismissed by many Americans listening to them that day, Lincoln's words, inscribed on the walls of the memorial, served then and now as permanent reminders to accept and understand the country's own dark history lest we be condemned to repeat it.[97] Moton, too, was the only speaker who grasped the challenge that the Memorial posed for the country at large—that it could either become a symbol of the hypocrisy of American ideals or a symbol of their realization. As an editorialist in the *Chicago Defender* wrote: "When juster and more grateful men come to power and history shall have rebuked offenders against the name of Abraham Lincoln, those set free in his death and glory will gather with their children and their benefactors to dedicate the memorial. . . .with song, prayer, bold and truthful speech, with faith in God and country, later on let us dedicate the temple thus far only opened."[98]

Critical Reception of the Memorial Ceremony

The critical reception of the dedication speeches, the accounts of the events of the day and of the memorial itself, reflect the deep divisions of the country and the strained efforts to maintain a mythology about Lincoln, slavery, racism, and the principles of the nation. A broad

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review of major newspapers and journals across the country— major black newspapers as well as the Northern white press —reveals that they had very different views of the Dedication Day ceremonies and addressed entirely different sets of issues. For the most part, the black press almost unanimously focused on the segregation of the Lincoln Memorial dedication ceremony and on Moton's role in the ceremony. White reporters and editorialists on Northern newspapers were more interested in purely aesthetic issues, such as the qualities of the architectural elements of the building. Southern presses registered their disapproval or disinterest by simply ignoring the event altogether.

Crisis, the NAACP journal established and edited by W. E. B. Du Bois, the director of publication and research, did not refer to the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial at all but instead devoted a considerable amount of space urging enactment of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill. Its silence signaled a clear indication of its priorities. T. Thomas Fortune, the militant, integrationist editor of the weekly, *The New York Age* (and the only black to write for white dailies—the *New York Sun* and the *Evening Sun*)— and James Weldon Johnson, a contributing editor when the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated, did make extensive comment. *The New York Age* headlined Moton's role as one of the three main speakers on the front page of the paper and printed his address in its entirety, along with his photograph. The addresses by Harding and Taft followed with succinct summaries.[99] In the second paragraph of this lead story, the paper recounted the segregation of the day's events. It followed up with an article a week later whose headline asked, "Is Harding Administration a Willing Heir to Segregation?" The sub-head read: "Southerner, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, Segregates Race Whenever Opportunity Offers."[100]

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Robert S. Abbot's *Chicago Defender*, the largest black-owned daily in the nation with a circulation of over 280,000 in 1920 that cultivated an aggressive style, forcefully expressed its opinion of the segregation of the dedication ceremony and laid the blame directly at the feet of the country's leaders: "The South was truly 'in the saddle' at the dedicatory exercises held at the formal acceptance of the Lincoln Memorial in Potomac Park. The Senate knows this. The chief rulers see it."[101] The writer followed with a double-edged comment that was both condemnatory and mocking. "It is to be regretted that Dr. Moton, principal of Tuskegee Institute, should have been forced by the laws of courtesy to fulfill an engagement under circumstances which filled him with feelings of shame and pity for the hypocrites of the nation."[102]

Other black presses were much harsher in their assessment of Moton's role. The *Pittsburgh American* declared that if Moton "were an intelligent, independent and courageous Negro he would not have been invited to Washington on Memorial Day. . . .The whites say that he is our leader, they have been kind enough to save us the trouble to do this for ourselves." [103] *The Appeal* denounced Moton as a man "who says and does just what his white masters order, [he] has naturally retarded the development of real manhood in those of the race who have been under his influence." [104] The *Chicago Whip* was even more withering in its condemnation of Moton: "Moton is a menace to the future of the twelve million black people of America and should be decried by all who have racial respect."[105]

The white press did not address the issue of segregation as it was considered the norm and not newsworthy, nor did they give much coverage to Moton's speech, especially as compared to the space devoted to the speeches of Taft and Harding. The assessment offered by the *Washington Post* is representative. The paper pulled out a few selected lines in Moton's speech to make the point that blacks were indebted to Lincoln and to the country, that their

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fidelity was unequivocal, and that their relationship to white Americans was one of subservience. The paper stated: "Lincoln did not die for the Negro alone, but upon that race rests the immediate obligation to justify emancipation, Dr. Robert R. Moton, of Tuskegee Institute, declared yesterday in his address at the dedication of the national memorial to Abraham Lincoln."[106]

The New York Times reduced Moton's speech to a few paragraphs, and summarized it with the headline: "Moton Says Negroes Are Loyal." [107] *The New York Tribune* focussed on the portion of Moton's speech that mentioned the obligation of the race to justify emancipation.[108] The *New York Herald Tribune* devoted more space to Moton's speech and pronounced that he had "by far the best voice heard during the proceedings."[109] It concluded its analysis of Moton's speech by insultingly asserting "that the name of Lincoln held an imperishable place in the hearts of every man, woman and child of his race and that the lessons he taught them has made them good citizens, worthy of the esteem of their white associates."[110] Most white newspapers, however, simply gave a one-line acknowledgement that a "representative of the colored race" spoke at the dedication, often leaving Moton unnamed and his address ignored entirely.

The white press was more absorbed with technical details and figures: the marvel of the radio and loudspeakers—new inventions that brought the ceremony to many thousands of people; how long it took to erect the Memorial; how many tons of marble were required; the size and dimensions of all of its features; and how many men were required to complete the building and at what cost. The feat of building such a structure was, in itself, viewed as a romantic, powerful gesture that galvanized these writers to wax about the progress of the nation and, by extension, the strength of the nation and the government. *Current History* gushed: "The building itself is one of the noblest expressions of architecture on the American Continent. In its compelling simplicity and purity of line it may be compared with the Taj Mahal at Agra, India,

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that exhalation of a dream."[111] To some critics, the majestic Memorial was proof that, as Taft suggested in his presentation speech, America was no longer an artistic backwater. The *Christian Science Monitor* suggested that "The Memorial. . .is of a sheer beauty that has seldom been equaled in this country or in Europe in such a structure."[112] Harvey M. Watts, a critic writing for *The Trend*, gave a gloating description of the memorial and concluded that "the sceptre of achievement in art has passed westward with the 'star of empire.'"[113]

There were dissenters who wondered how what looked like a Greek temple could convey the uniquely non-European spirit of America or of Lincoln.[114] *Washington Post* columnist Leila Mechlin's response to these dissenters is illuminating. She defended the architectural style of the Memorial vigorously, though she perhaps unwittingly employed the aggressive, acquisitive, nationalistic and racist assumptions associated with the Gilded Age in defending it when she wrote: "We Americans are the inheritors of the nations, the children of the old world, with a full right to carry on their tradition. We are not descendants of the American Indians, for the most part; therefore, why parade in war-paint and wampum? To be typical Americans, must we invariably saunter down the street whistling 'Yankee Doodle?'"[115] With such a comparison established, Mechlin invited the reader to wonder why Americans should metaphorically dress up in togas—certainly not any closer to American culture than the doeskin wraps of the Native American.[116]

The Lincoln mythology espoused in the dedication day speeches was embraced neither uniformly nor unqualifiedly by black Americans—a reflection of the fact that it never had been. As early as 1876, in an oration at the unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument to Lincoln in Washington, Frederick Douglass was measured in his assessment of the President: "Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. In his interests, in

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his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices, he was a white man."[117] When the mythology surrounding Lincoln was embraced by black Americans, it was with the recognition that it *was* mythology. Blacks seized the opportunity afforded by the dedication of the Memorial to address pressing political and social concerns, as well as to clarify their roles in the Civil War and emancipation. Commentary by the *New York Age* is representative of this concern. One month after the ceremony, the paper commented at length on Harding's dedication speech. The editorial was intentionally ironic and mostly was an opportunity to observe that blacks had played a large role in achieving their own emancipation. Referring to Harding's observations that "Emancipation was a means to the great end—maintained union and nationality," the editor observed:

> It is not wise to find fault with Mr. Harding for telling the truth in respect to Abraham Lincoln and emancipation. Whatever may have been Mr. Lincoln's personal views with respect to slavery, he had but one aim and purpose in his war effort and that was the preservation of the Union. A historical fact so plain can not be questioned. The Negro saved the Union and in doing as much, won his own freedom. This point is seldom stressed. Soon after Negroes got into the federal army, in large numbers, failures were turned into 'victories' until the Union triumphed completely [with the aid of] large Negro reinforcements.[118]

The July issue of *Crisis*' editorial section, called "Opinion," did make an oblique reference to the Dedication Day ceremonies, but put what was then a heretical spin on Lincoln, deconstructing the traditional mythology surrounding the sixteenth President:

> Abraham Lincoln was a Southern poor white, of illegitimate birth, poorly educated and unusually ugly, awkward, ill-dressed. He liked smutty stories and was a politician down to his toes. Aristocrats—Jeff Davis, Seward and their ilk—despised him, and indeed he had little outwardly that compelled respect. But in that curious human way he was big inside. He had reserves and depths and when habit and convention were torn away there was something left to Lincoln—nothing to most of his contemporaries. There was something left, so that at the crisis he was big enough to be inconsistent—cruel, merciful; peace-loving, a fighter; despising Negroes

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> and letting them fight and vote; protecting slavery and freeing slaves. He was a man—a big, inconsistent, brave man.[119]

In stark contrast, *The New York Times*, the nation's largest mainstream white newspaper, characterized Lincoln in a markedly different way. The *Times* invoked Plato's description of Socrates as a unique, remote, god-like being to summon the same characteristics in Lincoln. The "ugly," "awkward" and crude Southerner described by the *Crisis* was, in the eyes of the *Times*, a "lank, loose figure" with a "homely face." What were "Smutty stories" to the editor of the *Crisis* were "coarse jokes" and "neighborly gossip of the frontier" to the *Times*.[120] The *Times* editorial then pondered the meaning of democracy:

> We ask ourselves if Lincoln was the gift of democracy. And we find ourselves answering that his peculiar excellence could have come of no other order of society. We ask ourselves if democracy has the unerring instinct to find such men to embody its wishes at critical times. To this anxious questioning we have no certain answer. What gives most hope in new confusion and problems, unknown to his day, is that the more clearly Lincoln's disinterestedness and forbearance and magnanimity and humility are revealed, the wider and deeper is the feeling of admiration and love for his character. This perhaps assures us, after all, of the soundness and nobility of the ideals of democracy.[121]

The New York Times review reflected a very strong tendency shared by many of the Northern white mainstream newspapers to sustain the myth of Lincoln as a super hero and his accomplishments as a confirmation of democratic ideals. The *New York Herald* chose to emphasize Lincoln's humble beginnings.[122] *Current History*, an influential journal of opinion, wrote that the Memorial enshrined the memory of the "Great Commoner,"[123] while the *New York Tribune* stressed that the memorial belonged to "the swelling tide of humble people who stood for hours under a blazing sun to claim the temple of freedom and the man whose memory it enshrines as their own."[124]

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These newspapers were also concerned with projecting an image of reunion and harmony between the North and South. This impulse was so strong that on May 23 the *Washington Post* (a nominally "Northern" publication that frequently espoused Southern views) published a photograph of two Civil War veterans, one Union and one Confederate, kneeling together on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, united in prayer and, presumably, in heart. The photograph was a fake. There was only one veteran, a Union soldier, on the steps of the Memorial that day. The Confederate soldier had been carefully superimposed on the photograph[125] [Fig. 3.6].

There was no mention by the press in the Old South of the memorial or its dedication. It was as though the monument had fallen into a black hole in the Southern psyche. A few Southern newspapers however reflected the attitude of the New South that urged reconciliation, regarded Lincoln in a more positive light, and pleaded for a greater American nationalism. The *Baltimore Sun* devoted extensive coverage to the ceremony, was effusive in its tone, and provided excellent detail of every aspect of the day's ceremony. [126] The *Birmingham News* called the Memorial "this new shrine of democratic liberty"; [127] and the *Roanoke World News* called it "magnificent" and praised Lincoln, "who gave his life to his country just as truly as did the men who died on the battlefield."[128] But all of these newspapers carefully couched their praise and gave at least equal weight to exercises commemorating the memory of Confederate President Jefferson Davis' birth, which were held on June 3, 1922, in all of the states of the Old South, eight of which had declared the day a legal holiday. Some New South presses, such as the more liberal *Atlanta Constitution*, did not acknowledge the dedication of the Memorial at all.

The agenda of the South was, however, different than that of the North. While the new South could espouse admiration for the memory of Lincoln, it could do so only if Lincoln could

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be made into one of their own. North Carolina's *The Asheville Times* addressed the issue more directly than most of the papers. Its front page headline read "Planned To Save The Union Rather Than Free Slaves," and its sub head read "President Harding, in Accepting Memorial, Said Lincoln Would Have Compromised With Slavery."[129] Its editorial a few days later, entitled "A Happy Augury," patted the South on the back, praising it for setting aside "the rancor of the Sixties"[130] and concluded that ". . .the North is coming to appreciate the moral elegance of ROBERT E. LEE and to recognize in him the very flower of our Anglo-Saxon civilization. He is taking his place on the national pedestal beside the man who was the political leader of the opposing armies. What happier augury for the perpetuity of our democratic institutions can be found than this which is furnished by the acceptance of Lee and Lincoln as co-partners in greatness?"[131] This assessment implies that emancipation was an unintentional, unfortunate accident of the war and reinscribes the presumed superiority of Anglo-Saxons.

The reception of Lincoln by the media in the Old South particularly, reflects an unrelenting animosity and bitterness toward him where anger over the Civil War and its aftermath was still widespread in the 1920s. Mired in poverty, substandard education, fear and a blind determination to maintain white supremacy at all costs, dedicating the Memorial to Lincoln seemed to intensify this anger, generating more anti-Lincoln material than during other periods. In the South, unlike in the North, there was a voluminous and well-developed body of anti-Lincoln literature that had been evolving since the close of the Civil War. Certain themes recur in this literature which most frequently included the defense of the constitutional right of secession, the South's contributions to the progress of the Union, a justification of the antebellum slave-based society, and an overwhelmingly negative reassessment of Lincoln.

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Among the leading writers of the Twentieth Century who were engaged in the effort to forge a Southern history included J. Clarence Stonebraker, who wrote *The Unwritten South: Cause, Progress and Result of the Civil War*, (1908) and Charles Landon Carter Minor, an aristocrat from Virginia who fought in the war and later became president of Virginia A & M College.[132] These men were followed by many others in trying to justify the South to the rest of America. But Lyon Gardiner Tyler (1853-1935) son of John Tyler, the 10th President of the United States, who forwarded a two-nations theory, and Mildred Lewis Rutherford, the grand historian of the United Daughters of the Confederacy from 1896 until her death in 1928, were the most sustained anti-Lincoln voices of the period.

Tyler spent his entire adult life as a writer, educator, and historian whose goal was to demolish the pro-mythology of Lincoln. Beginning in 1920 he published a magazine called *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, which was a compendium of anti-Lincoln materials. In 1921 Tyler announced in his magazine that Lincoln, as the author of the Emancipation Proclamation, was "the true parent of reconstruction, legislative robbery, Negro supremacy, cheating at the polls, rapes of white women, lynching, and the acts of the Ku Klux Klan."[133] To "claim that Lincoln was a democrat, that he restored the Union, that he was a friend of the South, is," Tyler asserted, "the purest fiction imaginable."[134] Tyler's magazine was representative of the Old South's attitude toward Lincoln, and he stayed true to his beliefs until the day he died, which was, in a cruel irony, on Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

Mildred Lewis Rutherford, fondly called "Miss Millie" by her friends, was as steadfast in her anti-Lincoln vision as Tyler. In addition to her role as the Grand Historian of the U.D.C from 1896-1928, she was also a teacher, principal, and club woman. She was a prolific writer of the Southern perspective who explained the rationale for her ongoing work on the frontispiece of

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her book *Truths of History*, published in 1920: "To secure a peaceful settlement of the many perplexing questions now causing contentions between the North and the South." [135] In one of her many pamphlets, *Jefferson Davis (the President of the Confederate States) & Abraham Lincoln (the President of the U.S.) 1861-1865*, Rutherford drew an unflattering comparison between Davis and Lincoln and concluded that Lincoln "involved the States in the war by reinforcing Ft. Sumter," "freed the slaves. . .by a proclamation that was unconstitutional," and "preserved the Union, not by constitutional right, but by armed might."[136]

Among the southern journals, The *Confederate Veteran* was the only journal that provided first-hand accounts of the Southern perspective on the war and traced the animus of the Southern Cause. It was the official publication for the United Confederate Veterans, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Confederated Southern Memorial Association, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Founded by Sumner Archibald Cunningham and published in Nashville, Tennessee, articles in the *Confederate Veteran* were written by Confederate veterans, their wives and their children. Published from 1893 until 1932, its principal purpose was to publish facts about the Civil War, Confederate soldiers and the South and its patriotic organizations for the purpose of vindicating the South and perpetuating the Southern view of the "cause."

The *Confederate Veteran* never acknowledged the opening or dedication of the Lincoln Memorial. Articles in the journal published the year the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated to the public demonstrate a deeply felt and deeply driven anger toward Lincoln and the North that was still very much alive in 1922. Issues published that year justified the Ku Klux Klan as necessary ". . .to frighten the Negroes into submission to the better elements of the community;"[137] justified slavery,[138] decried the Emancipation Proclamation,[139] and vociferously condemned the North for

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its reconstruction policies: ". . .it was the malignant effort of the conquering section of the country, in obedience to a false and fanatical ideal, to destroy an ancient civilization with its claims, its rights, its privileges, its ideals, and its principles. To change an order of nature and bring the highest elements—intellectual, social, religious, and political—into subjection to the very lowest elements that could be used for purposes of corruption and mere material profit. The Negroes were organized into secret societies to put themselves in office and carry out the behest of their carpetbag advisers. Under these circumstances, every principle of self-respect, of honor, and of self-preservation demanded that the South should resist by all means in its power the destruction of its original ideals."[140]

The August issue of the *Confederate Veteran* justified its endorsement of this point of view and added: "It is exceedingly unfortunate that the Northern mind has conceived such a picture of Lincoln that any discussion of him whatever, unless couched in sycophantic terms, strikes them as profane and bordering on the sacriligious. . .If many things claimed for Lincoln were true, we of the South would have to rest under aspersions that would make us deserve the scorn of the world. We cannot disregard our birthright or the truth of history."[141]
In its September issue, the publication stated that "The life of President Lincoln would be incomplete without a discussion of the fundamental principles of our Constitution. . .The public life of Mr. Lincoln must depend largely upon the question whether the seceding States had a right, under our Constitution, to withdraw from the Union. All of his biographers have written as if no such right existed. We of the South, however, stand upon the rights of the State to withdraw from the Union, and view Mr. Lincoln's life from that standpoint, and upon the solution of that question Mr. Lincoln must stand or fall."[142] In the magazine's October issue, an article entitled "Was Lincoln a Friend of the South?" argued that the North's assessment of

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Lincoln was propaganda, and that far from being a friend of the South, Lincoln would rather have exterminated all of the Southern people than lose the war.[143]

In 1932, ten years after the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated and the last year of the magazine's publication, little had changed. In its January issue, a writer vehemently objected to a proposal in the Georgia legislature that Lincoln's birthday be made a legal holiday in that state, comparing Lincoln (once again) to Caesar Borgia and asking, "Why Should the South Honor a President Responsible for the War?" [144]

The great divide that remained unchanged for both the North and the South was race. Newspapers and other publications in the North and South did not recognize or did not acknowledge the dynamism in Lincoln's own thinking about union and race and its implications for the meaning of the Memorial and the country, and they even more rarely envisioned black Americans as part of the reconciliation process. In fact, the spontaneous protests against segregated seating arrangements at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial and the formal protest lodged by the NAACP that followed, did not set a precedent for more demonstrations against segregation at its site. Instead, throughout the 1920s to the end of the 1930s, there were a number of segregated events held at the Memorial—mostly social and celebratory—that, ironically, were usually held to honor Lincoln's birthday on February 12. Presidents, foreign dignitaries, school groups and thousands of ordinary citizens visited the Memorial. But most of the annual celebrations were organized by local and national delegations of numerous veterans's organizations (among them the Grand Army of the Republic, Spanish-American War Veterans, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled Americans Veterans, Society of Santiago and the Army and Navy Union, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion and sons of Union Veterans). These organizations, which excluded almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors from

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their membership and from the ceremonies, faithfully gathered annually at the Memorial to honor their victory and collective heroism and to reiterate the well-established rhetorical and mythical litanies about Lincoln as savior of the Union, martyr, and saint. Their services were usually followed by elaborate banquets and dances.[145] Black Americans also held services at the Lincoln Memorial, but their focus was on Lincoln's Act of Emancipation, and they frequently coupled Lincoln's birthday with Frederic Douglass's birthday, which happened to fall two days later.[146]

The 1920s and 1930s were politically formative decades for working class Americans of both races and those on the left who would make it possible for the Memorial to be used as a protest site beginning in the 1940s. The NAACP, because of its historically close relationships with U.S. Presidents and the respect it enjoyed among a majority of black Americans, was the only civil rights organization in the 1920s that might have been able to mount social protests at the Lincoln Memorial. But the NAACP was conservative philosophically and did not endorse confrontational political tactics, preferring instead to lobby Washington and conduct discreet behind-the-scenes negotiations with political leaders. Although this conservative stance precluded a more militant use of the Memorial as a site of protest, the NAACP's moderate tone enabled the organization to establish itself successfully as the principal black liaison with the Chief Executive's office. This consolidated its role as the most important mainstream interracial organization in the twenties. It made huge gains in its membership and influence during these years[147] and this enabled the NAACP to establish a relationship with the Roosevelt administration that was instrumental in its securing the Lincoln Memorial site for the Marian Anderson concert held there on Easter Sunday, 1939. Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes requested and received permission directly from President Roosevelt to hold a free open-air

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concert at the Memorial after Anderson was denied the use of Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which characteristically clung to a whites'-only policy of exclusion. Although Roosevelt was to later regret his decision and Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, mistakenly assumed the statue of Lincoln was created by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, their combined efforts nonetheless resulted in an ebullient, interracial Easter Sunday concert that was praised by all quarters as a demonstration of American democracy.[148]

An alternative to the NAACP was the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Established in Harlem in 1917 by Jamaican-born Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940). it was the largest organization dedicated to black economic self-reliance and political self-determination. The organization became a movement known as Garveyism, an early precursor of the black nationalist movement of the 1960s that appealed to large numbers of black Americans, particularly those in the working class. It centered around a "back to Africa" movement that called for the repatriation of black Americans to their ancestral homeland. Garvey's movement was vociferously condemned as anti-American by the NAACP but attracted the interest of Socialist labor leader A. Phillip Randolph (1889-1979). Randolph formed an alliance with Garvey's UNIA from 1916 to 1919, and developed a base of supporters that he expanded during his tenure as President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the 1920s, a union of nearly 10,000 porters. These supporters formed the base of Randolph's protestors for the March on Washington Movement in the 1940s, the first mass protest movement in the United States.[149]

Garvey's program, though theoretically attractive, had no practical venue for action, and his call to blacks to leave the United States and reestablish roots in Africa was less than pragmatic for most, whose world view of themselves and their culture were shaped more by the

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culture and democratic ideals of the United States than by some presumed racial memory of an "Africa" that in reality was an amalgam of distinct ethnic tribes which were as distant from many black Americans as Africa itself. A far more serious problem for Garvey, however, was the fact that his movement attracted the attention of the Harding administration, which deemed the self-proclaimed "Provisional President of Africa" a dangerous radical and urged J. Edgar Hoover, who in 1921 was a youthful Justice Department official, to find a way to undermine Garvey's movement. In 1922, Hoover successfully indicted Garvey on mail fraud charges stemming from bogus promotional claims made by Black Star Steamship Line (a black owned and operated enterprise intended to provide a means for black Americans to return to Africa and exchange goods and services around the Atlantic). After serving three years in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Garvey was deported to Jamaica and barred from reentering the United States. The deportation of Garvey was the first of many successes against presumed subversives by Hoover, who was promoted to director of the FBI in 1924. Harding's administration established a precedent for Hoover's role as the principal contact of United States Presidents on racial matters for the next fifty years. But it was Hoover who almost single-handedly shaped the internal security apparatus to police and control activities of all black civil rights organizations. Even the NAACP was under FBI surveillance throughout most of its existence. As shall be seen, Hoover's intense hatred of black Americans and the broad power invested in his office to investigate civil rights organizations, as well as the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), would significantly impact both the nature and outcome of every civil rights protest held at the Lincoln Memorial through 1968.[150]

While Garveyism helped establish a sense of racial pride in many blacks, it was the rise of the labor movement and the establishment in 1921 of the CPUSA (and later the onset of the

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Great Depression in 1929) that were crucial in the development of the March On Washington Movement (MOWM) led by A. Philip Randolph. The CPUSA mobilized large numbers of black workers and black intelligentsia to generate numerous protests and demonstrations in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s that influenced the proposed 1941 March on Washington. While none of these protests were held at the Lincoln Memorial during this period, they foreshadowed many of the key tactics and strategies used by protesters at the demonstrations held at the Memorial in the 1940s and 1950s, and were precursors of the modern civil rights movement.[151]

The official, unwavering positions of the CPUSA during these two decades— that the struggle of black Americans was part of a larger class struggle, that the interests of black and white workers were inseparable, and that it actively advocate interracialism—were anathema to the nation's definition of itself and its nation-building efforts. In addition to these stands, which were diametrically opposed to the policies of the United States government, through the 1950s the CPUSA consistently took a more militant stand against racism than any other single group in the United States. For a short time in the 1920s and 1930s, the CPUSA attracted large numbers of the black working class and intelligentsia, although most who were initially attracted to the Party, rather quickly abandoned it for both pragmatic and theoretical reasons.[152]

A conscious decision to radicalize—not jettison— the notion of American exceptionalism underpinned the conceptual framework of the CPUSA. The Party used it to advance its programs and mounted hundreds of well-organized mass demonstrations that drew on mythic American figures and democratic ideals— Lincoln and his act of Emancipation was one of the most popular—to legitimize their demands for social and economic equality.[153]

The CPUSA also established National Unemployed Councils and held hundreds of interracial hunger and unemployment marches across the country. The CPUSA fought especially

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vigorously for the economic rights of the black unemployed and working poor, who were the hardest hit by the Depression and who were consistently given the least assistance by the U.S. government.[154] Reginald Marsh's painting, *The Park Bench* (1933), captures perfectly both the lassitude and torpor of joblessness and hunger and the promise that Communism held for some black Americans. It depicts a man on a bench reading the *Daily Worker*, the Communist newspaper that reached its greatest circulation of more than 100,000 during the Depression [Fig. 3.7].

The CPUSA also took a militant stand against lynching and founded the International Labor Defense (ILD) in Chicago on June 23, 1925, to provide high-quality legal defense for black Americans it contended were systematically victimized by courts in the United States.[155] It mounted dozens of demonstrations against lynching and other forms of legalized racism. Washington, as the seat of government, was the favored site for such demonstrations. In 1933, two high profile demonstrations were held in front of the White House: one to protest the conviction of Angelo Herndon, a black American openly affiliated with the Communist Party who was indicted under an 1859 law for "inciting to insurrection" when he led a march in Georgia to demand relief for unemployed blacks; the other to urge the release of the Scottsboro Nine, a group of teenagers falsely accused of raping two white girls in Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1930 and subsequently sentenced to death.[156]

These demonstrations helped lay the groundwork that culminated in demonstrations held at the Lincoln Memorial in the 1940s and 1950s that were premised on confrontation and challenge of governmental authority rather than on compromise and acquiescence that characterized the 1963 March on Washington. The CPUSA's outspokeneness, diligence and dogged grass roots work, combined with its organizational skills and willingness to employ

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tactics of public pressure and mass protest on behalf of civil rights, only confirmed a popular perception in much of the nation that the Communist Party was determined to overthrow American ideals and values. To many Americans, Communism—whether acknowledged directly or not—was also a threat to the racial status quo, a sentiment captured in one of the many anxious comments of the period: "This is what the depression has wrought—resentment directed mainly against the white man; restlessness, and a flaming desire for advancement."[157]

When Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933, one quarter of the labor force was unemployed, men and women stood on bread lines, and much of the southwestern United States was a dust bowl. Black Americans suffered disproportionately. Revolution seemed not only possible but plausible. Many of F.D.R's policies and initiatives were motivated by circumstance and pragmatism. The desperation of the Depression dictated increasing incursions of government. One of the results of such incursions was a greater "nationalization" of public culture. Government-sponsored art projects put people to work. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) transformed the cultural landscape. At its peak in 1936, the WPA employed more than 5,000 artists and over the eight years of its existence, its artists produced 2,566 murals and more than 100,000 easel paintings. Under the Farm Security Administration, (FSA) photographers including Dorothea Lange and Ben Shahn traveled around the country and documented rural poverty. Writers compiled state and regional histories. Lewis Mumford's optimistic vision of a "united front" of artists guarding culture and human heritage was not realized but the Federal Government's power increased as did its authority as guardian of the nation's public culture.[158]

A major beneficiary of this sweeping change in the government was the National Park Service. Founded in 1916 to oversee the maintenance and preservation of national parks such as

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Yosemite and Yellowstone, the role and power of the NPS was greatly expanded when Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6166 on June 10, 1933, which brought together all federally owned parks, monuments, military battlefields, national cemeteries and national capital parks under a single entity called the National Capital Parks System (CPS) under the stewardship of Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. In 1935, with the passage of the National Historical Sites Act, it became national policy to preserve such sites for public use and public education.[159]

Horace Albright, National Park Service director, wished to expand the role of the NPS so it would be responsible for historic preservation and interpretation. He assembled a number of people to assist in this endeavor (including his friend and NPS supporter Madison Grant, the racial nativist) and hired the NPS's first professional historian, Verne Chatelain. Chatelain's responsibility was to develop a uniform approach to the presentation of historical material at the various sites under the NPS's control. Like most historians of this era, Chatelain drew on a racialized history of the United States and integrated his conceptions (and misconceptions) of the nation's history into this program. He recommended categories of history centered around nation-building efforts (he excluded slavery and Reconstruction entirely) and established linear time frames for each category. He intentionally sought to limit and simplify themes in order to ensure uniformity and coherence in the presentation of printed material and guided tours to the public and shaped the material so that it would be entertaining, celebratory and inspirational rather than didactic. One result of these New Deal developments in the NPS was the institutionalization of an exceptionalist, mythic history dependent upon a nineteenth century viewpoint that would be presented and disseminated to the public up to the present day. In the case of the Lincoln Memorial, the NPS was faced with a particularly complex narrative that required a successful resolution of slavery, racism and an increasingly violent backlash against civil rights efforts. (It

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was not until the 1990s that the agency incorporated the civil rights struggle into its programs designed for the public. Housed in the basement of the Memorial is a permanent exhibit called "The Legacy of Lincoln" in which the figures of Lincoln and King are conflated as American heroes and the adoption of civil rights is presented as an outgrowth of Lincoln's beneficence. This history is so flattened and simplified that the exhibit leaves the impression that the civil rights movement was achieved without struggle).[160]

In its new proactive role, the federal government took on greater responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, and established economic policies that helped advance the concept of economic rights to be provided by the government for all citizens. These developments encouraged black Americans to demand that the government's new agenda also address their needs.[161] Three men who had attended Harvard University together in the early 30s—Robert C. Weaver, a Ph.D in economics who was part of Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet"; Ralph J. Bunche, who had a degree in political science; and John P. Davis, a graduate of Harvard Law School—formed what was to become the National Negro Congress (NNC), an organization designed to bring together a broad spectrum of groups representing black interests that would function as an alternative to the NAACP. While its membership from the outset did include Communists and whites in the liberal reformist camp, the NNC was conceived within the context of New Deal reformism and black activism. Its brief life, (1936-1947) however, is illustrative of how the two-fold threat of Communism and national racialism defined, shaped and limited the possibility of more radical civil rights protests at the Memorial through the 1960s.

Weaver, Bunche, and Davis formed the Negro Industrial League (NIL) in 1932 and, a year later, expanded its scope by forming the Joint Committee on National Recovery (JCNR), which was established to lobby Congress for participation in New Deal economic recovery

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programs and fight discrimination in New Deal agencies. By May 1935, Davis and Bunche had organized a national conference that culminated in a call for the establishment of an organization that would tap into the large numbers of black and white trade unionists as well as into religious, civic and fraternal groups, creating, they hoped, a united front of all such existing organizations. The first meeting of the National Negro Congress, held in Chicago on February 14-16, 1936 (coinciding with Frederick Douglass's Birthday on the 14th), represented a broad spectrum of organizations—585 of them with 817 delegates from 28 states and the District of Columbia, attended the inaugural meeting. The delegates adopted a democratic, non-partisan organizational structure and endorsed anti-lynching legislation, an unrestricted right to vote, the right of black Americans "to join all trade unions," and the right to enjoy equal wages and equal work conditions. The NNC also called for immediate relief for needy families, social and unemployment insurance, equal opportunity in education, and complete equality for black women. On the international level, the NNC asked that the United States adopt a neutral position in fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, an ancient black kingdom that had been free of foreign occupation up to that time. Integral to the NNC program was support for organized labor and a consensus that working class unity and mass pressure in the form of protests involving as many religious, civic and fraternal organizations as possible were essential for black American progress. Its goals were to influence public opinion, pressure the government into improving the condition of blacks, and carry out the social reforms of the New Deal.[162]

A. Philip Randolph, founder and president since 1925 of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, who had successfully unionized more than 10,000 Pullman Company porters in 1935, became president of The National Negro Congress in 1936.[163] Randolph insisted that the purpose of the NNC was primarily to improve the condition of blacks, who were largely excluded from

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New Deal programs and social welfare legislation. But when NNC national secretary John P. Davis struck an alliance with the Communist-led Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1938, the nation's largest union that organized thousands of black industrial workers in integrated unions including the United Auto Workers and United Steel Workers, he made a serious mistake that adversely affected the future of the NNC and placed Randolph's union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), in a compromised position. Davis's alliance with the CIO opened the doors for greater control and influence by Communist members who, by that time, provided most of the financial support of the NNC. In 1940, Randolph resigned as NNC president because of increased Communist party influence. With his resignation, the only progressive organization that represented a broad based spectrum of black working class and middle class interests died.[164]

After Randolph resigned from the NNC, he set aside ideological differences and joined NAACP secretary Walter White and National Urban League head T. Arnold Hill to urge Roosevelt to desegregate the military and the defense industry. After an unsatisfactory meeting with the President, Randolph initiated the planning of a mass march on Washington, D.C., enlisting the aid of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and several other black organizations, in order to pressure the administration to respond to their demands. Randolph's organizing strategy and political stance was aggressive and confrontational, reflecting his Socialist and labor-organizing background as well as his familiarity with the hundreds of labor strikes and demonstrations he had witnessed and taken part in throughout the 1930s. His public pronouncements that "Power is the active principle of only organized masses, the masses united for a definite purpose," and "We loyal Negro-American citizens demand the right to work and fight for our country," must have seemed as much a threat as a demand to the Roosevelt

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administration. Randolph's insistence that those participating in the march be exclusively black Americans probably created even more tension in the administration. Randolph issued his demands and requested executive intervention to have them met (perhaps recalling the success of the NAACP's request to Roosevelt that resulted in Marian Anderson's performance at the Lincoln Memorial). At the same time, Randolph couched his demands in terms of Roosevelt's promise to ensure economic security to all American citizens. [165]

Randolph decided that the March on Washington Movement demonstration would be held in front of the Lincoln Memorial on July 1, 1941, and promised a turnout of at least 10,000 demonstrators. By April, the number of potential marchers had grown to 50,000—all of whom had donated money and organized rallies and demonstrations across the country in support of the demonstration. The Roosevelt administration, fearful of organized militant blacks descending on the capital and concerned about the disparaging comparisons that would inevitably be made by the international community between Nazi Germany and the United States' racial policy, was determined to stop the demonstration. The administration had the FBI monitor plans for the march in order to gauge the mood of black Americans. Eleanor Roosevelt, at the President's request, made a personal visit to Randolph, asking him to call off the march. Randolph refused and reiterated his demands. There was a standoff until the last minute, when Walter White and Randolph were called again to meet with the President, who demanded that the march be cancelled. Randolph then suggested a compromise. He would call off the march if Roosevelt enacted one of his six demands: outlaw discrimination in the defense industries. Roosevelt balked and the meeting ended in a stalemate. Meanwhile, whites citizens and politicians in Washington, D. C. raised the specter of violence and bloodshed and added to the mounting pressure on Roosevelt. One week before the march Roosevelt caved in and issued Executive

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Order 8802. It outlawed discriminatory hiring policies in the defense industry and established the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to enforce and investigate breaches of the order. Social Realist artist Ben Shahn optimistically captured the effect of Roosevelt's executive order in *The Welders*, one of five posters he created for the CIO's Political Action committee in 1944 that depicts blacks and whites working side by side, although two years later the FEPC was disbanded. [Fig. 3.8]

While Randolph endured criticism by many black leaders for his compromise, the threat did yield a tangible result and suggested that aggressive mass protest or, in this case, the threat of mass protest, worked. Randolph also provided a model for mobilizing citizens that was to be deployed with great effectiveness in the next decade, beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955.[166] But it was the federal government that benefited mostly. It had found a strategy for defusing mass protest and subverting criticism that was to serve future presidents well, especially John F. Kennedy during the 1963 March on Washington. Roosevelt averted what he viewed as a threat to public order and the humiliation of negative international public opinion, by portraying his Executive Order as proof of commitment to democracy for all its citizens.[167] He thus was able to fall back on an old argument which drew on the deep reserves of exceptionalist ideology to illustrate the nation's good intentions and progress toward inclusionary democracy while maintaining its very narrow definition of national identity. Roosevelt's actions set a precedent and, in the future, civil rights protests at the Lincoln Memorial were mounted with substantial aid, direction and control exacted by the office of the chief executive and the FBI.

Less than six months after Randolph's cancelled march, the United States declared war on Japan, followed shortly thereafter by declarations against her Axis allies, Germany and Italy.

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Randolph, nonetheless envisioned a continuation of the March on Washington Movement that he hoped would result in full economic, social, political and racial equality. One of his immediate goals was the integration of the U.S. armed forces—a goal that was not achieved, as the armed forces remained strictly segregated throughout the war.[168] In his keynote address delivered to conference members of the movement in Detroit on September 26, 1942, Randolph laid out a grand vision. He told the delegates that black Americans had to build organizations that "...deal with and manipulate the mechanics of power." This, he believed, made it necessary to organize on a massive scale. He envisioned millions of blacks ready to be summoned to immediate action. Without such organization, he believed that mass power, "the most effective weapon a minority people can wield," would never be developed.[169]

The war diverted the attention of all Americans and Randolph's movement never fully materialized. What did occur over the course of twenty years was that from the day of its dedication to the onset of World War II, the Memorial became a fully politicized site and symbol that was largely regarded as synonymous with both democracy and racial progress. The first official act at the Memorial—the segregation of black citizens on dedication day—led to its unintended use as a public forum to challenge racial discrimination. While such public use and the slow expansion of power within civil rights groups made it more difficult for those who wielded cultural and political authority to maintain autonomous assumptions and definitions about the Memorial, neither Robert Moton's warning that the Memorial was in danger of becoming a symbol of hypocrisy, nor the protests of the NAACP, had much political impact in the 1920s. It was not until the Marian Anderson concert was held in 1939 that the general public began to associate the Memorial with racial issues. Yet, while the concert with its interracial audience, undoubtedly created a highly visible profile for the Memorial as a positive national

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symbol of American democracy, it did nothing to substantively challenge fallacious assumptions or obvious contradictions about democracy or race in America.

Randolph's March on Washington Movement was poised to do precisely that. It was far more radical in its objectives than the Marian Anderson concert. Yoked to demands to correct by law some of the most egregious inequities in the military industry and supported by a large group of organized laborers, Randolph's threatened demonstration reflected a change in the relations between black leaders and the government. Randolph used the political leverage of publicity and large numbers of militant supporters to posit a more aggressive use of the Memorial, including demands that would openly challenge the celebratory public perception of the Memorial.

The threat of the march sharply recast the role that the government would play in controlling the use and meaning of the Memorial. Just as the Roosevelt administration feared, the Memorial became a favored site for publicly presenting the grievances of disaffected groups, especially civil rights groups. After the Marian Anderson concert was held, both the government and the National Parks Service consistently strove to deny the use of the Memorial to civil rights activists and to generally disassociate it from all controversial issues. Especially during the Roosevelt era— a time of economic depression, domestic strife and world war—the government wanted the Memorial to represent a coherent national identity equated with racial and religious tolerance. In this highly charged atmosphere, the Memorial could ill afford to be associated with radical politics that would glaringly spotlight racial prejudice in general and race as an organizing principle of the American military in particular when the country was about to embark on a war to fight Nazism. Lincoln's status as a historical personage also grew in direct proportion to the impending global war. His ideals, invoked by radicals and Communists

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throughout the 1920s and 1930s, were redefined by politicians, public leaders and government officials until, by the onset of World War II, the Savior of the Union acquired a universal meaning that was intended to transcend political party and nationality.

There was yet another dynamic in this complex interplay of politics and nationalism. Randolph's decision to restrict the march to blacks not only belied the efforts of the Roosevelt administration to create an image of a unified nation, it also foreshadowed the balkanization of liberal whites and black activists as well as the emergence of issue politics that were established during the late 1960s. Additionally, Randolph's decision abrogated a central principle of democracy—assuring full accessibility to the same sphere by all citizens—and thus made it easier for both the government and blacks and whites to sidestep the most difficult challenge of full integration and complete equality to be replaced by political skirmishing instead. This factor and Randolph's acquiescence to Roosevelt opened the doors to the first step in the institutionalization and bureaucratization of protest movements at the Memorial, which inadvertently rendered it impotent as a site in which racial progress might be achieved. A rich opportunity for engaging a large, well-organized, independent movement capable of challenging racial authoritarianism was thus lost and never regained.

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Chapter 3: Notes

1. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 74.

2. Statistics are from the Department of Records and Research, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. Details of the five black deaths are from the *New York Age*, July 8, 1922, front page.

3. Records of Tuskegee Institute. These statistics do not include other forms of mob violence. On May 29, for example, Wilbur Die, a black from Savannah, was accused of killing B.W. Moody, a white man. Die was "trailed into a swamp by a mob of 300 men, surrounded and shot to death and his body burned." See *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1922.

4. Wilson to Taft in a letter included in the minutes of the Lincoln Memorial Commission meeting on April 5, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Box 9, Entry 366, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital.

5. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 74.

6. Lincoln Memorial Meeting, Minutes of April 5, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Box 9, Entry 366.

7. NAACP Papers, Group I, Series G, D.C. Branch, Box G-34, Reel 5, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

8. *Ibid.* Taft's secretary acknowledged receipt of this letter on March 17, 1922.

9. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 73.

10. *New York Age*, June 17, 1922, p. 4.

11. Others who left the dedication ceremony in protest were: Dr. Emmett J. Scott, former Assistant to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker in the Wilson Administration and at the time of the dedication secretary-treasurer of Howard University; Perry W. Howard, Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney General and Mrs. Howard; George W. Cook, Dean of Howard University and Mrs. Cook, a member of the School Board of the District of Columbia; Counselor Ormond W. Scott, ex-grand exalted ruler of the Elks and his wife; and Judge and Mrs. Emanuel M. Hewlett. For other black American VIPs at the ceremony and an account of the McKinley incident, see *NewYork Age*, June 10, 1922, p. 5.

12. *Chicago Defender*, undated news clipping in the National Archives, RG 42, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

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13. Despite ongoing debates about Lincoln's antipathy towards black Americans and his commitment to end slavery, he nevertheless issued the Emancipation Proclamation in strong, measured language.

14. National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

15. Letter dated May 31, 1922, from Du Bois to Johnson in NAACP Papers, Group I, Series G, Reel 5, D.C. Branch, Box G-34, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.* See letter dated June 3, 1922, from Johnson to Davidson.

18. *Ibid.*

19. "Resolution of Protest Adopted by the District of Columbia Branch of the NAACP Against the Segregation of Colored People at the Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial," in NAACP Papers, Group I, Series G, Box G-34, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. Weeks to Grimke, letter dated June 10, 1922, in National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Weeks to Grimke, June 7, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation-Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

26. Grimke to Weeks, June 10, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation-Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

27. Cobb to Sherrill, June 3, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Quoted in *New York Age*, June 17, 1922, p. 4.

30. Kilyer to Sherrill, June 30, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

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31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. Unidentified and undated news clipping (probably the *Afro-American* [Baltimore]) in the National Archives, RG 42, Box 2, Entry 366, Race Segregation — Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

41. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 77.

42. *Baltimore Sun*, May 30, 1922, front page.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Basler, p. 43. For a comprehensive analysis of the Gettysburg Speech see Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America.* Thorndike, Maine: G.K. Hall, 1999.

45. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 78. For the entire text of Moton's address see pp. 78-81.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Concklin, The Lincoln Memorial, p. 79.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

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51. Instead of appealing to the public from a humanitarian standpoint, it proved to be more effective to appeal to a nationalist ideology that ultimately hearkened back to the principles stated in such documents as the Declaration of Independence or in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Thus, appeals for rights proclaimed "I am an American," rather than "I am a man." See Scott A. Sandage, The Lincoln Memorial, p. 138.

52. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 81.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. The revised draft is in the Moton Family Papers, Box 11, Folder 3, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

57. Original draft of the Lincoln Memorial address by Robert Rossa Moton for the dedication ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial, May 30, 1922, in the Motor Family Papers, Box 11, Folder 13, p. 7. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

61. Concklin, p. 80.

62. Moton Family Papers, p. 5.

63. Concklin, The Lincoln Memorial, p. 80.

64. Moton Family Papers, p. 5.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Ibid.*

69. While Moton has always been regarded as an arch conservative by many of his black American peers, this speech, both in its original and revised forms, is characterized more by a mix of pragmatism and disillusion.

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70. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 70.

71. For Markham's poem in its entirety, see Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, pp. 82-83.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.*

75. Concklin, p. 84.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

78. See Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, pages 87, 90 and 91 consecutively.

79. The *Washington Post*, May 30, 1922, p. 1.

80. *Ibid.*

81. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 87.

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

84. *Ibid.*

85. See Robert G. Murray, *The Harding Era, Warren G. Harding and His Administration* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1969), pp. 401-403.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 401.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 402.

88. Congress was pressured into passing the act shortly after Martin Luther King was assassinated.

89. See *New York World*, September and October, 1921.

90. See undated article in *Afro-American* [Baltimore]. National Archives, RG 42, Segregation-Lincoln Memorial Dedication File. On Harding's ancestry see Francis Russell, *The Shadow of*

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Blooming Grove, Warren G. Harding & His Times (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company), pp. 20-26.

91. See Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 165.

92. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*, p. 89.

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

95. *Baltimore Sun*, May 30, 1922, front page.

96. *Ibid.*

97. From philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952). The exact quote is: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

98. Undated, probably May 31 or June 1, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Segregation—Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

99. See *New York Age*, June 10, 1922, front page. On Fortune see Emma Lou Thornbrough, *T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Journalist* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972).

100. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

101. Undated clipping (probably June 10, 1922), the *Chicago Defender*. National Archives, RG 42, Segregation—Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

102. *Ibid.* The *Defender* presented a perceptive moral analysis of the days events. It equated Lincoln's actions and the outcome of the Civil War with the birth of a new nation. In this, the paper was not alone. Many of the most enlightened writers and commentators of the post Civil War period, among them William Dean Howells, viewed the outcome of the war with an eye toward redemption. But the *Defender* was quick to acknowledge that neither redemption nor reconciliation between the North and the South had occurred. On the contrary, the country was still divided by "...the stream (between Washington and Virginia/North and South) thus far the dividing line between right and wrong, truth and error, liberty and slavery." See undated clipping, the *Chicago Defender*, May 31 or June 1, 1922. National Archives, RG 42, Segregation—Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

103. *Pittsburgh American*, June 16, 1922. Schomburg Archives, Reel 6.

104. *The Appeal*, St. Paul, Minnesota, Vol. 38, No. 22, June 3, 1922, p. 2.

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105. From the *Chicago Whip* as reprinted in *The Appeal*, July 15, 1922. Schomburg Archives, Reel 6.

106. The *Washington Post*, May 31, 1922, front page.

107. *The New York Times*, May 31, 1922, p. 3.

108. *New York Tribune*, May 31, 1922, p. 4.

109. *New York Herald Tribune*, May 31, 1922, front page.

110. *Ibid.*

111. J.W. Duffield, "Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial," *Current History* (July 1922), p. 552.

112. "Simplicity to Mark Dedication Tomorrow of Noble Memorial to Abraham Lincoln," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 29, 1922, n.p.

113. Harvey M. Watts, "The Lincoln Memorial," *The Trend*, 1, No. 16 (June 21, 1922). Henry Bacon Papers, Wesleyan University.

114. See "How Lincoln Would Have Laughed," *New York Independent*, 74 (February 6, 1913), pp. 280-281; *Inter Ocean*, January 16, 1913; *Saturday Evening Post*, March 16, 1912; *Pittsburgh Press*, September 10, 1911; *Chicago Evening Post*, January 23, 1912; *Inter Ocean*, January 19, 1913; *Chicago Sunday Record*, January 19, 1913, clippings in Henry Bacon Papers, Wesleyan University.

115. Leila Mechlin, "The North Window," *The Washington Post*, May 17, 1923, in Henry Bacon Papers, Wesleyan University.

116. *Ibid*

117. Frederick Douglass, Oration Delivered on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, in Abraham Lincoln Park, Washington, D. C., April 14th, 1876.

118. *Ibid.*, July 1, 1922, p. 4. The *Chicago Defender* on the other hand attacked Harding and suggested his analysis of Lincoln undermined the late president's accomplishments: "[Harding] obscures a light to which Lincoln lent the illumination of a character that outshone the sun and all the stars." The editorial also asserted that Harding "denied the title that gives Lincoln deathless fame, that of Emancipator." See undated news clipping, May 31 or June 1, 1922, National Archives, RG 42, Segregation-Lincoln Memorial Dedication File.

119. *The Crisis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, July 1922, p. 103.

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120. *The New York Times*, May 30, 1922. News clipping in Henry Bacon Papers, Wesleyan University.

121. *Ibid.*

122. *New York Herald*, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 274, May 31, 1922, front page.

123. J.W. Duffield, "Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial," *Current History*, July 1922, p. 553.

124. *New York Tribune*, May 31, 1922, front page. Regardless of the geographic location of the various white publications, the classical architectural style of the Lincoln Memorial was almost unanimously praised for its ideal, universal qualities, which were thought to conform to traditional cultural values the Memorial —and by extension—Lincoln were meant to embody and convey. See for instance, the *Christian Science Monitor*, "Simplicity to Mark Dedication of Noble Memorial to Abraham Lincoln," May 29, 1922 n.p.: "In the strength and Greek austerity of the building from which the heroic statue of Lincoln looks out...the visitor must feel inevitably a sense of the greatness and simplicity which were Lincoln's."

125. The *Washington Post*, May 31, 1922, p. 3.

126. See *Baltimore Sun*, May 30, 1922, front page & p. 2.

127. *Birmingham News*, May 30, 1922, front page.

128. *Roanoke World News*, May 30, 1922, p. 6.

129. *Asheville Times*, May 30, 1922, front page.

130. *Ibid.*, June 4, 1922, p. 4.

131. *Ibid.*

132. Stonebraker's argument was that many of Lincoln's "policies," such as centralism and miscegenation were directly responsible for the destruction of the economic, political and social health of the South. See *The Unwritten South*, 5th edition (1908) esp. p. 185.; Minor authored *The Real Lincoln, From the Testimony of His Contemporaries* (2nd ed., Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Co., 1905) in which he uses "testimony" of Lincoln's contemporaries to "prove" that Lincoln caused the Civil War.

133. Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Propaganda in History*, 2nd ed., revised (Richmond, Va., 1921) pp. 10-19.

134. *Tyler's Quarterly*, 10 (July, 1928) p. 69.

135. Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Truths of History*, 1920, frontispiece

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136. United Daughters of the Confederacy, Georgia Division, 1916, p. 48.

137. James H. M'Neilly, "Reconstruction and the Ku Klux Klan," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 3 (March 1922), p. 97.

138. James H. M'Neilly, "As to African Slavery," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (April, 1922), pp. 127-128.

139. Lyon G. Tyler, "Was Lincoln A Friend of the South?", *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 10 (October, 1922), p. 365.

140. James H. M'Neilly, "Reconstruction and the Ku Klux Klan," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 3 (March 1922), p. 97.

141. Arthur H. Jennings, "That Lincoln Resolution—and Some Other Things," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 8 (August 1922), p. 285.

142. *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 9 (September 1922), p. 324.

143. *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXX, No. 10 (October 1922), p. 366.

144. C. E. Gilbert, "Lincoln's Inconsistencies," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XL, No. 1 (January, 1932), p. 20.

145. For a representative account of one of these gatherings see *The Washington Post*, February 13, 1929, p. 2.

146. One of the first gatherings at the Memorial was held four months after the dedication, in September, 1922, when members of the National Medical Association (an association of black medical professionals) held meetings to honor both Lincoln and Douglass. They visited the Lincoln Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery, and the Frederick Douglass Memorial home in Anacostia,Virginia, that had been recently dedicated by the Douglass Memorial Association. See the *New York Age*, September 2, 1922, p. 5. One of the earliest large gatherings was held at the Memorial in 1926, when 2,000 delegates of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church held a convention at the Memorial in which Bishop E.D.W. Jones reiterated Lincoln's importance as emancipator. See *The Washington Post, August 6, 1926*, p. 8.

147. In 1917 the organization had a membership of 9,000, by 1919 it had risen to about 90,000, and by 1946 it was to claim nearly 500,000 members.

148. Walter White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), p. 184; Marian Anderson performed at the Lincoln Memorial on two other occasions: October 11, 1954 at a memorial service for Harold Ickes and August 26, 1963 at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

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149. In 1917, Randolph also co-founded with Chandler Owen the *Messenger*, a Socialist magazine that offered a more radical viewpoint than that of the NAACP's *Crisis*, whose editor was W.E.B. Du Bois.

150. On J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I. see Richard G. Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: Free Press, 1987); Athan G. Theoharis and John Cox, *The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).

151. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto*, 3rd edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), p. 272.

152. See Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), esp. p. 285

153. See, for example, Earl Browder, *Lincoln and the Communists* (New York, 1936), esp. p. 58.

154. There are a number of assessments of the Depression and its disproportionate impact on black Americans. See William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), pp. 185-187; Bernard Sternsher, ed., *The Negro in Depression and War: Prelude to Revolution, 1930-1945* (Chicago, 1969); *Negroes and the Great Depression: The Problem of Economic Recovery* (Westport, Connecticut, 1970).

155. For ILD activities during this period see Philip S. Foner and Herbert Shapiro, eds., *American Communism and Black Americans, A Documentary History 1930-1934* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

156. The case became a cause célebrè that was taken up by the CPUSA and the NAACP, and by Clarence Darrow, the lawyer famous for defending a man accused of teaching evolution. After several trials, four of the nine accused were acquitted and released in 1936 and four more in 1940. The last prisoner was not freed until 1950.

157. The *New York Herald Tribune*, October 8, 1933.

158. Milton Meltzer, *Violins and Shovels: The WPA Arts Projects* (New York, 1976). For a discusssion of the nationalization of public culture during Roosevelt's administration see Nancy Beck Young, William D. Pederson and Byron W. Daynes, eds., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Shaping of American Political Culture* (Armonk, New Jersey: M. E. Sharpe, 2001).

159. Barry Mackintosh, *The Historic Sites Survey and National Historic Landmarks Program, A History*, History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior (Washington, D.C., 1985), p. 4.

160. The exhibit opened on September 23, 1994. Phone interviews with Susan Kelly, Site Manager of Mall Operations, November 12, 2001 and Robert Fudge, Chief of Visitors Service at

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the National Mall, November 15, 2001.

161. For a discussion of how the economic policies of the New Deal helped advance the concept of economic rights see Richard Gilbert et al.,*An Economic Program for American Democracy* (New York, 1938).

162. The NNC also adopted resolutions urging unionization of black women workers, desegregation of public accommodations and schools, protection of migrant workers as well as resolutions against war and fascism. See John P. Davis, *Let Us Build a National Negro Congress* (Washington, D.C., 1935) and John B. Streater, Jr., "The National Negro Congress (Ph.D. Diss., University of Cincinnati, 1981), pp. 55, 62, 67, 74.

163. The Pullman Company was founded shortly after the Civil War and by the 1920s had become the nation's largest single employer of black Americans. Although many Pullman porters were college graduates, they faced unfair and discriminatory practices on the job. For ten years, Randolph held the union together and fought to have the Railway Labor Act amended, although his efforts were opposed on many fronts. Criticism came from white and black political leaders including the National Urban League, led by Lester Granger, and the NAACP. See Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1981* (New York: International Publishers, 1981), pp. 216-217.

164. Marable Manning, *Black American Politics, From the Washington Marches to Jesse Jackson* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 81.

165. Richard M. Dalflume, 'The "Forgotten Years" of the Negro Revolution,' in Bernard Sternsher, ed., *The Negro in Depression and War: Prelude to Revolution, 1930-1945* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 305-306.

166. Meier and Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto*, p. 272.

167. Herbert Garfinkel, *When Negroes March* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1959), p. 60.

168. It was not until July, 1948, when President Truman signed Executive Order 9981, that segregation in the military ended.

169. Keynote Address to the Policy Conference of the March on Washington Movement (Detroit, Michigan, September 26, 1942) in Joanne Grant, ed., *Black Protest: History, Documents and Analyses, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), pp. 243-250.

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Chapter 4

A "Cathedral of Democracy" in the Cold War

On April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage and it was left to Harry Truman to seek a way to end the war. Just four months after taking office, on August 6, 1945, Truman ordered an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and three days later, another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. With many thousands dead and wounded and facing what they were certain were more attacks from the terrifying new weapons, Japan agreed to unconditional surrender on August 14. By September, Americans were celebrating V-J Day and the outcome seemed another vindication of the American democratic system. As the nation, unscathed by the war when compared to bomb-pocked and devastated Europe, rushed to a post-war recovery, a number of events occurred almost simultaneously that would set the stage for the longest war in the history of the United States—the Cold War—and that would further ensure the institutionalization of the Memorial and its use as a forum to advance democratic idealism. The Memorial would also be used to justify President Truman's foreign policy of intervention based on the belief that the United States was the advance guard for the liberation of the world—a policy and attitude consistent with the exceptionalist ideology of national mission embodied in the monument.

The proximate reason for the seismic shift in foreign policy (the United States and the Soviet Union had been allies during the war) was the deterioration of the United States' relations with the Soviets, articulated in Winston Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri,[1] where he warned of Soviet expansionism. That speech marked the start of the Cold

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War. At the same time, racial violence worsened dramatically as black veterans returned from the war only to find that they frequently faced lynch mobs instead of a grateful citizenry. Soviet propagandists condemned the treatment of black veterans and sparked numerous protests in Washington as well as intense criticism at home and abroad about the way blacks were being treated in their homeland. The United States was both defensive and reluctantly receptive to such criticism. In the aftermath of the war the international community was acutely sensitive to issues of colonialism and racism and their potential to lead to another global war. Atrocities such as the Holocaust revealed in the Nuremberg trials were reported daily. Some countries established anti-racism leagues.[2] These events, along with the dissolution of the League of Nations in April 1946 followed by the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in London, formed the international backdrop against which America's racial policies would come under increasingly negative scrutiny.

The black American press added to this scrutiny. It sent correspondents to Europe to cover the events at the United Nations in London and also to report on the Paris Peace Conference. In Paris in September, 1946, *Chicago Defender* correspondent George Padmore reported on the Vietnamese struggle for independence and interviewed Ho Chi Minh, who was in Paris to negotiate a treaty with the French on behalf of the new Vietnamese government. Padmore reported that Ho's first question to him was about the racial situation in the United States. When Padmore told him about the lynchings of two World War II veterans and their wives in Monroe Georgia Ho responded, "It's barbarism."[3]

At the same time, East Indians who were engaged in a world-wide mass passive resistance movement for freedom from British colonialism, sent representatives to the United

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States to advertise their second-class citizenship status in South Africa. Another *Defender* correspondent, Ralph Izzard was sent to Bombay and reported from there that lynchings and mass terror against American citizens reflected the same racial oppression Indians were fighting in South Africa and "dimmed the prospects" of their U.S. mission. He also noted that despite newsprint rationing, the Indian press devoted considerable space and editorial commentary to racial incidents in the United States. The Monroe, Georgia lynchings, he wrote, were widely reported and Indian papers such as *The Free Press*, in Bombay, compared the racial policies of the United States unfavorably with those of South Africa, commenting that "white America beats South Africa."[4]

In October George Padmore filed another report from Paris on visits by Secretary of State Byrnes and Vivian C. Mason of the National Council of Negro Women, who were in the city to meet with European delegates at the Paris Peace Conference on the issue of race in the United States. Padmore reported: "Two conflicting portraits of American Democracy are being painted in Paris today...while Byrnes waves the blessings of Americanism before the European delegates—especially those from the so-called Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe—Mrs. Mason has been lobbying with delegates in the corridors of the Luxembourg Palace, relating the suffering of 13 million loyal citizens in America."[5]

Blacks at home protested the increase in violence and framed their displeasure within an international context. Fifty women from the NAACP picketed the White House carrying banners that read: "Speak, Speak! Mr. President!" and "Where is Democracy?"[6] The National Urban League held a five-day conference in St. Louis in September with leaders from across the nation participating. They demanded enactment of Fair Employment Practice laws, protested the return

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of the United States Employment Service to state control, demanded better benefit laws for veterans, and drew up a resolution on world peace emphasizing that "American foreign policy must inspire worldwide convictions that the U.S. is interested in the welfare of the common man of all races and creeds and conditions." A statement by President Truman read at the opening of the conference acknowledged that America's position of leadership within the international community was jeopardized until the county addressed its own racial problems. [7]

Internationally, the country had posited itself as a moral arbiter and defender of democracy—an increasingly untenable position as lynchings and mob violence continued to escalate and the government remained unresponsive in stemming the violence or apprehending and prosecuting lynchers. Between June 1945 and September 1946 fifty-six black Americans were killed and not a single arrest, indictment or conviction of any participant in any of the lynchings had been made.[8] In the hysteria and paranoia that permeated much of the country, communism was frequently viewed as a two-fold threat: on the one hand it threatened democracy while on the other its espousal of equality threatened white supremacy.[9] The left-wing domestic media, meanwhile, criticized the hypocrisy of the long arm of the state department for dictating its moral ideology to the rest of the world while it tolerated the Ku Klux Klan and turned a blind eye to the lynching of black citizens [Fig. 4.1] and abandoned black soldiers who fought against fascism in Europe only to return to the United States and become victims of organized terror themselves [Fig. 4.2].

Racial violence also energized liberal pressure groups which, by the end of 1946, had prodded Truman to create a Civil Rights Committee by Executive Order (the Committee was financed by the President's contingent fund).[10] Truman defended his decision to establish the

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Civil Rights Committee when he said: "I created this committee with a feeling of urgency. No sooner were we finished with the war than racial and religious intolerance began to appear and threaten the very things we had just fought for...men of good will everywhere are striving, under great difficulties, to create a worldwide moral order, firmly established in the life of nations."[11] The lynchings and burnings, in conjunction with international pressure spawned by the cold war, ultimately led to the President's decision to deliver a message on June 29, 1947 at the NAACP's 38th annual conference that culminated at the Lincoln Memorial. The speech was unusually aggressive in its message of Government activism on behalf of civil rights.

Among the more horrific incidents that produced much negative publicity causing Truman to respond personally was the blinding of Isaac Woodward, a black veteran who had served in the New Guinea and Philippine campaigns and had been awarded a Battle Star for service. On February 13, 1946, Woodward boarded a Greyhound bus in Aiken, South Carolina. Discharged from the Army only four hours earlier and still in uniform, Woodward and the bus driver had a verbal spat and at some point Woodward was taken off the bus, beaten unconscious, and Sheriff L. M. Shull, the Batesburgh, South Carolina chief of police gouged out his eyes with a billy club.[12]

Following on the heels of this incident was an attack in Columbia, Tennessee, on February 24 and 25 during which a number of black citizens were terrorized and two were murdered while they were detained in jail by the Ku Klux Klan, local police and the National Guard of that town. A riot ensued and twenty-eight blacks were arrested and charged with murder. Thurgood Marshall, a future justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, litigated the case for the NAACP and asked for an audience with Truman to discuss the situation. Truman did not meet

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with representatives of the NAACP but assigned Attorney General Tom Clark to investigate the case. Leon A. Ransom, chief counsel for the defendants, protested to Clark that a fair trial was not possible because of bias by the prosecution and the state court.[13] He charged that a "kangaroo grand jury" in Columbia had ruled that "no civil liberties were violated in the riot and that the primary blame lay with Negroes,"[14] and since the Justice Department concurred with the Columbia grand jury, any assistance from the Justice Department was impossible. Ransom also complained that Judge Joe Ingram recommended that Southern newspapers suppress information favorable to the defense. That information was testimony offered by James Underwood, sheriff of Columbia County at the time, that "a mob of 50 to 75 whites stormed the city jail at the height of the riot" and "he was forced to hold back the mob with a submachine gun."[15] While the twenty-eight defendants were eventually freed of the charges against them for lack of evidence, no indictment was ever brought against the white officials involved in the riot and murder.

In July, when four blacks (two men and their wives) were lynched near Monroe, Georgia, it was reported on the front page of the *New York Times* that President Truman was "horrified" and that he "had ordered Attorney General Tom Clark to use every resource of the Department of Justice to investigate "this and any other crimes of oppression."[16] Despite Truman's pronouncement, relatives of the victims, threatened by the Ku Klux Klan, were too frightened to attend the funerals.[17] Nor did Truman's outrage prevent Senator Theodore Bilbo, Democrat from Mississippi, from announcing on the day of the funeral, on a nationwide radio broadcast, that he was a member of the Ku Klux Klan No. 40, "called the Bilbo Klan No. 4 Mississippi."[18]

These miscarriages of justice took on international significance when a group of prominent citizens headed by Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Channing H. Tobias, director of the

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Phelps-Stokes Fund organized to protest the latest incident. Their efforts led to the establishment of an organization called the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence. It was this committee that conferred with Truman on September 19, 1946, a meeting that would ultimately lead to his acceptance of an invitation to speak at the Lincoln Memorial. The committee was led by the executive secretary of the NAACP, the personable and quietly insistent Walter White who along with W.E.B. Du Bois and Mary McLeod Bethune worked as a delegate in the founding of the United Nations in 1945. Other members of the delegation represented a broad cross section of civic organizations and political interests and along with Dr Channing Tobias, included James Carey, secretary of the CIO, who represented labor interests, Leslie Perry, administrative assistant of the NAACP, Boris Shishkin of the AFL, and Frederick E. Reissig, from the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.[19] Although the group had been allotted only fifteen minutes the amicable meeting lasted thirty-five minutes and concluded with Truman having his picture taken with the delegation.[20]

The primary purpose of the meeting was to urge the President to take action against lynching, specifically to call a special session of Congress to enact a law making mob violence a federal offense. White told the president that it was critical that he act to "stem the rising tide of lynchings and violence against Negroes"[21] and he specifically requested that Truman instruct law enforcement agencies to "concentrate upon securing evidence against and persecution of lynchers without delay or appeasement of any political, sectional or other defenders of mob violence."[22] Dr. Tobias told the President that he had read an account of the two men and women lynched in Monroe, Georgia in a London newspaper and that it "did not read well" and that he was "less concerned in talking to him about injustice to Negroes than...about the extent

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to which American prestige was suffering abroad as a result of this unchecked wave of mob violence."[23] The delegation also urged Truman to educate both the public and appeal to public opinion, to "rouse the American people by radio, press and other media to oppose actively every form of mob violence,"[24] pointing out to the President that "while representatives of the United States labor at the Paris Peace Conference and in the United Nations to create world peace based on human freedom and justice, their words and actions are made a hollow mockery by the unprecedented wave of mob violence in the United States."[25] The committee ended its meeting with the President by providing him with graphic and detailed descriptions of racial violence occurring throughout the South, including full reports of the quadruple lynching in Georgia, and and the blinding of Isaac Woodward in South Carolina. They also informed Truman of the spread of anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, anti-labor and anti-foreign-born hate literature circulating throughout the entire country.[26]

Walter White, recounting the meeting with Truman, recalled that the President expressed horror at these reports and admitted to the delegation that domestic racial violence was one of his greatest problems. His initial response genuinely impressed the committee: "My God! I had no idea that it was as terrible as that! We have to do something," he went on to say that "Everybody seems to believe that the President by himself can do anything he wishes on such matters as this, but the President is helpless unless he is backed by public opinion."[27] But Truman's response was calculated since before the meeting took place he was already aware of the incidents and had decided to recommend the establishment of a committee to research violation of civil liberties and present a program of corrective action during the meeting with the delegation.[28] To bypass any possible interference from Congress (at the time it was comprised primarily of Southern and

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conservative members who could indefinitely bottleneck any action recommended by the President), a concern raised by Walter White, Truman decided to create the committee by Executive Order and finance it from his contingent fund. Two months later, on December 5 1946, Truman created a civil rights committee authorized "to inquire into and to determine whether and in what respect current law-enforcement measures and the authority and means possessed by federal, state, and local governments may be strengthened and improved to safeguard the civil rights of the people."[29] It was also to recommend "...more adequate and effective means and procedures for the protection of civil rights..."[30]

Four days after meeting with the delegates from the NAACP, Truman met with another civil rights group, the American Crusade to End Lynching, formed under the auspices of the National Negro Congress. Like the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence, this group organized in direct response to the dramatic increase in lynchings but its approach was far more aggressive than the gradualist approach favored by the NAACP. The American Crusade to End Lynching intended to mobilize supporters on a massive grass-roots level and insisted that their demands by met within a specified time frame. Led by activist singer and actor Paul Robeson, the Crusade brought together an impressive array of supporters. Foremost among these was W.E.B. Du Bois, who Robeson asked to join the anti-lynching crusade: "The alarming rise of lynchings and continued immunity from prosecution necessitates dramatic, effective action of democratic Americans on a national scale. Will you join Bartley Crum (Crum was special counsel to President Roosevelt's Committee on Fair Employment Practices in 1942 and in 1945 was a consultant to the United States delegation at the founding of the United Nations) and myself in issuing a call for a gathering in Washington on September 22, 23 in commemoration of

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Lincoln's projection of the Emancipation Proclamation to launch an American crusade to end lynching? [Fig. 4.3] This crusade will express the determination of the American people that the lynchers be apprehended and prosecuted and that the Congress of the United States enact a Federal anti-lynch law."[31] Du Bois accepted as did many other representatives from a diverse number of church, civic and labor groups as well as prominent figures including Lena Horne, Leonard Bernstein, Oscar Hammerstein II, Serge Koussevitzky and Albert Einstein who wrote to Truman: "May I wholeheartedly endorse the aims of this delegation, in the conviction that the overwhelming majority of the people favors security for all against illegal violence. To bring about this security is one of the most urgent tasks of our generation. There is always a way to overcome legal obstacles whenever there is an inflexible will at work in the service of so just a cause."[32]

The American Crusade to End Lynching was intended to be an ambitious 100-day long effort, beginning on September 22, 1946 and lasting through January 1, 1947. The symbolic rationale and dates for the "Crusade" were carefully chosen. It planned to march on the Capital on the 84th anniversary of Lincoln's announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation to the South which gave the seceded states 100 days to return to the Union or face the granting of freedom to their slaves on January 1, 1863. The "Crusade" would operate within this 100 day limit and would climax at the time of the convening of the 80th session of the United States Congress to have its demands met. The objectives of the Crusade were to apprehend and punish all lynchers, effect the passage of a Federal anti-lynching bill and to prevent Theodore Bilbo, the outspoken Klan member from Mississippi from regaining his seat in the Senate in the next election.

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The crusade was launched on September 22 with a 45 minute inter-denominational and bi-racial religious service presided over by two Protestant ministers, a Catholic priest and a rabbi. It was held in Chicago at the Metropolitan AME Church and was followed by a rally attended by 1,500 delegates from across the country.[33] On September 23, a mesmerizing nation-wide broadcast given by Robeson reached thousands of Americans. The force of his message was located in the words that Lincoln had spoken almost a century earlier when he issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Robeson, an ardent admirer of Lincoln, said:

> I stand here ashamed. Ashamed that here in the Capitol of the world's first genuine democratic government, it is necessary to seek redress of a wrong that defies the most fundamental concept of that precious thing we call democracy. Ashamed that it is necessary in the year 1946—84 years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, it is necessary to rekindle the democratic spirit that brought that document into being. Ashamed that it is necessary to publicly expose and fight the horrible contradiction that renders hollow our promises to lead the people of the world to their highest aspiration of freedom. I speak of the wave of lynch terror, and mob assault against Negro Americans. Since V-J Day, scores have been victims, most of whom were veterans, and even women and children.[34]

He reached out to a broad coalition of Americans:

> But I am not ashamed to stand here as a servant of my people, as a citizen of America, to defend and fight for the dignity and democratic rights of Negro Americans... to fight for their right to live. And I am not ashamed to join with the thousands of Americans, from all over the land, white and black, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, of all political persuasions, who have come together in a national pilgrimage of the American Crusade to End Lynching. People of America, we appeal to you to help wipe out this inhuman bestiality, this Ku Klux Klan hooded violence, this... this Fascism, as we have today appealed to the President and the Attorney-General of the United States.[35]

He then specifically attacked the government for its inaction: "For one whole year, this lynch terror has been going on. The number of victims has increased in volume with each succeeding month. And, during this one year, there has not been one arrest, there has not been

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one indictment, there has not been one conviction. These facts would lead to the conclusion that our local, State and national law enforcing agencies are either impotent or indifferent. We can be sure that the advocates of lynching have made this interpretation, as their increased violence attests." Robeson contrasted the position of the government with the beliefs of all Americans: "But, I know and you know –that the American People are certainly not indifferent and certainly do not recognize any such thing as impotence on the part of their government when the fundamental rights of all are actually threatened. And lynching is undermining the fundamental democracy of all. It is not the exclusive concern of Negro Americans." Here, Robeson paraphrased Lincoln's point made many years earlier: "The good Aryan who stood idly by when the German Jew was persecuted lived to learn that that was the beginning of the end of his own freedom. Let us not some day live to learn that the persecution of the Negro was the beginning of the end of all American freedom."[36]

Robeson ended his broadcast with this appeal: "We call upon the American people to petition and demand in the next 100 days of their federal government that proper action be taken to achieve this. From this day to January 1st, all Americans must be alerted and mobilized. United, let us go forward together for a genuine democracy for all people of these United States, achieving that for which a great war under a great Commander in Chief was concluded—a democratic, abundant and full life for all citizens of all races, creeds, and colors."[37]

The Crusade scheduled conferences throughout the day. While these conferences were in session delegations visited the Department of Justice and the Chairmen of the Republican and Democratic National Committees and a delegation led by Robeson met with Truman. The delegation sent to the Department of Justice presented a statement to Attorney General Tom

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Clark that likened the treatment of black Americans to the Jews at the hands of the Nazis in Germany and charged that "law enforcement authorities look the other way."[38] It demanded that the department enforce the laws of the country and that it make a concerted effort to apprehend and prosecute all lynchers. The delegation also urged that the department initiate an educational campaign on lynching and "investigate immediately the conspiracy between the various municipal, country and state authorities and the unpunished murderers."[39]

The statement presented to the national committee of the Republican and Democratic parties demanded that "all party candidates adhere to and support the enactment into law of an anti-lynch bill."[37] It made pointed demands that addressed the stumbling blocks encountered in the past, which included the elimination of "the obstructionist tactics of any filibustering minority" and the refusal to invoke cloture. It also demanded that all Senatorial candidates and incumbents publicly oppose Mississippi's Senator Bilbo and that campaign literature include information about the need for Federal legislation to end lynching.[40]

Although the delegates from the NAACP and the delegates from the American Crusade to End Lynching were asking substantially the same things of the President, Robeson's delegation had a very contentious and unsuccessful meeting with Truman and the Crusade had limited success. Several factors account for this. Three months before meeting with Truman, the National Negro Congress petitioned the newly formed United Nations asking the Secretary-General of that body to intervene and address critical human rights issues of black citizens because the United States government was historically unresponsive and continued to ignore their needs. At the same time, the Congress also wrote to President Truman, advising him of their action, referring to the United Nations as "the highest court of mankind" and relaying their

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dissatisfaction with his domestic and foreign policies.[41] Nor did Robeson help matters when he joined with Secretary of State Henry A. Wallace and publicly attacked Truman in an address he delivered in Madison Square Garden in New York City at an anti-lynching rally just a week before the meeting, angrily stating: "This swelling wave of lynch murders and mob assaults against Negro men and women represents the ultimate limit of bestial brutality to which the enemies of democracy, be they German Nazi or American Ku Kluxers, are ready to go in imposing their will. Are we going to give our America over to the Eastlands, Rankins and Bilbos? If not, then *stop the lynchers*!" He then demanded "What about it, President Truman? Why have you failed to speak out against this evil? When will the federal government take effective action to uphold our constitutional guarantees? Resolutions and appeals unnumbered have been sent to Washington asking these questions. To date not a single arrest, indictment, or conviction in the recent lynchings has been made. Impatient for action, the people will now go to Washington themselves on Monday, September 23, in a mighty American Crusade to End Lynching."[42]

By the time the Crusade's delegation, which consisted of six members led by Robeson[43] who was also the group's chairman met with Truman, he was already negatively predisposed toward them. Robeson read a message drawn up by the delegation which he read to Truman. The message asked the President to issue "a formal statement" expressing his views on lynching within the next one hundred days and to recommend "a definite legislative and educational program to end the disgrace of mob violence."[44] Robeson explained to the President that the next hundred days would be an appropriate time for the President to act, because it was on Sept. 22, 1862, that Lincoln issued the proclamation freeing the slaves and it was on January 1, 1863

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that it became effective. Robeson basically threatened the President that if the government did not take action to stop mob violence that "the Negroes will."[45] But Truman declined to make a statement about his views on lynching, citing sensitive political matters and poor political timing.[46] Dr. Metz T. P. Lochard, editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Defender*, disagreed and expressed his opinion that the time was ripe for the President to make known his position.[47] Mrs. Harper Sibley, president of the United Council of Church Women and the wife of the former president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce pointed out that "Discrimination against the Negroes in this country is just as bad as the racism of Nazi Europe. We're trying people in Nuremberg for war crimes: but if we really consider them guilty, Mr. President, we should consider those in this country who lynch Negroes equally guilty."[48] When the delegation concluded that it "seemed inept for the United States to take the lead in the Nuremberg trials and fall so far behind in respect to justice to Negroes in this country" the President bristled, claimed lynching was not a moral issue, and snapped that "Domestic problems are domestic problems, and foreign problems are foreign problems." He continued: "We realize, and you must realize that it is their [the Nazis'] philosophy which has infected a few people in this country and is largely responsible for lynching."[49] But Dr. Joseph Johnson, director of the Washington chapter of the Southern Conference on Human Welfare, replied that lynchings were common in this country long before the crimes now being judged in Nuremberg took place.[50] Aubrey Williams, publisher of the *Southern Farmer* and former administrator of the National Youth Administration, added that "a reign of terror existed in the South."[51]

Truman responded that, despite domestic problems, America and Great Britain were the last refuges of freedom in the world but Robeson took issue with the President's point: "I have

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lived in England for many years," Robeson told Truman, "and I know you are partially right about individual freedom in the British Isles—although I believe the Welsh miners might argue that point. But outside England I don't believe the British have a very proud record for human liberties in Africa, Palestine, India and other colonial areas." Truman shot back: "No true American should disagree with our foreign policy. We've got to support our policy and Secretary of State Brynes—he needs unity behind him." But Robeson pressed on: "I'm sorry to disagree, Mr. President. How can Secretary Byrnes stand up in the council of nations as the representative of a land of freedom, when lynchings and discrimination are common occurrences in that land?" He continued: "The temper of the Negro is changed, Mr. President. Negro war veterans, particularly, who fought for freedom want to know that they can have freedom in their own country. If they can't have protection against violence and intolerance on the local level, then they want to know they will have Federal protection." Robeson warned the President that this dissatisfaction could produce a situation so dire that Federal intervention would be required. At this point the President lost his temper and accused Robeson of threatening. Robeson apologized, and characterized his comment as personal and strongly felt: "I'm afraid I was carried away by the subject, Mr. President. It's something I feel deeply—for my people and for the overwhelming majority of white people of America." [52] Truman abruptly concluded the allotted fifteen minutes for the session early, made no promises and issued a statement so general— "all right-thinking Americans abhor lynching" [53]— that one newspaper concluded it was intentionally evasive and demonstrated a "vacillating and equivocal" attitude on "lynching and mob violence."[54]

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A cartoon in the *Chicago Defender* shortly after Robeson's meeting with Truman, entitled "Pointing Out The Resemblance" [Fig. 4.4] captured the dynamics of the meeting. Robeson (a tall, 240 lb. man with a commanding presence in real life) is shown larger than life, with feet spread, gesticulating to an unbelieving, bespectacled and diminutive Truman who looks like two figures standing in the background joined together shoulder to shoulder. The figure on the right, with "U.S. Fascist" written across his chest has his arm draped over the shoulders of a man with "European Fascism" written across his chest. Both of these identical figures wield whips and wear gestapo like leather boots with which they pin down two men —a Jew and a black man.

In a press conference after the contentious meeting with Robeson and his group, David Niles, presidential assistant and advisor to the President on racial matters, tried to soften Truman's position to the press that "The President feels that this is a political matter and that the element of timing is important. This is not the time for the chief Executive to make a pronouncement of any new course." He added, "The President conveyed to the delegation that his general position was a matter of record." Robeson interjected "This is an issue that cannot be ducked."[55] It was Robeson's turn, however, to be on the defensive with the waiting reporters who asked him point-blank if he was a Communist. Robeson replied that he was not and added: "I label myself as very violently anti-fascist." But he did not attempt to disavow communism entirely. Asked if he followed the Communist party line, Robeson replied "It depends on what you mean by the Communist party line: Right now the Communist party is against lynching. I'm against lynching."[56]

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Later that evening, the delegation marched to the Lincoln Memorial where an integrated audience of more than four thousand assembled for a dramatic evening that included appearances of families of some of the lynch victims. Robeson sang with the Washington Community Chorus. The rally was concluded by Robeson pronouncing a new Emancipation Proclamation. Standing at the feet of Abraham Lincoln's statue in the rain [Fig. 4.5], Robeson dramatically and forcefully read this new Emancipation Proclamation that recalled Lincoln's opening words for the Gettysburg Address: "Four score and four years ago a great President of the United States proclaimed the abolition of human slavery in most of America, the proclamation to become effective within one hundred days." He continued: "During the next few years, the abolition of slavery was made complete, and the long oppressed Negro people were endowed with the democratic constitutional rights of citizenship and of suffrage. Legally, the heritage of more than two centuries of Negro slavery was at an end." He went on to say that despite this, the oppression of the Negro never ended. In fact: "Today, but little more than one year after the United Nations victory over the enemies of all mankind, Negro women and men, including many veterans, are being murdered with impunity by lawless mobs, beaten and maimed and blinded, their homes destroyed, their right to vote openly flaunted, and a mockery made of their right to protection and to justice in the courts."[57]

Robeson likened the American mob violence against blacks with the horrors perpetrated by Nazi Germany against Jews: "The terror now being directed against Negroes in America has assumed that cruel pattern so characteristic of our late enemies in Nazi Germany." He then linked the fate and health of black citizens with the well-being of the nation— the same rationale that Robert Moton used twenty-four years earlier when the Memorial was dedicated to the

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public: "Unless it is stopped now, it will destroy not only the lives and liberties of Negroes, but also the democratic foundations of our entire society." He denounced Truman's and the Congress's inactions: "It is astounding that the President and Congress of the United States have taken no action which effectively curbs this unrestrained violation of human and constitutional rights! It is almost incredible that the political leaders of America remain idle in the face of this menace to the democratic freedom of our nation!" Robeson then officially proclaimed the start of the "one hundred day crusade" and called upon "all Americans of whatever race or creed or political persuasion, to mobilize their maximum resources and influence to the end of impressing the President and Congress of the United States with the urgent necesity of enacting effective legislation to stop lynching promptly upon the convening of the Eightieth Congress in January one hundred days hence."[58]

Although the Lincoln Memorial from its inception had been used as a leverage tool by civil rights leaders, Paul Robeson adopted an aggressive posture and publicly condemned Truman's policies and the nation's treatment of black Americans. While invoking Lincoln's words, he rejected out of hand the ideal of the American democratic experience as generating a never-ending process of never-ending progress. In the eyes of Robeson at least, the Lincoln Memorial was no longer a sacrosanct site where those who used it would be compelled to restate the ideals of the nation and plead for their eventual realization.

While the Crusade had the support of a broad spectrum of church, political and civic groups, as well as many important public figures the Crusade was doomed before it began. In addition to Truman's open hostility toward it, the group was plagued by organizational and financial problems—the National Negro Congress did not start actively planning the crusade

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until September 4. But most damaging of all, it was largely regarded as a Communist-front organization. The NNC's stance that the realization of black rights was inseparable from the establishment of Communism in Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia put it in open opposition to Truman's foreign policy. This combined with competition from other black organizations, a shift from a federation of organizations to a mass membership group after the War and deradicalization of the labor movement led to the demise of the National Negro Congress by 1947 which merged with the International Labor Defense and Civil Rights Congress in 1948.[59]

But in 1946 Truman considered both the organization and Robeson a threat. Although throughout his life Robeson steadfastly denied that he was a Communist, in the 1930s he lived in the Soviet Union for a brief period and had a close relationship with progressive labor unions, both in the United States and in Great Britain. These affiliations, along with his progressive views and his outspokenness made him suspect and less than three months after Robeson met with Truman, he was called to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee in California which grilled him about his political affiliations.[60] Given the Communist scare, practical as well as political reasons pre-empted any serious alignment between Robeson and Truman.

Several prominent black leaders including Walter White and other NAACP representatives who considered the National Negro Congress a dangerous rival distanced themselves from Robeson. White carefully explained that Robeson did not speak for "the overwhelming majority of the Negro people"[61] and in fact, many black organizations chose to work with the NAACP rather than with the NNC. One such organization, the Philadelphia

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Young Citizens Political Action Committee, wrote to Robeson: "We regret to inform you that we are discontinuing our plans for an Anti-Lynch Rally at Town Hall, Philadelphia on December 17. We have learned that the Philadelphia Chapter of the NAACP is holding a Rally on December 8, and we feel that it would be far more effective if we directed our efforts toward the support of that Rally."[62] Robeson received many such letters and several newspapers followed suit. Even the more radical black newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier* ignored Robeson's meeting with Truman while giving a thorough accounting of the NAACP's meeting with the President.[63]

As a result of pervasive fear and antagonism toward anything or anyone that might be tainted by Communism, the 100 day crusade effectively ended with the rally at the Lincoln Memorial which was ignored by Truman, who chose instead to attend the finals of the President's Cup Regatta.[64] Yet a half-year later, the NAACP announced in a press release on May 16, 1947 that a "huge outdoor meeting" would be held in front of the Lincoln Memorial on June 29 to close its 38th annual conference, and Truman would be the featured speaker presiding over its closing conference. The NAACP had obtained permission to use the site from the Department of Interior with ease and worked smoothly with the National Capital Parks Department to make additional arrangements for the meeting.[65]

When White met with Truman at the White House to offer the invitation, he pointed out to the President that it was both timely and politic to make such an appearance. He reminded Truman how "acts of discrimination against minorities were being used abroad to discredit the United States and convince the people of the world that Americans were incurably addicted to bigotry" and urged a "forthright and unequivocal statement" by the President "to let the people

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of the world know that while Americans frequently failed to live up to their declarations of democracy, we were constantly at work to narrow the margin between our protestations of freedom and our practice of them."[66] Although this sounded remarkably similar to the demands made earlier by Robeson, Truman was very receptive and even asked White to "send me a memorandum of the points you think I ought to emphasize in my speech."[67]

As plans for the conference developed, certain points of emphasis and strategy emerged as did the NAACP's major theme to secure Federal anti-lynching legislation—a theme that would be reiterated throughout the conference. NAACP press releases emphasized the precedent of using the Lincoln Memorial for occasions related to civil rights. The organization's association with the Marian Anderson concert was frequently mentioned to provide both historic legitimacy and significance. The NAACP also made vigorous efforts to ensure a large gathering. It invited several hundred men and women—including prominent citizens, politicians and foreign dignitaries-to this multi-national gathering.[68] It also arranged for a specially chartered train that would leave Houston, Texas, and would make stops in Arkansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Missouri and Ohio to pick up and transport NAACP delegates.[69] Newly chartered NAACP branches increased their representation and the number of delegates who would attend the conference. An NAACP press release stated: "Simultaneous with the Lincoln Memorial meeting, NAACP branches in practically every section of the United States will assemble in hundreds of meeting halls. These meetings, with an expected 4 to 5 hundred thousand persons attending, will be joined to form one gigantic mass meeting linked together by radio. All of the major networks will broadcast the President's speech and parts of the meeting."[70] All of these efforts indicate that the NAACP believed numbers were important in measuring the success of

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what they described as a "mass meeting" and the projected size of the June 29 meeting was emphasized in every press release (the June 6 press release pronounced that it "promises to be the largest single mass meeting in the Nation's history"). [71]

The NAACP nurtured interest by foreign newspapers, especially those from India, Africa and South America. Oliver Harrington, the NAACP's public relations director, reported on June 13 that his office was "besieged by correspondents from numerous overseas newspapers and press associations." [72] He provided a steady supply of information and statistics, especially on lynching and racial discrimination, that was specifically requested by foreign newsmen. The purposeful wooing of the foreign press, along with the broad-based effort in the United States, affirms that the NAACP's purpose for gathering at the Lincoln Memorial was much more than to celebrate 38 years as the most powerful civil rights organization in the United States. Its larger goal was to achieve federal legislation against lynching, and it intended to use the convention to draw attention to that issue. Walter White made clear the reason that the Lincoln Memorial was chosen as the preferred site:

> The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will meet in the fitting shadow of the Abraham Lincoln monument to rededicate all of its resources and energies to the peoples of all nations who fought and are still fighting to secure the rights of all men." He then took the opportunity to suggest a parallel between contemporary events and those of World War II which not unintentionally, exerted political pressure on the Truman administration: "Terrorism has always met with resistance. Nazi terrorism met with resistance and caused the destruction of a nation. The Negro people hope that their federal government will make resistance to the terrorism now being directed against them unnecessary.[73]

On June 20, the NAACP issued a press release that the June 29 meeting "will mark the spiritual rededication of America to the ideas and principles upon which our country was founded" [74] thereby suggesting that these ideals remained unfulfilled. As Robert Moton had

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emphasized at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, the NAACP's criticism (presented as a legitimate and elevated cause and justified by Lincoln's words and actions) was directed to all American citizens.

The conference lasted six days. Regular sessions began on Tuesday, June 24 and were held at the AME Zion Church, on 14th and Corcoran Streets, N.W. through June 28. There were 794 delegates from 43 states. The daytime sessions covered a range of legal, political, economic and social concerns. Issues of franchise, education, housing, transportation, civil rights acts, crime and police brutality were discussed. Practical matters were also covered that included reports from various organization committees, and election of committee representatives, membership and youth work fund raising. The conference gathered together a remarkable group of people, including Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas and Thurgood Marshall. NAACP delegates from various states conferred with their representatives in Congress on anti-lynching legislation as well as other legal issues. Full evenings were also scheduled but these were less business oriented and consisted of musical programs, addresses and announcements. The Negro anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written by James Weldon Johnson, followed by a benediction closed every evening's activities.

The highlight of the conference was the June 29 rally at the Lincoln Memorial that concluded the NAACP's national gathering for that year. There were several nationally known speakers including Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon and Walter White. The distinguished mezzo-soprano Carol Brice, described as "one of the greatest voices of modern times" [75] was invited as was the United States Marine Corps band. The most important voice, of course, was President Truman's. The NAACP announced:

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> The President's speech, which will be broadcast over major networks, is being eagerly anticipated in domestic as well as international circles, since it is expected that Mr. Truman will make a major declaration of government policy on racial tensions both at home and abroad. It is known that the rise of bigotry since he war's end has been a matter of ajor concern to the President, as evidenced by his appointment of a Commission on Civil Rights, headed by Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric.The front page notice and unprecedented editorial comment which the foreign press has devoted to lynching and racial discrimination in the United States, particularly when Secretary of State George Marshall issued his definition of democracy during the recent Moscow Conference, are known to have been a matter of grave concern to the President, according to sources close to the White House.[76]

The State Department, too, was sensitive to the impact of Truman's speech and requested that his speech be transmitted internationally by short wave. [77]

The Lincoln Memorial ceremonies [Fig. 4.6] began at 3:20 p.m. with music by a community chorus directed by Dean Warner Lawson of the Howard University School of Music. At 4: 00 p.m. the one-hour program of speeches began with an invocation by the Reverend Stephen Gill Spottswood, president of the District of Columbia NAACP and minister of the John Wesley AME Zion Church. The invocation was followed by Miss Carol Brice, who sang "The Star Spangled Banner" and "Ride on King Jesus" [Fig. 4.7].

This was followed by an address, "Making Democracy Work," by Senator Wayne L. Morse from Oregon. He opened his address by acknowledging the appropriateness of gathering at the Lincoln Memorial:

> It is fitting that we should gather at this great national shrine of human rights and rededicate ourselves to the principle that there shall be no discrimination in our democracy because of race, color, sex or creed. Would that every American could come frequently to this memorial spot on the banks of the Potomac and renew his faith in the principles of individual liberty and of representative government which are epitomized in the spirit of the great emancipator who, seemingly alive, but in the silence of stone, looks down upon us.[78]

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Throughout the rest of the address Lincoln remained at the heart of Morse's remarks. He assigned a deep layered meaning to the memorial for Americans, calling it a "cathedral of American democracy" and elevated Lincoln's addresses into moral teachings, examples of how "Lincoln saw democracy as Christianity put to practice."[79] In the past, the memorial always served multiple symbolic purposes and had often been referred to as a shrine but Morse's remarks both strengthened and extended the equation by positioning the memorial's importance within the context of a dynamic and secular political culture. The memorial's symbolic strength, already considerable, now became even richer: from the day of his assassination Lincoln was associated with the martyred Christ and now his temple, the cathedral of democracy, was the literal stage for what Clinton Rossiter eloquently called democracy's passion play.[80]

Senator Morse alluded to the Cold War and reminded his listeners that "in this critical hour in the history of our nation and of the world we dare not run the risk of paying just lip service to equality and justice and opportunity under law in the United States." He defended democracy as the most viable system of government and declared that "bigotry and democracy cannot be reconciled." He then called for a free ballot extended to all Americans as "a Federal right under our constitution beyond the trespass of any class or race consciousness," and for the end of all practices of discrimination, singling out economic discrimination in employment practices and lynching.[81]

Morse urged Americans to "insist that our elected representatives exercise an honest independence of judgement on the merits of issues as they find them irrespective of the terrific pressures which selfish groups may bring to bear upon them." He concluded with a quote by Lincoln: "No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what

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he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure which he deems constitutional if, at the same time, he deems it inexpedient."[82]

Eleanor Roosevelt was the next speaker and was introduced by Walter White as one "who after thirteen years as the First Lady of the Land is now First Lady of the World."[83] Greeted with a wave of applause, Mrs. Roosevelt said she came with a prayer in her heart, longing for a formula for world peace. She reported that a meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that she recently attended opened on a note about which there was no discord—that "all men are created equal." She reminded the audience that the world was watching America: "We are now under the eyes of the whole world, which sees us as a nation built upon the contributions of many people." She continued: "the blot of lynching on our land ...weakens the confidence that the rest of the world has in what we offer, since we have a great deal to offer."[84]

Walter White followed Mrs. Roosevelt. He outlined the history of the NAACP and paid homage to William English Walling, a white Southerner from Louisville, Kentucky (1877-1936), who by chance witnessed a race riot in Abraham Lincoln's hometown of Springfield, Illinois in 1909. Walling, said White, was so horrified by what he saw that he determined to do something and took the first steps that led to the organization of the NAACP. White also summarized the NAACP's legislative victories over the years, which included twenty-four cases involving fundamental human rights carried to the Supreme Court, twenty-two of which were won by the NAACP. As a result, he related, "no man in this country can legally be denied the right to vote

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in a primary election, to secure education in a tax-supported school, to ride first-class travel in return for a first-class fare, or be denied, because of color, the right to work."[85]

Invoking Lincoln's words, White said: "The NAACP operates on the proved principle that a nation cannot be half-free, half-slave. We know that throughout history, bigots have grown powerful by first attacking the most vulnerable minority in a nation, and then proceeding to attack others until liberty was destroyed for everybody, including the bigots."[86] He concluded with a statement intended to stress the autonomy of the NAACP and to disassociate it from influence by any political party, since it and all other such organizations were being watched by the FBI for any evidence of "subversive" political activities.

Then came Truman's speech, which was remarkable because it enunciated a major policy statement that not only startled many but in its passion and specificity surpassed even Robeson's exhortations of a half year earlier [Fig. 4.8]. The difference, of course, was that Truman was President and thus had the power to turn rhetoric into law. The president began by congratulating the NAACP "upon its effective work for the improvement of our democratic processes" and immediately launched into the most forthright statement on civil rights by any President up to that time: "It is my deep conviction that we have reached a turning point in the long history of our country's efforts to guarantee freedom and equality to all our citizens." He then referred to recent incidents of racial violence in the United States and to the Nazi Holocaust in Europe (fresh in the public's mind because of the recently concluded Nuremberg trials), suggesting a moral equivalence between the two. He drew upon this curious and dangerous parallel—ironically, the same parallel made by Paul Robeson that had so irritated him— in order to make the point that freedom and equality must be applied uniformly to all citizens. He told the audience that civil

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rights laws written in the early years of the Republic were "written to protect the citizens against the possibility of tyranny by the Government." He called for a new concept of civil rights— a radical proposal that challenged states rights as they had never been challenged before: "The extension of civil rights today means not only the protection of the people against the Government, but protection of the people by the Government. We must make the Federal Government a friendly, vigilant defender of the rights and equalities of all Americans. And again, I mean all Americans."[87]

The President proceeded to lay out a set of principles that all Americans had the right to enjoy: "equality of opportunity," "the right to a decent home, the right to an education, the right to adequate medical care, the right to a worthwhile job, the right to an equal share in making the public decisions through the ballot, and the right to a fair trial in a fair court." He pledged his full support of these principles and then directly attacked lynching: "Many of our people still suffer the indignity of insult, the harrowing fear of intimidation and, I regret to say, the threat of physical injury and mob violence. The prejudice and intolerance in which these evils are rooted still exist. The conscience of our nation, and the legal machinery which enforces it, have not yet secured to each citizen full freedom from fear." [88] For someone who had bristled at Robeson's far milder suggestions, this was like Saul's epiphany on the road to Damascus.

Truman urged quick action on his civil rights initiatives and yoked them to the threat of totalitarian governments to capitalism abroad— a strategy that could only have been used in an atmosphere of paranoia and anxiety triggered by the fear of the spread of Communism:

> The support of desperate populations of battle-ravaged countries must be won for this free way of life. We must have them as allies in our continuing struggle for the peaceful solution of the world's problems. Freedom is not an easy lesson to teach, nor an easy cause to sell, to peoples beset by every kind

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> of privation. They may surrender to the false security offered so temptingly by totalitarian regimes unless we can prove the superiority of democracy. Our case for democracy should be as strong as we can make it. It should rest on practical evidence that we have been able to put our own house in order. [89]

At this point Truman reasserted and justified the need for the Federal Government to take on a dominant role in securing civil rights: "For these compelling reasons, we can no longer afford the leisurely attack upon prejudice and discrimination. There is much that state and local governments can do in providing positive safeguards for civil rights. But we cannot, any longer, await the growth of a will to action in the slowest state or the most backward community. Our National Government must show the way."[90]

Truman stated that as a first step towards this unusually aggressive federal stance he had appointed an Advisory Committee on Civil Rights, and he asked Congress to pass legislation "extending basic civil rights to the people of Guam and American Samoa so that these people can share our ideals of freedom and self-government" which he regarded as "evidence to the rest of the world of our confidence in the ability of all men to build free institutions."[91]

He recalled the historic "charters of freedom"—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Emancipation Proclamation—to be used as guides to create a land that would be "a symbol of hope for all men, and a rock of security in a troubled world." He concluded his speech deferring to Lincoln's ideals. Although Lincoln was *not* one of his favorite figures Truman recognized the expediency of invoking Lincoln's image and words as a normative example of a democratic leader (such as himself) who represented the interests of all of the American people: "Abraham Lincoln understood so well the ideal which you and I seek today. As this conference closes we would do well to keep in mind his words, when he said, 'If it

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shall please the Divine Being who determines the destinies of nations, we shall remain a united people, and we will, humbly seeking Divine Guidance, make their prolonged national existence a source of new benefits to themselves and their successors, and to all classes and conditions of mankind.'" [92]

When Truman finished, applause was barely polite, and it prompted Walter White to remark in his autobiography that "I thought again of Lincoln—of the cool response which had been accorded the Gettysburg Address. I did not believe that Truman's speech possessed the literary quality of Lincoln's speech, but in some respects it had been a more courageous one in its specific condemnation of evils based upon race prejudice which had too long disgraced America, and its call for immediate action against them."[93] When Truman finished he sat down, turned to White and said: "I said what I did because I mean every word of it— and I'm going to prove that I do mean it."[94]

The speech was nothing less than momentous in its impact. It marked the beginning of a shift of power for protecting citizens' rights from the frequently ineffectual states (especially in the South) to the Federal Government and it eventually resulted in the establishment of a uniform legal standard by which all citizens were to be treated. The speech also articulated the moral suasion of democracy and located the compulsion for action in the symbolism of Lincoln's words and actions embodied in the Lincoln Memorial itself. It was a speech that twinned politics and morality with the physical presence of the Memorial. From this moment forward the Memorial would no longer function on a purely symbolic and abstract level. Previous invocations of the principles and ideals of democracy and freedom by political leaders at the Memorial took on a concrete specificity: the realization of civil rights for black Americans

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through the defeat of communism. Truman, by his physical presence at the Memorial and his use of Lincoln's words, altered the meaning and function of the Memorial. He related it to radical change in political institutions and class relations and did so by forwarding two contrastive conceptual images: the superiority of democracy and the brutality of communism. He skillfully magnified the threat of communism and legitimated his Cold War containment doctrine without jeopardizing the image of American omnipotence and without overexposing the fragility and hypocrisy of America's democratic, capitalistic ideals. The Memorial, a canonical temple, seemingly hermetic in its simple, repetititve forms and divorced from the insistence and chaos of life, suddenly took on a vivifying force and function much like Greek sacred architecture, in which meaning and form are inseparable.

An editorial in the Birmingham (Alabama) *Herald* praised Truman: "President Truman was at his best when he addressed the NAACP in Washington Sunday. He spoke with great sincerity and force on the subject of civil rights. He expounded a democratic doctrine which is altogether admirable." The editorial concluded, with a refreshingly different tone: "We must give proof of the faith we seek to propagate. What is this proof? The fulfillment of the following proposition, according to Mr. Truman: 'Every man should have the right to a decent home, the right to an education, the right to adequate medical care, the right to a worthwhile job, the right to an equal share in the making of public decisions through the ballot, and the right to a fair trial in a fair court. We must insure that these rights—on equal terms— are enjoyed by every citizen." The editorial concluded: "These rights are, to be sure, of unequal weight and value. But all of them belong in any adequate list of American rights which purports to give a broad-gauged picture of American freedom."[95] The moderate *Arkansas Gazette* in Little Rock however,

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wondered "Is it in the power of any government to wipe out prejudice? Enforcement of laws against 'discrimination' in fields where the government had not previously entered might only make prejudice more active."[96]

Surprise and moderation marked reaction within the black press. *The Crisis*, typically cynical and biting about racial progress, was ebullient about the President's speech and called it "the most comprehensive and forthright statement on the rights of minorities in a democracy and the duty of the government to secure safeguards that has ever been made by a President of the United States."[97] In an editorial of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a paper that did not support Truman in 1944, the President was compared favorably to Roosevelt. The editorial pointed out that Roosevelt never accepted any of the invitations proffered by the NAACP, nor did he make any statements as forthright as Truman's. Nor did the Department of Justice under F.D.R.'s administration aggressively pursue complaints of mob violence, and denial of the right to vote. Truman, on the other hand, was praised for appointing an Advisory Committee on Civil Rights without pressure, denouncing lynching, and showing "a friendliness, interest and insight which is as refreshingly new as it is statesmanlike, in view of the difficult international situation which soon may lead to World War III." [98] And while the editorial pointed out that it was not in agreement with all of Truman's policies, it concluded that the President deserved "high praise for his sincerity and forthrightness after a long era of double-talk and political expediency." [99]

But for all the problems and unfulfilled expectations Truman's speech raised, its content and the symbolism inherent in its place of delivery energized the growing civil rights movement. Pleas began to come in from other civil rights organizations and civic improvement groups that perceived that Truman was open to their causes. The People's Movement, a civic improvement

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group from St. Louis that had been picketing St. Louis Theaters for eight months to secure civil rights laws for St. Louis, appealed to Truman, citing that his address at the Lincoln Memorial, "gave hope and encouragement to democratic people throughout the world."[100]

Just four months later, the NAACP, despite Truman's speech, determined to keep an international spotlight on racial affairs and appealed directly to the United Nations (as had the National Negro Congress a year and a half earlier).[101] W.E.B. Du Bois, and a small group of distinguished Americans (Professor Milton Konvitz of Cornell University, Earl B. Dickerson and W. Robert Ming of Chicago, Leslie Perry of Washington, D.C. and Rayford Logan of Howard University) drew up a 155-page petition titled "A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress, Prepared for the NAACP" and presented it to the United Nations on October 23, 1947.[102] This petition detailed the catalogue of violence and oppression that black Americans encountered daily.

The petition created an international furor. But the United Nations Commission, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland on December 4, 1947, rejected the proposal.[103] As a result of the NAACP's action there was widespread news coverage from both the American and foreign press and the United States was publicly humiliated and forced to respond quickly and vigorously to the accusations. Attorney General Tom Clark addressed the NAACP's grievances in a public forum in Boston to the National Association of Attorneys General. His comments reveal his greater concern was with how such accusations would be received in the light of the Cold War, possibly jeopardizing the United States' ability to win the "great battle in the world between freedom and tyranny." Clark promised a larger and stronger Civil Rights Section of the Justice

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Department that would "secure to every citizen the rights of citizenship which are unquestionably his" and he gave notice that the Federal Government would intervene, if necessary, in securing those rights: "And in those instances where the states, through negligence or for whatever reason, fail in their obligation to protect the life and liberties of the individual citizen, we shall move with as great vigor and force as is permitted us under the law."[104]

Two days later, on October 29, a report drawn up by the Committee on Civil Rights, was submitted to President Truman.[105] Initially authorized by Truman's Committee on Civil Rights on December 5, 1946, the purpose of the report was to propose measures to strengthen and protect the civil rights of Americans. General Electric President Charles E. Wilson chaired the committee. All departments and agencies of the Federal Government were instructed to cooperate with the committee and furnish it with information and staff services as required. The committee conducted an inquiry, held public hearings, solicited advice, examined evidence, and made recommendations for policy improvements to carry out the mandate of Executive Order 9808. [106] The Committee was terminated upon submission and publication of its final report entitled "To Secure These Rights," in December 1947.[107]

The Committee was asked to focus its attention "on the bad side of the record—on what might be called the civil rights frontier."[108] It compiled a bleak picture of the current state of the inequitable application of civil rights to American citizens, described by the Committee as a situation which "is creating a kind of moral dry rot which eats away at the emotional and rational bases of democratic beliefs."[109] The Committee determined that "The protection of civil rights is a NATIONAL problem which affects everyone. We need to guarantee the SAME rights to every person regardless of who he is, where he lives, or what his racial, religious, or national origins

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are."[110] It concluded that "we would remind ourselves that the future of our nation rests upon the character, the vision, the high principles of our people, Democracy, brotherhood, human rights—these are practical expressions of the eternal worth of every child of God. With his guidance and help we can move forward toward a nobler social order in which there will be equal opportunity for all."[111]

When Truman received the committee's statement, he called it "an American charter of human freedom in our time," and added that "the need for such a charter was never greater than at this moment. Men of goodwill everywhere are striving under great difficulties to create a worldwide moral order, firmly established in the life of nations. For us, here in America, a new charter of human freedom will be a guide for action; and in the eyes of the world, it will be a declaration of our renewed faith in the American goal—the integrity of the individual human being, sustained by the moral consensus of the whole nation, protected by a government based on equal freedom under just laws." [112]

Commentary on the report was varied but many regarded it in the same terms as Truman. Senator Elbert D. Thomas, Democrat from Utah, commented: "If there was ever a time in the history of the world when a government must stand in its actions foursquare with the principles it poses as supporting in the world, now is the time."[113] Senator Wayne Morse said: "I am very much of the opinion that we need to protect the basic civil rights of individuals from encroachment during this time of great confusion and unsettled domestic and foreign affairs. The best type of Americanism is that which protects the guarantees of the individual in our Constitution."[114]

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Many newspapers in the North were enthusiastic about the report. The *Washington Post* editorialized "The document prepared by the committee is a heartening as well as an appalling one. The record of this nation falls far short of its pretension; it is a record which gravely impedes the fulfillment of our aims in foreign affairs, which seriously undermines the development of our full strength and security at home. Yet the recognition of our shortcomings is the indispensable first step toward correction of them."[115] The *Norfolk Journal and Guide* praised the report and urged its immediate application to stem the threat of communism, which it presented as a threat to democracy: "If this country now rejects and repudiates such a reaffirmation of faith in democratic living, after fighting two wars in one generation to preserve and spread democracy, it will make itself morally defenseless against the criticism and propaganda of other nations and peoples, thus weakening its useful influence in the world at a time when that influence is critically needed if the world, and itself, are not to be engulfed by chaos."[116]

But white supremacist groups also played on the fear of communism and subverted the notion of equality and the ideals of Lincoln, suggesting that racial equality was communistic propaganda. One such group, the National Citizens Protective Association, published this statement accompanied by an image [Fig. 4.9] that made its point graphically clear:

> All men are created equal, is a Communist statement. No two objects in nature are alike. The more alike the lower the form. Likeness is a sign of abasement. Negroes and Asiatics are very similar. All lower races are. They consequently have very little culture. Variation indicates where God is working and choosing. The white race built civilization because it has variety and is able to reflect the infinite creative spirit of God. Negroes and Asiatics are catalytic. You cannot raise them—but they will lower you. They have destroyed many white civilizations by breeding into them. Communists spend millions of dollars in the United States to make you think Negroes and Asiatics are the equal of whites. This sort of propaganda will destroy the

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> civilized world. The lower human forms are unable to reflect the infinite capacities of the civilized mind. If form meant nothing the dog would be as smart as a man. Variety of form and variety of races is God's way—not equality of races. What the lower races have, the white man gave them. Do you protect your white child from the Communist lie that all races are equal?[117]

Southern response to the Committee on Civil Rights was cool and often antagonistic. The most frequent objections cited were intervention of federal authorities in states rights and a belief that social change could not be legislated. While Southern legislators who blocked passage of FEPC, anti-lynch and anti-poll tax legislation remained uncharacteristically quiet about the report, many Southern newspapers thought that elimination of racial segregation would lead to chaos and social upheaval. *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, in an editorial entitled "Coercive Laws are Unwise and Dangerous" is reflective of much of the Southern press' commentary: "If the program of federal legislation now proposed by the Civil Rights Commission were to be adopted by Congress in the near future, which seems completely unthinkable, the results in the southern states would be even worse than those in the nation under Prohibition. They would be worse because the explosive issue of race relations is involved, and it has been demonstrated time and again that when efforts are made to settle that question through passing coercive laws, conditions are made worse rather than better."[118]

Truman refused to back down. He used the report as the basis for a special civil rights message to Congress and issued executive orders to desegregate the armed forces and end discrimination in the Civil Service system. Truman's Lincoln Memorial speech was of lasting importance because it extended the dialogue on civil rights that had been tentatively established at the Lincoln Memorial in 1922 and permanently changed the dynamics of the discourse on

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race. Race relations were no longer a social, marginalized issue but a legitimate national and political issue that would soon have the force of federal law.

When Truman, in his meeting with Robeson's delegation of the American Crusade to End Lynching, proclaimed that lynching was not a moral issue, he revealed a profound moral blindness. But when he pronounced the most far-reaching and substantive policy statement about race at the Lincoln Memorial he also revealed the complexities of the American social consciousness. The inexorable force of the concept of American exceptionalism, most frequently challenged and expanded by America's black leaders and most publicly articulated at the Lincoln Memorial, had undergone another transformation in the shadow of Abraham Lincoln whose image was used with equal facility by Truman, communists and white supremacists. Truman managed to skillfully create an image of Lincoln as a Cold War warrior in order to cement a developing Cold War consensus and to help create universal acceptance of the view that the United States was the only nation destined to lead the world in attainment of democracy and freedom—an idea that Lincoln had expressed on many occasions. Communists frequently draped their ideas on a well-developed American rhetorical tradition that was most movingly and convincingly articulated in speeches and writings by Lincoln. Finally, white supremacists assaulted the already fragile bonds of a pluralist society. They seized and built upon the intolerance and demands for conformity that attended the national fetish of anti-communism that pervaded American society and in so doing grossly perverted the principles of freedom and equality that Lincoln and the Memorial symbolized.

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Chapter 4: Notes

1. Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record, Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980), p. 77.

2. Wadyslaw Bartoszewski, "The Founding of the Anti-Racism League in 1946," Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C., 1990.

3. George Padmore, "U.S. Lynchings Called Barbaric," *Chicago Defender*, September 28, 1946, p. 13.

4. Ralph Izzard, "India Links British, U.S. Bias," *Chicago Defender*, October 5, 1946, p. 13.

5. George Padmore, "Paris Gets Facts on U.S. Negroes," *Chicago Defender*, October 5, 1946, p. 13.

6. *The New York Times*, July 31, 1946, p. 48.

7. Howard R. Woods, "Urban League Demands Rights for Minorities," *Chicago Defender*, October 5, 1946, front page.

8. For discussions of U.S. racial policies and their impact on national political decisions see Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anti-Colonialism 1937-1957* (Ithaca, 1997); and Mary L. Dudziak, "*Cold War Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs in the Truman Administration*," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1992; For lynching data and statistics compiled by Tuskegee Institute see Jessie Parkhurst Guzman, 1945 and 1946 Negro Yearbook (New York, 1945 and 1946).

9. The relationship between Communism and racialism is interrelated with the concepts of nativism and Americanism. The landmark study on the subject of nativism is John Higham's *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1865-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1955, 1988). For studies on Americanism see in particular Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot* (New York, 1933); Horace M. Kallen, *Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea, An Essay in Social Philosophy* (Philadelphia: University of Pensylvania Press, 1956); For a view that rejects the melting pot concept and proposes a culturally pluralist society (the term is Kallen's) see Randolph Silliman Bourne, "Trans-national America," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Volume 118, July, 1916, pp. 86-97. For studies on how anti-communism came to be identified with American freedom and, paradoxically, racism in the 1940s and 1950s see Frederick F. Siegel, *Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan* (New York, 1984); Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1953* (New York, 1994); and Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (New York, 1991).

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10. See William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Ohio State University Press, 1970), esp. pp. 41-78; The *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 5, 1946, p. 1.

11. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, January 1-December 31, 1947 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 479-80.

12. The incident is recounted in several histories of the period. See esp., Florence Murray, ed., *The Negro Handbook*, 1949 (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 102; Walter White, *A Man Called White, The Autobiography of Walter White* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), pp. 325-28.

13. See *The Washington Post*, September 23, 1946, p. 10.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *The New York Times*, July 31, 1946, front page.

10. The *Vicksburg Herald*, August 9, 1946, p. 6.

18. The *Vicksburg Herald*, August 10, 1946, front page.

19. See White, *A Man Called White. . .*, P. 330.

20. See *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, September 28, 1946, p. 1.

21. NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, June 26, 1948.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

26. White, *A Man Called White. . .*, pp. 330-31.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Berman, *Politics of Civil Rights. . .*, p. 51.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

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31. See Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Vol. III, Selections 1944-1946 (University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), pp. 112-113.

32. Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part II, Reel 22, Frame 0490, New York: Schomburg Archives.

33. Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part II, Reel 26, Frame 0971, Schomburg Archives.

34. The speech "I Stand Here Ashamed" was delivered over the Mutual Broadcasting System, September 23, 1946, Washington, D.C. See Philip S. Foner, Ed., *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918-1974*, (New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1978), pp. 176-78.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part II, Reel 22, Frame 0491, Schomburg Archives.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*, Frame 0492.

41. Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part III, Reel 17, Frames 0002 and 0003, Schomburg Archives.

42. Paul Robeson Papers, Reel 7, Frame 0071, Schomburg Archives.

43. *The New York Times*, September 24, 1946, Philadelphia *Tribune*, September 24, 1946, New York *World-Telegram*, September 23, 1946 and *The People's Voice*, September 28, 1946 listed the other delegation members (besides Robeson) as Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Palmer Memorial Institute; Mrs. Harper Sibley, president of the Council of Church Women; Reverend W. H. Jernagin, National Baptist Convention; Dr. Joseph L. Johnson, dean of the Howard University School of Medicine; Dr. Max Yergan, president of the National Negro Congress; and Aubrey Williams, editor of the *Southern Farmer*. The Chicago *Defender* (September 28, 1946) also lists Metz T. P. Lorchard, editor-in-chief of the *Defender*; Rabbi Irving Miller, American Jewish Congress; and H. Murphy of Chicago as part of the delegation.

44. For the complete text of the message, see Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part II, Reel 22, Schomburg Archives.

45. *Ibid.*

46. See *The New York Times*, September 24, 1946, p. 60.

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47. See the *Chicago Defender*, "Truman Balks at Lynch Action," September 28, 1946, front page.

48. See *The Washington Post*, September 29, 1946, Section B, p. 5.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. *The Chicago Defender*, "Truman Balks at Lynch Action," September 28, 1946, p. 1.

52. *The Washington Post*, September 29, 1946, Section B., p. 5.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, September 28, 1946, p. 1.

55. *The Chicago Defender*, "Truman Balks at Lynch Action," September 28, 1946, p. 6.

56. *The New York Times*, September 24, 1946, p. 60.

57. The full text is in the Papers of the Negro National Congress, Part II, Reel 22, Frame 0486, Schomburg Archives.

58. *Ibid.*

59. See Cicero A. Hughes, "Toward a Black United Front: The National Negro Congress Movement," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 1982), pp. 224-227; National Negro Congress Papers, Reel 33, Frame 0186, Schomburg Archives.

60. The testimony is from the Joint Fact-finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California, October 7, 1946, Paul Robeson Archives, Berlin, German Democratic Republic. Reprinted in Foner, *Paul Robeson Speaks*, 1978, pp. 178-80. In 1950 the State Department cancelled Robeson's passport, thereby effectively curtailing his singing career and earning power, the white media imposed a blanket censorship on his activities, all major concert halls were closed to him, and his records were removed from stores. His passport was not renewed until 1958.

61. Robeson Papers, p. vii.

62. Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part II, Reel 34, Frame 0002, Schomburg Archives.

63. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, September 28, 1946, p. 2.

64. *The Washington Post*, September 23, 1946, p. 2

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65. See press releases of May 16 and May 30, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

66. White, *A Man Called White. . .*, p. 347.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

68. The guests included Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, Mr. & Mrs. A. Philip Randolph, Under-Secretary of the Interior, Oscar L. Chapman, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Springarn, as well as ambassadors from Belgium, Yugoslavia, the Philippines, and Nicaragua.

69. Press release, June 13, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

70. Press release, June 6, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

71. *Ibid.*

72. Press release, June 13, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

73. Press release, June 6, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

74. Press release, June 20, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

75. Press release, May 30, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, p. 2, Schomburg Archives.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Press release, July 11, 1947, NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, Schomburg Archives.

78. For the entire text of the speech, see NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, p. 4., Schomburg Archives.

79. *Ibid.*

80. The phrase "democracy's passion play" is taken from Clinton Rossiter, *The American Presidency*, (New York: New York American Library, 1960), p. 108. The full quote is: "Lincoln is the supreme myth, the richest symbol in the American experience. He is, as someone has remarked neither irrelevantly nor sacriligiously, the martyred Christ of democracy's passion play. And who, then can measure the strength that is given to the President because he holds Lincoln's office, lives in Lincoln's house, and walks in Lincoln's way? The final greatness of the presidency lies in the truth that it is not just an office of incredible power but a breeding ground of indestructible myth."

81. NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12.

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82. *Ibid.*

83. See *The New York Times*, June 30, 1947, p. 3.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*

87. For the entire text of the speech, see NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, pp. 2-3, Schomburg Archives.

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*

93. White, *A Man Called White. . .*, p. 348.

94. *Ibid.*

95. NAACP Papers, Part I, Reel 12, p. 3, Schomburg Archives.

96. July 1, 1947, p. 3.

97. *The Crisis*, August 1947, p. 247.

98. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 12, 1947, p. 7.

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

101. For the full text of the appeal, see Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part III, Reel 17, Frame 0002, Schomburg Archives.

102. NAACP Papers, Box 354, Library of Congress.

103. For details of this incident, see letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White in NAACP Minutes of the Board of Directors, February 9, 1948, NAACP Papers, Box A-12, L.C.

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104. See *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, November 8, 1947, p. 2.

105. See Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, January 1-December 31, 1947, p. 479.

106. The Committee's members included Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric and Chairman of the Committee and Robert K. Carr, Executive Secretary; Sadie T. Alexander, assistant city solicitor of Philadelphia and Channing H. Tobias, a director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, were the two black representatives. Other members were drawn from a broad professional spectrum and included John S. Dickey, president of Dartmouth College; Dr. Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina; Charles Luckman, president of Lever Brothers; Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., chairman of the housing committee of the American Veteran's Committee; The Right Reverend Henry Knox Sherrill of Boston, Bishop of the Episcopal Church and the Most Reverend Francis J. Haas, Catholic Bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

107. "To Secure These Rights," *The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), pp. vii-ix.

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*

112. Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1947, p. 480.

113. Quoted in *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, November 8, 1947, p. 13.

114. *Ibid.*

115. *The Washington Post*, October 30, 1947, Editorial Page.

116. *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, November 8, 1947, Editorial Page.

117. Paul Robeson Papers, Reel 7, Frame 0045, Schomburg Archives.

118. Quoted in *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, November 8, 1947, p. 13.

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Chapter 5

"Lincoln Freed the Slaves, Truman Free McGee"

In 1951, four years after Truman made his historic civil rights declaration at the Lincoln Memorial, another demonstration held there cast that iconic symbol of American democracy in an entirely different light. In an ironic reversal, American Communists, often regarded in the Cold War era as un-American, acted as standard bearers for democracy and civil rights. They intentionally chose the Lincoln Memorial as the most potent site from which to demand that the ideals of American democracy promulgated by Abraham Lincoln be put into practice. The Communists invoked the exceptionalist ideal to insist that American democracy was not only unique but that it should be applied equitably across the body politic. But by 1951, anti-Communist hysteria in America had reached such a fever pitch that any actions by Communists or those perceived to be Communists were viewed as assaults against the nation. As a result, a demonstration led by a group of 300 left-wing trade unionists at the Lincoln Memorial—a secular temple that many considered the altar of nationhood—was viewed as part of a sinister plot.

In this highly charged atmosphere, the wrongful execution in Mississippi of Willie McGee, a black man from that state accused of raping a white woman, was a foregone conclusion, especially after his cause was championed by leftists and by unions and other organizations whose top officials belonged to the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA). The dramatic demonstration on behalf of McGee at the Memorial cast a critical light on the double standard of justice in American courts.

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During a decade in which the civil rights debate would be taken to the courts, frequently by civil rights and civil liberties organizations that were Communist run (and that were often themselves were under government scrutiny), the negative reception of the McGee protest at the Memorial illustrates again that the political needs of the nation dictated the utility of the monument in 1951—as it did at all of the previous civil rights demonstrations. In this instance, it was driven by a desire to maintain a national political consensus and ensure a conformity of public opinion during a period in which the nation believed itself to be threatened by Communist tyranny. Although the Federal Government ignored the protest entirely, the Truman administration's lack of tolerance for any Communist activities assured that the McGee protest would be marginalized. Thus, the Northern and Southern presses (both black and white), with few exceptions, portrayed the entire McGee trial as a Communist plot, while the protest held at the Memorial to spare McGee's life was ignored by all of the media except the left-leaning press, which covered the event in detail.

A series of demonstrations on McGee's behalf by left-wing and Communist organizations both in the United States and abroad culminated in the demonstration at the Memorial on May 6, 1951. To protest McGee's pending execution, members of the International Fur and Leather Workers Union (the IFLWU), the majority of whom were white veterans of World War II who belonged to the CPUSA, chained themselves to the pillars of the Memorial. This was one of the most dramatic demonstrations held at the Memorial because of the bold physicality of the act and also because the IFLWU was a militant union that was on the government's list of Communist organizations.[1]

The demonstration was all the more remarkable when one considers the legal chains the government had forged to shackle the Communist movement both at home and abroad. Foremost

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among these was the Truman Doctrine. When the Doctrine codified the effort to contain the spread of Communism in 1947, Truman made clear there was no middle ground in the fight between good and evil: "At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life... One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by outside pressures."[2] With the President of the United States so forcibly and publicly opposing Communism across the globe, efforts to assure racial equality and economic parity, so often reflecting the interests of a handful of liberals, Socialists and Communists, were viewed as implicit criticisms of capitalism and thus were deemed un-American by some sectors of society, including many representatives of the federal and local governments. Albert Canwell, who chaired the Washington State Legislative Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities, spoke for many Americans when he declared: "If someone insists that there is discrimination against Negroes in this country, or that there is inequality of wealth, there is every reason to believe that person is a Communist."[3]

Events leading to the McGee demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial began in November 1945, when McGee was accused of raping Mrs. Troy Hawkins in Laurel, Mississippi. Defense lawyers later determined that the chief evidence against him was a coerced confession he gave after being held incommunicado for 32 days after his arrest, during which time he was beaten, tortured and threatened with lynching. In addition, several facts were never presented at trial:

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Neither Mrs. Hawkins' husband nor her two children, asleep in the next room, heard any commotion from the alleged attack; Mrs. Hawkins and McGee had had an affair over a period of four years and McGee had attempted to terminate their relationship. Although the affair was known to many blacks and whites in Laurel, they were too intimidated to come forward, and although no white man in Mississippi had ever been sentenced to death for rape, the prosecution demanded the death penalty. On December 6, 1945, during a trial at which a white mob was held at bay by Mississippi National Guardsmen armed with bayonets and machineguns, an all-white jury found McGee guilty after just two-and-a-half minutes' deliberation.[4]

The glaring double standard of justice in the McGee trial galvanized progressive organizations. Among these was the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, a left-leaning civil liberties group that was the first to intervene on McGee's behalf. It requested a change of venue, which was granted, and successfully appealed the conviction. This was the first of many agonizing twists and turns during which six execution dates were set over a seven year period.[5] Despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence, the severity of the sentence for the alleged crime, legal irregularities, massive national and international support for his cause by numerous organizations and individuals, and vociferous international opinion in opposition to his execution, McGee was electrocuted on May 8, 1951. The execution took place in the same Laurel, Mississippi, courthouse where McGee had been sentenced.[6]

In 1945, the same year McGee was charged with rape, another event occurred that would play a major role in determining his fate. Earl Browder, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, had dissolved the CPUSA in 1944 and reorganized it as the Communist Political Association in the belief that the party was poised to become a mass organization that could attract large numbers of ordinary Americans. But Jacques Duclos, the

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second-in command of France's powerful Communist Party, criticized Browder's strategy, which led to an internal crisis in the Communist Political Association. Browder's action was overturned, he was deposed, and in July 1945 the party reconstituted itself once again, this time under its old name—the Communist Party of the United States—with William Z. Foster as its head.[7]

The reconstituted Communist Party attracted many men and women from liberal constituencies who opposed the United States' emerging policy of containment. The Party appealed to Jewish liberals, as well as to anti-fascist Socialists and to idealists shaken by a global war in which Hitlers' concepts of Aryan superiority had led to the Holocaust. Also catalyzed by the government's anti-Communist policies were a small number of American blacks who were alienated by the economic and social systems of the United States. Although almost all Americans associated with the Communist Party of the United States became bitterly disillusioned once Stalin's repressive regime was denounced by Nikita Khruschev and eventually renounced Communism, for a brief period the party seemed to hold the promise of creating a fairer more equitable alternative to American democracy.[8] While the Communist Party of the United States adhered to the larger ideological goals and policies of the International Communist Party, which were dictated by Moscow, and did not support the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, its discourse was nevertheless distinguished by an infusion of distinctive American democratic ideals. This characteristic was most apparent in the rhetoric used by leaders of left-wing trade unions and civil rights organizations that used the themes of liberty, freedom, and even exceptionalism, to explain and justify their goals and policies. They also employed slogans based on speeches by Abraham Lincoln and used crude banners and drawings of Lincoln at conventions and other gatherings to justify and amalgamate

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the demands of labor with the demands of civil rights. If it were not for the more strident, inflated use of the language by American Communists, the themes they employed would have been almost indistinguishable from those used by anti-Communists. This fact attests to both the strength of American democratic ideals and also to the autonomy of nationalism for it was nationalism that crossed ideological and color lines and the belief in the potential of the United States to lead other nations, and even to be the moral arbiter of the world, was strong even among members of the CPUSA.

The Communist Party of the United States held the view that black Americans were critical in effecting the Party's goals,[9] and from 1945 to 1952 the Party's program was dedicated to forming an alliance between blacks and working class whites, specifically within the left-wing labor movement. In its resolution, the Party called for a new commitment to the struggle for the civil rights of black Americans, whose membership, never very large, had declined sharply after the war.[10] According to a report by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, the number of blacks in the Party by 1954 was miniscule:

"We recently reviewed the origins of 5,395 of the leading members of the Communist Party. The results were most interesting. Only 411 were Negroes but of the remaining 4,984, we found that 4,555, or 91 and one-half percent were either foreign born or born of foreign parents. The fact that only 411 Negroes were found in this select group is strong evidence that the American Negro is not hoodwinked by these false messiahs."[11]

Blacks were indeed wary of the CPUSA for several reasons. They remembered the Communists' wartime policies that gave a higher priority to Soviet interests than it gave to the interests of black workers. They strongly disagreed with the Party argument that too much militancy could impede the war effort, insisting on a "Double V" campaign—victory against

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racism at home and fascism abroad.[12] The Party further alienated blacks with its self-determination doctrine, formulated in the late 1920s, that seemed to marginalize them even more as it stated that since they represented an oppressed nation constituting a majority population in certain areas of the South, they should set up a separate state and government there.[13] The great majority of blacks did not want to separate themselves from the United States; they simply wanted equality and full inclusion in the existing system. And, finally, like other Americans, joining a third party in a historically two-party system was a leap they were loath to take. Most blacks were affiliated with the Democratic Party, their loyalty having been solidified by Franklin Roosevelt's promise of inclusion, and believed they had more to lose by aligning their interests with an unknown, untested political party.[14]

The newly reformed CPUSA sought to address these issues. An article published in *Political Affairs*, the Party's theoretical organ, written in 1946 by Harry Haywood (a leading advocate within the CPUSA of the policy of self-determination for blacks), clarified the Party's position: "The vast potential of the Negro Americans' anti-fascist democratic struggle has not been really tapped. Their full resources can be brought to bear in the cause of labor and American democracy only to the extent that white American labor understands and uncompromisingly supports their full and just demands. It is the job of militant labor and the Communists to break down all barriers to the full unleashing of the struggle for Negro liberation."[15]

The Communist's commitment to civil rights for black Americans coincided with black laborers' increased frustration over a seemingly unending battle to work within the American Federation of Labor. Despite the AFL's high-minded promises to organize all workers, regardless of race, creed or nationality, segregation was its modus operandi.[16] At the same time,

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earlier appeals by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (the CIO) siphoned off black workers, who were invited to join their unions.[17] But, when the Federal Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) was shut down in 1946, black workers had no support in the Federal Government. In December of that year, Truman's *To Secure These Rights* report on civil rights acknowledged that blacks had actually lost economic ground since the close of World War II.[18] A petition submitted to the United Nations in 1946 by the National Negro Congress documented in detail the widening gap between blacks and whites in income, unemployment, housing, medical care, food, and all basic living necessities.[19]

Recognizing that blacks were disenchanted by such failures, left wing labor unions doubled their efforts to enlist them. Some of the most active unions involved in this recruitment effort were the United Electrical Workers; the International Mine, Mill and Smelters Workers Union; the International Marine and Shipbuilders Union; the Packinghouse Workers; the National Maritime Union; the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards; and the International Fur and Leather Workers Union. These unions formed anti-discrimination committees that called for parity in training, hiring and advancing blacks, with special emphasis on black war veterans. The committees demanded that layoffs be proportionate, based on numbers rather than race, and fought for unemployment insurance. They called for an end to Jim Crow practices in unions and the establishment of a permanent F.E.P.C. [20]

These committees also sponsored exhibits that documented contributions by black Americans in the arts and sciences, as well contributions to the labor struggle. The exhibits traveled all over the country and were held in conjunction with interracial meetings and cultural and social affairs attended by thousands of union members. For many, the exhibits were their first exposure to this aspect of American history and their first opportunity to interact outside of

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the workplace—both rarities in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s.[21] On a broader scale, the Party pressed to secure equitable benefits for black veterans through an expansion of the G.I. laws,[22] and it developed organizations specifically designed to meet the needs of black veterans as well as industrial workers and sharecroppers.[23]

As part of this drive to attract black Americans to the CPUSA, the Communists established a number of new civil liberties and civil rights organizations. The most important of these organizations was The Civil Rights Congress (CRC), the organization that led the legal effort and the protest at the Lincoln Memorial to save the life of Willie McGee. It was officially organized when over 400 representatives from the National Federation of Constitutional Liberties, the International Labor Defense, and the National Negro Congress—all of which were closely associated with the Communist Party—met in Detroit on April 27 and 28, 1946.[24] The National Negro Congress (NNC), led by A. Philip Randolph until his resignation in 1940, merged with the CRC in December 1947. William L. Patterson, a lawyer who was executive director of the International Labor Defense (ILD) from 1932-1946 and one of a handful of black Americans who joined the Communist Party in the United States in 1927, led the CRC for the duration of its relatively brief existence from 1946 to 1956.[25]

Although it was public knowledge that the CRC contained many CPUSA members, particularly among its national leaders, its local leaders and chapter membership were politically and racially diverse.[26] Based in New York City, with local chapters in 24 states and in Canada and Puerto Rico, the CRC's constitution called for protecting the rights of "labor, the Negro people and the Jewish people, and of racial religious and national minorities." Its stated purpose was to combat discrimination, legally defend victims of discrimination, and promote basic rights and universal equality.[27] The CRC organized committees around the country that functioned as

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regional programs to reach out and organize large numbers of people specifically to address labor, racial, political and social inequities. In the course of its ten-year existence, it mounted thousands of strikes, protests and demonstrations that attracted large numbers of people and refined the tactics of mass protest. It also provided the first viable organizational alternative to the NAACP, which was thought to be of little practical help to black workers.[28]

Despite it wide-ranging activities, the CRC was never able to move beyond its image as a manipulative Communist front organization whose sole purpose was to provide legal aid to Communists and Communist sympathizers, and to embarrass the government by publicizing numerous instances of racism.[29] Patterson repeatedly rejected such charges: "We are a 'front' organization. We front for all that which Jefferson and Lincoln stood for; against the economic royalists Franklin D. Roosevelt fought, against the Jew-baiters, racists and red-baiters who are masters of the Goebbels-Hitler technique."[30] The sub-text here may have been the Party's reaching out to blacks through the persona of Lincoln, who was still revered by many blacks. But if the Communists saw Lincoln and his Memorial as a beacon of black empowerment (and its use as a way to boost Party enrollment), many more Americans came to view Lincoln as a bulwark against a foreign and destructive ideology. Yet, in this confusing era, it seemed that Americans had forgotten that the monument was meant to memorialize the man who kept the Union whole, and who epitomized the ideals of American democracy.

Although the threat of Communism to the security of the United States was, in hindsight, minimal, Congress enacted legislation designed to curb all presumed Communist activities. The Subversive Activities Control Act of 1948 permitted Congressional investigation of any organizations or individuals suspected of being subversive. In 1950, with the passage of The McCarran Internal Security Act (passed over President Truman's veto), the pressure on groups

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identified by the government as subversive became even tighter. It required Communists to register with the Attorney General; forced all organizations suspected of being Communist fronts to supply the government with both membership lists and financial records; forbade employment of Communists at defense plants; and finally, empowered the President, "in case of an internal emergency," to arrest and detain anyone suspected of being a Communist. By the mid-1950s, dozens of Communist Party leaders had been imprisoned under the Smith Act of 1940 (the first peacetime anti-sedition act since 1798), while thousands of rank and file Communists were harassed by the FBI, called to testify before Congressional investigating committees, denied passports, and in many instances, were fired from their jobs. Under the McCarran Act, the Attorney General was authorized to deport Communists or members of "front" organizations even after they had become naturalized citizens, and it was also used to deport several trade unionists affiliated with progressive unions. Additionally, the U.S. Immigration Service prevented trade union delegates from attending union conventions and private individuals from entering the United States.[31]

The scrutiny of marginalized groups associated with Communism, such as the Civil Rights Congress, was especially zealous. The CRC, the organization that played a key role in protesting the execution of Willie McGee, was a target of the Truman Administration. The FBI compiled some 254 volumes of information on the CRC. It also tapped the organization's telephones, broke into its offices, intercepted its mail and infiltrated its offices with spies and informants.[32] In 1947, less than a year after the CRC was established, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) charged that the CRC was "controlled by individuals who are either members of the Communist Party or openly loyal to it" and was "dedicated not to the broader issues of civil liberties, but specifically to the defense of individual Communists and the

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Communist Party."[33] In November 1950, Patterson was indicted by a grand jury, which charged him with contempt of Congress for refusing to turn over the records of CRC's organizations and finances. In 1951 Attorney General Howard McGrath labeled the Civil Rights Congress "subversive."[34] In 1954, Patterson was asked by the Department of Internal Revenue to supply books listing the names of contributors to CRC. Patterson refused (although he did give the IRS financial information on which CRC tax returns were based). For his refusal he was sentenced to a three-month jail term.[35]

Patterson defended himself against the HUAC's accusations with a statement to *The New York Times* in which he defended his legal rights as an American citizen by employing the themes of freedom, liberty and the constitutional rights: "It is true that the organization which I have the honor to head has been declared 'subversive' by the Attorney-General. It is equally true that the conclusion drawn by this Attorney-General of the United States was not fortified by any court decision. There has been no trial of this organization. It has been permitted to face none of its detractors. Its record—as I know it—is characterized only by its defense of the constitutional liberties, civil and human rights of American citizens. It has made much of the fact that in this great land of ours, black Americans have never received the equality of opportunity in our political, economic and social life which is theirs, not only by virtue of their nativity but by virtue of the contributions they have made in blood to the building of this Republic and to the maintenance and extension of its revolutionary heritage."[36] But Patterson's defense had little practical effect, for by 1952 the CRC had been decimated, and although it remained in existence, it was ineffective. In January 1956, at a CRC national convention, Patterson voluntarily disbanded the organization.[37]

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When the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties merged with the Civil Rights Congress in April 1946, and the CRC inherited the Willie McGee case, it was already handicapped in its ability to defend McGee. As the Cold War evolved, moderation, cooperation and conformity to Truman's foreign policy became increasingly crucial. The campaign to save McGee became the CRC's most important effort. The case became a cause célèbre, a focal point for support and protest both in the United States and abroad that spotlighted the racial double standard of the United States and reflected the growing fear of Communism in the country. [38] But despite the CRC's Communist affiliations, it did not conduct the campaign employing Soviet models of protest. Self-promotion was not part of the effort, and there were no debates about Capitalism versus Communism. The CRC conducted its fight primarily in the courts of the United States and in the public arena. Its speeches, publicity programs and press releases were infused with the language of freedom and liberty, and Lincoln—not Stalin, Marx or Engels—was the organization's preferred reference point.

Many protests in Europe on behalf of McGee were generated by the International Communist Party and put continual pressure on the State Department. A representative protest was voiced in Prague by the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers: "All Czechoslovak lawyers have learned with indignation that on March 20th, Willie McGee is to be executed. This decision proves that American racial justice, disregarding the protests of democratic and progressive organizations throughout the world, has decided to continue the judicial murder of innocent Negroes...At the same time, American racial justice continues the pardoning of the Nazi criminals who committed mass murders which were the worst in the history of mankind."[39]

Communist newspapers such as the French daily *L'Humanité* took up the cause. The paper observed that "while much of Europe will be celebrating the victory of Nazi racism on

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May 8, America will be perpetuating it as it carries out McGee's execution on that day."[40] In Paris an American reporter for the *Daily Worker*, a Communist newspaper published in New York City, wrote: "After the shock of the execution of the Martinsville Martyrs, [seven black men from Virgina convicted for raping a white woman] which sent a tremor of disgust for American ruling class racism throughout Europe, the impending murder of McGee has taken on a special meaning here. It is looked upon as not just another case of white supremacist hypocrisy and outrage, but as a sort of 'last straw'—a definite example of why American capitalism is so hateful to Europe, and what is in store for other peoples if the American imperialist system succeeds in the [Korean] war plans."[41]

Newspapers abroad not associated with left-wing or Communist organizations also commented on the McGee trial, and though they were still critical, they were more tempered. The French paper *Combat* praised American leadership but thought the McGee case was a "regrettable stain."[42] *Le Monde* carried articles about the McGee case regularly. A reporter for the newspaper, Henri Pierre, wrote that McGee was a victim of American racism: "Even if there is any doubt about his guilt, his execution would only strengthen the prejudices which affect the Negro people in the South, and would ill serve the cause of the United States in its relations with colored peoples everywhere, at a moment when that country has the greatest need of their support." He wondered if Mississippi Governor Fielding L. Wright "takes into account that in letting McGee be executed he would do worse for America than all the efforts of the propaganda of its adversaries."[43]

In France, philosopher/novelist Jean-Paul Sartre, novelist Albert Camus, and playwright Jean Cocteau openly protested the impending execution.[44] In the United States, clergy, artists, actors, and organizations as diverse as the New York Council for the Arts, Sciences &

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Professions; the Baptist Ministers' Alliance of Montgomery, Alabama; and the American Civil Liberties Union, found common ground in the cause. Albert Einstein, the most prominent scientist in America, wrote to the National Council of the Arts, Sciences & Professions, declaring his support for those protesting the execution of McGee: "In the face of the evidence any unprejudiced human being must find it difficult to believe that this man really committed the rape of which he has been accused. Moreover, the punishment must appear unnaturally harsh to anyone with any sense of justice."[45] William Faulkner, the Mississippi novelist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950, sounded a different note: "I do not want Willie McGee to be executed because it will make him a martyr and create a lasting stink in my native state...I have nothing in common with the representatives of the Civil Rights Congress except we both say we want Willie McGee to live."[46] Dashiell Hammett, Norman Mailer and Oscar Hammerstein were among other distinguished citizens who appealed to Truman to intervene.[47]

The CRC helped organize citizens committees in New York City and across the country in order to create sustained, mass, nationwide pressure. The Harlem Citizens Committee to Save McGee was especially active. The Committee, which mounted protests and picket lines in New York City, demanded that the President stop McGee's execution, and they evoked the still powerful presence of the Lincoln Memorial when they demanded that he live up to the promise he made at the Memorial in 1947 to uphold civil rights—proof that they felt the presumed moral weight of the Memorial could cause the President to intervene. The Committee further demanded that Truman exercise the Federal Civil Rights Statute and order Attorney General Howard McGrath to go to Federal Court to block Mississippi officials from executing McGee.[48] The CRC also organized several national delegations, which traveled to Jackson, Mississippi, to meet Governor Wright and Mississippi State Supreme Court Chief Justice Harvey McGehee to

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plead for McGee's life. Mayors and U.S. Supreme Court Justices urged the Mississippi governor and Truman to stop the execution. Mississippi officials were inundated with thousands of letters, telegrams and petitions urging clemency. Several women's organizations, most comprised of white Southern women, organized rallies at the state capitol.[49] The criticism became so fierce that Tom Elliston, a representative of the international press and publications division of the State Department, was sent to Jackson to study the records of the case in order to "offset Communist propaganda which has been put out about it," and to "refute false charges made against Mississippi" in foreign countries.[50]

The CRC employed a small army of lawyers over a five-year period in an effort to save McGee's life. Bella Abzug, Ralph Coe, John Cox and Emmanuel Bloch (who had unsuccessfully defended Julius and Ethel Rosenberg against charges of espionage and treason) were among those who entered the case and continued to file appeals with state and federal judges up to the hour that McGee was executed. The CRC paid the lawyers, and provided living, medical and emergency funds to McGee and his family. They also developed a publicity campaign that generated a constant stream of literature about the case and deluged local newspapers with press releases and photographs of McGee to keep the case before the public.[51]

In one of the last efforts made on McGee's behalf, the CRC drafted letters for McGee and for his children that were signed by them and sent directly to Truman. A letter from McGee sent to Truman on May 7, 1951, personally petitioned the President to intervene and prevent his execution. He appealed to Truman first from a legal point of view, citing the many flagrant violations of law and the Constitution in his case. He then used the words of Abraham Lincoln to justify his argument for protection, reminding Truman that Lincoln defined a republican form of government as "of the people, by the people, and for the people," and quoted Truman's words in

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his address at the Lincoln Memorial in June, 1947, that promised a more pro-active government stance on civil rights: "We must make the Federal Government a friendly, vigilant defender of the rights and equalities of all Americans...We must keep moving forward, with new concepts of civil rights to safeguard our heritage. The extension of civil rights today means not protection of the people against the Government, but protection of the people by the Government." McGee pointedly reminded Truman that he spoke these words when he created the Committee on Civil Rights: "The constitutional guarantees of individual liberties and of equal protection under the laws clearly place on the Federal Government the duty to act when state or local authorities abridge or fail to protect these Constitutional rights."[52] Finally, McGee's lawyers spoke to Presidential Assistant David Niles after the last appeal for a stay of execution submitted to Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black was denied. They were told that Truman would not intercede and that "there was no point in discussing the case any further."[53]

The CRC's effort to sway Truman was essentially a call to memory, to what Lincoln had stood for and a reminder of the courageous first steps the president seemed to have taken at the time. In fact, the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950, followed by the passage of the Internal Security Act, led to greater governmental repression (and greater public hostility) against the CRC during this period. Whatever the motivations were for Truman's silence on this issue, he only added to the perception of McGee's guilt by refusing to intercede on his behalf.

In the meantime, the CRC tried unsuccessfully to join forces with the NAACP, which was also involved in efforts to save McGee. While some of their approaches and methods overlapped, the two organizations were philosophically opposed to one another. The NAACP supported Congress' and Truman's anti-Communist policies and chose to work solely within the existing legal system, while the CRC saw the McGee case (and all such cases) as part of a

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systematic and intentional oppression of blacks, designed to create a permanent class of low-paid laborers. The CRC believed that legal action alone was not enough because the courts had historically demonstrated an unequal application of the law. They believed that ongoing mass pressure in the form of strikes and demonstrations was essential to the success of a protest.

But for the NAACP, a number of factors made a coalition between the two impossible. It knew that any association with the CRC would compromise its position with most of the black community, which was largely suspicious of any organization associated with Communism. It knew that such an association would alienate it from the larger national political community with which it had forged a 40-year working relationship; and it knew that such a move would play into the hands of white supremacist groups that often characterized any form of black protest as Kremlin-inspired.[54] The NAACP therefore made vigorous efforts to distance itself from the CRC. In 1949 in an editorial published in its official organ, *Crisis*, the NAACP issued a strong denunciation of the Communist Party. The denunciation made clear its commitment to both the democratic values of the country and the civil rights of black Americans. Communists, it said, "...are busy stirring up disaffection, dissension, and unrest in every segment of American life they can penetrate...The purpose in all this is not to build a better NAACP to fight more effectively for civil rights for Negroes under the American Constitution, using legitimate American methods, but to operate one more front group to confuse and embarrass Americans and the American government in the present contest of ideologies." It went on to defend American democracy as viable and accessible, even to black Americans: "They [Communists] do not believe American democracy can be improved or reformed, hence anyone who does, who keeps alive a faith in the American way of life, is a criminal and a 'betrayer of the people.'"[55]

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In 1950, the NAACP moved to prevent infiltration by Communists. It prohibited membership to known Communists and adopted a resolution that strengthened the role of the Executive Board, giving it the power to expel any local branch of the NAACP that fell under the control of Communists.[56] The NAACP's stance signaled a strong anti-Communist consensus among most black leaders and organizations. It is some indication of the altered political climate that while the NAACP in 1922 demanded that radical firebrand W.E.B. Du Bois be allowed to give the opening speech at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, by 1948 the organization had dismissed du Bois (a founding member of the NAACP) because he supported Henry Wallace, the Progressive Party's presidential candidate who opposed Truman's foreign policy. By that year, the CRC was largely isolated not only from the NAACP but also from most other moderate civil rights organizations and liberal individuals. Aubrey Williams wrote the CRC: "Don't send me any more of your material. You people do far more harm than good. The best thing you could do for people like Willie McGee is to go out of existence."[57] When Aubrey Grossman, national organization secretary for the CRC, wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt asking her to speak out in support of McGee in her newspaper column, she wrote back immediately: "If your organization would leave these cases to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the men would not have added suspicions aroused against them."[58]

The CRC's role in the McGee case also created intense suspicion and anger among Southern conservatives, who fed the public's fears by exploiting the belief that racial equality, Communism and anti-Americanism were one and the same. In a 1950 editorial entitled "An Animal We Don't Know," editor Frederick Sullen of the *Jackson* [Mississippi] *Daily News* suggested that citizens of Jackson might mistake "Civil Rights Congress Communists" to be "varmints" and that Jackson citizens might act impetuously and quickly: "...if a Communist

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should be mistaken for an animal of some other sort, what might follow would be logical and thoroughly understandable. For instance, some feller might reason thusly: 'Why the hell go to Korea to shoot Communists when the hunting is good on home ground?'"[59]

Viewing these threats as "an open call to violence and shooting," the CRC notified the Justice Department and also circulated the editorial to several newspapers.[60] The *Jackson Daily News* continued its attack, however, complaining in a January 17, 1951, editorial that "The United States Supreme Court has, for the third time, refused to review the case of Willie McGee, the Laurel rapist in whose behalf the Civil Rights Congress, a Communist organization, has spent at least $50,000."[61] The next day, the newspaper openly threatened Aubrey Grossman: "...no personal safety can be guaranteed to Aubrey Grossman, or any other lawyer employed by the Civil Rights Congress, if he sets foot on Mississippi soil and seeks to continue the legal travesty that has so sorely tried the patience of our people for more than five years."[62] Despite this overt call to violence, the Justice Department did nothing.

Isolated from other civil rights organizations and financially strapped, the CRC received most of its support from left-wing trade unions. However, progressive trade unions that did not agree with the United States' foreign policy were also isolated and fell under tighter governmental scrutiny and restrictions. In 1949 the CIO, which up to that point had provided an alternative to the AFL, expelled 11 progressive unions with almost one million members, contending they were "Communist-dominated," and effectively removed affiliates that had been at the forefront of the fight for black workers.[63]

The IFLWU, the union that led the demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial, had been under continuous scrutiny since the 1920s. The political and personal resolve of IFLWU president Ben Gold put him squarely in opposition to the United States' foreign policy. Like Du

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Bois, he endorsed Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party, rejected the Marshall Plan, and did not believe containment was necessary to maintain American democracy, a point that he made forcefully in a report to the Executive Board of his union:

> It is my firm conviction that the instigated, inflated, confusing and misleading idea exploited and peddled by the MacArthur forces and by the Truman-Acheson forces, that we must mobilize for an inevitable war against Communism everywhere is a false idea that gives birth to false propaganda, a false approach to fundamental world problems and conflicts to justify false policies and programs, and is built on the false conclusion of the inevitability of war and preventive war. It is a false idea that we must war upon Communism everywhere in order to protect our way of life. Our great country—the country of Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt, the country that gave birth to that sacred truth that all men are created equal—cannot and must not be in the camp of the Francos and the Chiang Kai-Sheks. They will not help protect our way of life.[64]

Gold's consistent and staunch support of civil rights made him even more suspect. His speeches and writings, which touched on some of the same themes expressed by Lincoln, are frequently distinguished by the theme of redemption: "...the struggle for the rights of the Negro people is the struggle for the entire American nation. The day when the Negro people will secure their human rights, the political and economic and social equality, you will have a much more free America; the people will enjoy greater democracy, greater freedom, not only the Negroes, but all of us, we will have a happier America. It goes hand in hand...The truth of the matter is that only a free white nation can free the Negroes..."[65]

In 1948 Ben Gold and several other members of the Union were called before a Taft-Hartley Congressional Committee, called the Special Sub-Committee on Education and Labor, which instituted an investigation of the ILFWU as part of a larger investigation of Communist activities in the fur industry. Congressmen Max Schwabe (Republican-Missouri) and Wingate Lucas (Democrat-Texas) conducted hearings. Gold was the principal witness for the union. He challenged the right of the committee to inquire into his personal political

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philosophy but admitted to Congressman Lucas that he was a Communist: "I have never denied it, and I will never deny my principles, my affiliations, and my philosophy. I take my Americanism seriously, Congressman Lucas, and will fight to the death for this democratic country and its free institutions."[66]

Jamaican-born Lyndon Henry, chairman of Fancy Fur Dyers, Local 88 and a member of the anti-discrimination committee, also addressed questions by the committee about union policy and whether it was democratically determined, contrasting the workings of the union with the racism he felt was pervasive in the United States:

> I have come to Washington with my colleagues, and no decent hotel will give me accommodations—in the capital of the nation. My colleagues arequite willing to put up with me; they do not see any difference; they are all human beings. *Why do we not investigate things of that sort?* My very position in this union in which Negroes are in a minority is proof that democracy is not just a word in this union but is practiced. In this union, the provision of our constitution and the tradition of this leadership of no discrimination against any individual because of his race, color, religion or political belief means exactly what it says. In this union, I emphasize, there is complete equality of job opportunity for Negroes and they are not relegated only in the services of menial jobs... I defy this Committee or any other body to point to any other union or any other kind of organization in which greater democracy is adhered to and practiced.[67]

Despite these pressures on the IFLWU and all left-wing unions, their combined efforts resulted in a mass movement of workers and liberals from varied racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds that coalesced around the Willie McGee case. The demonstration held at the Lincoln Memorial on May 6, 1951, was one of their most dramatic efforts to save the Mississippian. From the ranks of moderate labor unions, James B. Carey, representing the national office of the CIO (which two years earlier had expelled 11 progressive unions from its organization), issued a public expression of support for McGee. The CIO's action was motivated by the steps taken by the New York Joint Council of the Shoe Workers Union locals, which

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mounted a campaign in support of McGee despite a restriction imposed by the union's leadership against engaging in political issues. Other moderate union locals that mounted resolutions and campaigns of support were the National Maritime Workers Union; the Newspaper Guild; and the newly formed Macy's I-S Local of the Department Store Workers Union.[68] However, the most vigorous and militant support came from the left-wing unions, including the IFLWU; the Packinghouse Union; the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union; the Distributive Locals; the United Electrical Workers; and some locals in the auto industry that had large black memberships. William Hood, the Recording Secretary of Ford Local 600 of the United Auto Workers, which represented approximately 50 nationally affiliated unions, organized the Trade Union Committee To Save Willie McGee. These unions merged their efforts with those of the Civil Rights Congress, the United Labor Action Committee, and the Harlem Trade Union Council—all of which were located in New York City. The Committee organized several actions in New York City and around the country that included a demonstration by 8,000 packinghouse workers organized by the Chicago District of the union on April 29; a bi-racial prayer meeting of 1,000 workers in the Chevrolet factory in Flint, Michigan, that was addressed by black and white ministers who also worked in the plant; and a vote for work stoppage on 300 ships by the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union. In addition, plant gate meetings and area meetings were held in different localities throughout the country and leaflets and other informational material was distributed in numerous communities to inform and educate workers about the McGee case.[69]

The Trade Union Committee also organized a 16-person delegation to go to Washington. Headed by Hood, it included trade union leaders Arthur Osman and Cleveland Robinson from the Distributive, Professional and Office Workers Union; Abram Flaxner and Thomas Richardson from United Public Workers; Joseph Selly from the American Communication

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Association; Clifford McAvoy of the National Electrical Workers; and Cleophus Jacobs, President of Local 968, International Longshoremen's Association.[70] The delegation met with George Triedman, head of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department on May 3rd, to demand that the department release its file on the McGee case, which the delegation believed contained information that would prove McGee's innocence. Triedman refused to release the file and referred the delegation to Truman's assistant, David Niles, who in turn referred them back to the Justice Department. In the end, the Trade Union Committee was unsuccessful and was forced to issue a joint statement with the CRC accusing the White House and the Justice Department of "passing the buck on a man's life."[71]

The IFLWU led the most aggressive campaign to stop the execution of McGee. Gold was completely committed to the effort. On March 2, 1951, William Patterson wrote an open letter to Gold. He appealed to Gold for financial and organizational support.[72] Gold urged all union members to lend their time and financial support to the McGee cause, stating that: "The wholesale attack on the human and democratic rights of Negroes is part and parcel of the fascist conspiracy to strangle the constitutional liberties of all Americans. The pogromming of the Jews, progressives, trade unionists, Socialists and Communists in Germany was the beginning of tragedy for the whole German people. The persecution of Negroes, progressives, Communists and liberals in our country, if not checked will spell tragedy for all Americans."[73]

The IFLWU members responded with a vigorous, well-organized campaign. On March 5, 1951, Abe Weisburd, one of the representatives working on the Trade Union Committee who also sat on the Anti-Discrimnation committee of the IFLWU, asked all trade unionists to contribute funds and to take part in a program of action to save McGee's life. He made his appeal to union members, citing the similar needs and common goals of all laborers: "The fight

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for Negro rights and for Labor's rights are one and inseparable. We in the trade unions must not permit this to happen. We have the organized strength to stay the hand of the lynchers. If we use our strength to the fullest, Willie McGee will be free."[74]

Two days later, on March 7, Weisburd urged trade union members to join a mass picket line and vigil to be held at New York's City Hall on March 12, with the goal of having Mayor Vincent Impellitteri speak publicly against McGee's execution.[75] The trade union delegation drew up a statement addressed to the mayor, urging him to "ask President Truman to intervene in this shocking denial of justice and clear violation of the inalienable rights of an American citizen. He has the power to intervene under the Federal Civil Rights Act." And, the statement added, "We know that this terror is aimed not only against Negroes like Willie McGee, but against all people, white and black, who dare struggle in defense of our constitutional liberties and human rights. We see in the drive to legally lynch Willie McGee those same forces at work which today hamstring American labor with wage-freezes and Taft-Hartley Acts."[76] Fifteen hundred pickets marched before City Hall. Responding to the pressure, Impellitteri issued a statement asking that Truman intervene on McGee's behalf. [77]

The IFLWU then called a conference on March 29 and decided to sponsor a Labor and Peoples Meeting to be held as part of an April 16 demonstration at the St. Nicholas Arena in New York City. The committee stated that, "As trade unionists we must recognize that the Willie McGee case has become a symbol of the persecution and brutality leveled against the Negro people throughout the country and in the South in particular... Everything should be put aside that evening to guarantee an overflow meeting of at least ten thousand people."[78]

The rally attracted 5,000 trade unionists. An array of speakers introduced by Ewart Guinier, the international secretary-treasurer of the United Public Workers Union, included nine

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trade union leaders. Ben Gold read a seven-page letter addressed to McGee in which he pledged on behalf of the union to "continue and help forge the unity of Black and White in the inevitable struggles to secure the complete freedom, the human rights, equality, democracy and peace for all of us, Black and White. Carry on, Brother McGee! Your freedom will be the victory of labor and the people, Black and White alike. We hope you will live to see the day when the lynchers will be called to account."[79]

Work stoppages initiated by Ben Gold and organized by the Furriers Joint Council and Furriers Joint Board were the most militant actions taken by the IFLWU. They were conducted in plants in New York City, Newark, Camden, Philadelphia, Chicago and Cleveland. Thousands of IFLWU members participated. Gold envisioned the work stoppages culminating in a central demonstration of thousands of workers in the nation's capital.[80] Female representatives of the Union accompanied an all-women's delegation to Jackson, Mississippi, to meet with Governor Wright in a last-minute attempt to stop the execution. [81] IFLWU locals also participated in the delegations to the Justice Department and the State Department, members of Congress and the Democratic and Republican National Committees.[82]

On May 6 there was a final flurry of nationwide protests. A vigil began at one o'clock in front of the White House. William Patterson and Bessie Mitchell, the sister of one of the Trenton Six [six teenage boys from New Jersey who were accused of raping two white women] and a member of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, led the march. It grew to about 200 people and included Norman Mailer and Josephine Baker.[83] As the vigil continued, a demonstration began at the Lincoln Memorial by veterans who were members of the IFLWU. They issued the following statement, demanding that Truman stop the execution and grant a commutation of sentence: "We veterans decided years ago that we would make any sacrifices

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necessary to guarantee the defense of our American liberties. In demonstrating here today to save the life of a Negro brother we are carrying on this fight for the sacred rights of all Americans, regardless of race, color or creed. We call upon all decent-minded Americans to add their voice to ours: 'PRESIDENT TRUMAN MUST ACT NOW! WILLIE MC GEE MUST NOT DIE.'"[84]

Explaining the reason for choosing the Lincoln Memorial as the site of the protest, they stated: "We have chosen as the site of our demonstration the one spot in our land that has come to be identified as a shrine symbolizing the long struggle for the freedom of the Negro people of America. Here, in the very shadow of a great American who did so much to put an end to slavery in the United States, we are raising our voices in the demand that President Truman use the power of his office to order the halting of the execution of Willie McGee."[85]

While several veterans chained themselves to the pillars of the Memorial chanting, "Lincoln freed the slaves, Truman free McGee" [Figs. 5.1 & 5.2], approximately 300 other veterans wearing T-shirts which read "Free Willie McGee" marched in front of the Memorial [Figs. 5.3, 5.4 & 5.5]. The demonstration continued on into the evening, ending with the veterans unchaining themselves from the pillars[86] [Fig. 5.6].

Not a single mainstream paper or magazine covered the demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial. However, Howard Fast, a novelist who was also a writer for the Communist *Daily Worker*, was present at the demonstration and wrote this first-hand report: "...watching with infinite patience the farce and tragedy of our present government [Lincoln] seemed at home, at home and in good company, alive and listening at long last in the Washington of today." As if Lincoln were a calming presence, Fast reported that spectators sensed the gravity of the demonstration: "For an hour we watched. I heard no one boo. I heard no one hiss. I heard no

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one cry 'Communist.' Hundreds and hundreds of people came there. They watched in silence. They walked up to the stairs to look at the lonely man who had suffered so much to make this a good land and a free land. They read the words engraved above his sad, brooding head: 'In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined—forever.' They stood there, and most of them left as they had come, in a curious silence that was threaded through with wonder and doubt..." Fast continued: "...only one person, also a soldier, asked why all this fuss over one life? Then we walked together into the shrine where Lincoln sits and the boy seemed confused and regretful over what he had said. Another visitor answered the young soldier: 'Sometimes, one life becomes a symbol of a million lives.' Even the police were sympathetic to the demonstration. The police could have broken it up, but they did not. It was something that even cops did not want to touch. Very little is sacred, eminently brave and good in Washington today; but this was—and the police left it alone." In concluding his account of the demonstration, Fast told his readers, "It is eminently fitting that the living memory of Abe Lincoln should be a witness to those who live and fight—and are willing to die, too—for what he believed in."[87]

The efforts of the ILFWU veterans were also unsuccessful, and one minute after midnight on May 8, Willie McGee was executed. When he was pronounced dead, the crowd of 300 whites that had gathered outside the courthouse where the execution took place broke out into Confederate yells.[88]

Atypically, reaction to McGee's execution in the black, Northern and Southern press was almost unanimous. They all agreed that McGee was a victim—of Communism. *Time* and *Life* magazines, the most influential publications in the nation, believed McGee's execution was justified and attributed the outcry of support for McGee to a Communist plot. *Time* opined: "To

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Communists all over the world, 'the case of Willie McGee' had become surefire propaganda, good for whipping up racial tension at home and giving U.S. justice a black eye abroad. Stirred up by the Communist leadership, Communist-liners and manifesto-signers in England, France, China and Russia demanded that Willie be freed" *Time* added: "The Communists, as usual, had managed to distort the case."[89] *Life* echoed the sentiments of *Time*: "Something very unfortunate happened to Willie. His case fitted too well into the strategy of the Communist-International. Because it did, Willie McGee suddenly became a pawn in a world propaganda war, a symbol with which Communism sought to convince Chinese and Indians and Indonesians that capitalism hates and tortures anyone who is not white. . . .Willie McGee was an instrument with which to stir up hatred of the U.S. abroad and heighten racial tensions at home."[90] Black establishment journalist Carl Rowan reiterated the line that McGee was a victim of Communist propaganda: "One thing emerged crystal clear: The Communists were reaping a propaganda bonanza and American democracy was suffering in the court of world opinion."[91]

The more radical black press, which might have been expected to take a different perspective, did not. In an editorial in the *Chicago Defender*, Robert S. Abbott attacked both the reactionary South and the Communists: "In the last few months we have witnessed a human rat race between two elements in our society, both hell bent on making a mockery out of the democratic concepts which undergird our republic...The double standard of justice in the South, as we have said before, represents a loaded pistol pointed at the heart of our democracy. Similarly, the Communists are committed to democracy's destruction and they know how to use this propaganda pistol."[92]

The *Pittsburgh Courier* covered the McGee case from the start and decried the judicial irregularities as frame-ups. But when *Courier* columnist George Schuyler, who had called the

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CRC a "notorious Communist front" as early as 1947,[93] reported McGee's execution, he focussed on singer Josephine Baker's attack on the CRC. He quoted the entertainer as saying that she denounced the Civil Rights Congress for using McGee "to swindle thousands of Americans into furthering its despicable plan to conquer the world." The newspaper also reported that Baker said she had nothing but "admiration and sincere respect" for other organizations, notably the NAACP, that contributed money to McGee and his family.[94]

Mary Mostert, a contributor to *The Nation*, also blamed Communism, but her conclusion was very different. In an article written two days before McGee's execution, called "Death for Association," she summarized all the facts of the case and concluded that the real reason McGee was threatened with execution was because "he was black and supported by Communists." The editorial concluded by asking: "What are we doing to ourselves? In a hysterical attempt to stamp out Communism are we creating the very conditions on which Communism thrives? Are we completely ignoring our own basic principles and allowing our courts to pass judgment on the basis of race, color, lawyers employed, religious or political affiliation? Now is the time that we should show the world, our minority groups, and especially ourselves that we have some faith in our democracy. By refusing men like Willie McGee a fair trial because of their race or their political association, we do not stop Communism, we promote it."[95]

The unanimity of most of the mainstream press in placing the blame for McGee's trial and execution on Communism, attests to the success of a powerful guilt-by-association consensus driven by the Cold War. With the exception of *The Nation*, dissenting voices were limited to Communist publications, organs of the progressive unions, and leftist organizations. Ted O. Thackrey, editor of the Communist newspaper *The Daily Compass*, said much the same as Mostert, but in far more strident language: "Only today—this day—is left to interpose the

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will of the people of the United States of America, expressed in the Constitution written for ALL citizens, against the lynch plans of the race-Fascists of Mississippi. In the name of democracy we have appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars to broadcast the American Story of freedom, liberty and justice for all to the world we would win to our political credo. What will that Voice [Of America] broadcast tomorrow? That we, with the power of the Federal Government at hand, stood idly by while anti-democrats calling themselves a government killed an American citizen because his skin was black? Or will we be able to broadcast triumphantly that, however belatedly, our sense of justice DID frustrate the lynch mob in this, our hour of trial?"[96]

The *Dispatcher*, the official newspaper of the San Francisco Local of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, in an editorial dated May 11 1951, entitled "The Meaning of Willie McGee," explored a larger issue: "Our union, and its officers and locals, are no longer going to be judged by 15 million American Negro People, 90 percent of whom are workers, solely upon a willingness to open ranks to Negro workers and merely defend their rights under a union contract. The crucial judgment will be made upon how well we recognize the force of their great movement, the depth of that force, and the true reasons that lie behind the execution of Willie McGee and the attempted frame-ups of outstanding leaders of the Negro people such as the venerable and beloved scholar, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois."[97]

A letter from black members of Local 867 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Jackson Mississippi, read: "They finally killed Willie McGee down here in Mississippi. But we members of the Mine-Mill Union in Jackson, Miss., want you all to know that we are going to keep on fighting for our rights and against this kind of injustice—even harder than ever . . . . we Negro workers in Mississippi read in the paper and hear on the radio

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how our country fights for Democracy and equal treatment and justice for all over the world. The only thing is we wish they would fight for it a little bit in Mississippi."[98]

Outside the United States, reaction to McGee's execution was swift. Richard Wright, the expatriate American writer, established a memorial fund for McGee's family, and singer Josephine Baker, another expatriate American living in France, paid for McGee's funeral expenses. The entire French press, including normally pro-American newspapers, decried McGee's execution. Five thousand Swedish citizens signed a protest letter sent to Truman. In England, 190,000 delegates at the annual conference of Electrical Trade Unions, upon hearing of the execution, stood in a moment of silence to pay homage to McGee.[99]

Willie McGee did not see himself as a pawn of the Communists. He was thankful committed advocates had diligently fought to obtain legal representation for him, fully aware that many other black men in Southern jails did not have such aid. He sent several letters to the Prisoners Relief Committee of the Civil Rights Congress that clearly expressed his feelings. In one letter, written just a few weeks before he was executed, he wrote: "Thank you all for being so kind to us and the real wonderful things you are all doing. All those who have sympathy for people in distress can only be one kind of person and would lead me to say that you and all of my many friends are really fine people. I do appreciate each and every thing you all may do."[100]

The role played by American Communists and leftists in the advancement of civil rights for blacks is often dismissed as self-serving, exploitative and manipulative. Their efforts were frequently deflated by the charge that their real interests lay in embarrassing the United States and furthering their own political agendas. There is no question that Soviet propagandists were helped by the United States' racial policies. This was, after all, a rich and bottomless reserve from which the Party could easily extract examples of outrageous and flagrant abuses of human

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rights. However, the charge of exploitation leveled against homegrown Communists must be viewed critically and cautiously within the dual contexts of Cold War hysteria and racism.

During this period, as the United States moved far to the right, Communism and even liberalism became synonymous with anti-Americanism, and the fight for the establishment of civil rights—a movement historically espoused by a distinct minority—became even more suspect. Ironically, demands for civil rights became confused with disloyalty to the country. As W.E.B. Du Bois observed, favoring equality of all people became "subversive" in this era.[101] Yet, Anti-Communism also served the needs of white supremacists, who used Communism as their "front"—a facade from which to operate in order to maintain the status quo of white superiority and as a reason to dismiss such demands as illegitimate.

At the time of the Willie McGee trial and government attempts to destabilize the CRC and progressive trade unions such as the IFLWU, the threat of Communism seemed very real (and in retrospect, the horrors of Stalinism made the transgressions of the United States against its citizens seem trivial by comparison). Fear of blacks rising up as an empowered, politicized group that worked in unison with white labor must have seemed a threat to the Truman Administration's foreign policy and hence to the entire Capitalist system.

In the final analysis, however, actions against real or imagined Communists set back civil rights efforts and limited and defined protests that would be tolerated by the government. This was particularly true in the case of the CRC and the IFLWU, which were constantly harassed by Congress and the FBI. After 1951, the more moderate NAACP re-emerged as the only acceptable voice of protest for black Americans, and when the country became enmeshed in a nationwide civil rights movement, protests at the Lincoln Memorial were even more carefully structured and were coordinated with the aid of the Federal Government.

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Because of these restrictive policies stemming from an anti-Communist posture that labeled most dissent "subversive," the United States lost an opportunity to forge a useful dialogue with pro-civil rights advocates tainted by the fact that they associated with Communists, or in the case of the CRC, were in fact organs of the CPUSA. Nonetheless, these advocates, despite many obstacles, promoted racial democracy at a time when a majority of white Americans were oblivious to human rights for black Americans. The Civil Rights Congress defended the rights of racial, political, religious and national minorities that were frequently victims of courts of law. They particularly challenged the unequal treatment of blacks in Southern courts and the disproportionate use of the death penalty against blacks convicted of rape. Progressive unions were the only organizations in the 1940s and 1950s that purposefully integrated the workplace and introduced formal programs to address racism both in and out of the workplace. Through their use of the methods of mass pressure and mass protests that prefigured the Montgomery Bus Boycott they contributed to the tactics and strategies employed by the civil rights movement of the mid-1950s that captured the attention of the entire nation. Perhaps most importantly, these organizations, and particularly the Civil Rights Congress, which insisted that racism was not merely a quirk or an exception but a grave and systemic flaw of Capitalism, filled a vacuum that no other civil liberties or civil rights organizations addressed, and it did so during a time of social turmoil and political repression.

By 1951 the civil rights debate had become subsumed by the Cold War. As the struggle for civil rights in the United States became defined more closely in relation to the struggle against Communism, issues of racial oppression that were specific to American democratic Capitalism and relevant only within that context were viewed as undermining Truman's foreign policy of containment as well as the overall efforts of the nation to stem the spread of

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international Communism. Although Communism as a form of government and the presumed threat of communist tyranny had little to do with the status of blacks in American society, the two became entangled. The ideological fervor of the Cold War deflected the real issue and left the unspoken, ulterior forces of race unexamined and circumscribed the possibility of a public discourse on race. Indeed, the idea of democratic equality—even beyond the boundaries of race—became more muddled.

For a brief moment the demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial to save the life of McGee seemed to bespeak the strength of the Memorial as a symbol of justice as well as the entire democratic system. White and black American veterans, most of whom were Communists, assembled at the site to freely and openly voice their objections to the legal system of the United States. Ultimately, however, the demonstration proved decisively that the ability to protest openly had little to do with the ability to effect actual change, especially when public opinion was so successfully directed by President Truman's efforts to contain the spread of Communism. Rather, the Memorial was used as lens to magnify the agendas of those for whom it had become a flashpoint of competing concerns.

The premise by much of the media and the general public that the intervention of Communists on behalf of McGee caused his death and that the demonstration at the Memorial was an affront to democracy, also attests to the vulnerability of the Memorial to the ideological priorities of the nation and its leaders. Its use as a site for protests that did not embrace the construct of democratic idealism as asserted by the majority was proven, again, to be unfeasible.

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Chapter 5: Notes

1. The IFLWU was formed when the Fur Workers Union and the International Leather Workers Association merged on March 21, 1939. Previous to 1939, the Fur Workers Union was part of the AFL but on March 12, 1927, the AFL expelled 37 officers of the Fur Workers Union's Joint Board in New York City. The AFL cited "Communist domination" as the reason for its action. See Philip S. Foner, *First Facts of American Labor, A Comprehensive Collection of Labor Firsts in the United States, Arranged by Subject* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984).

2. U. S. Government Printing Office, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1945-1950* (Washington, D.C., 1961-1964).

3. Quoted in Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c. 1996), p. 21.

4. McGee's account of the alleged rape can be read in a copy of Affidavit by McGee, February 3, 1951, Civil Rights Congress (CRC) Papers, reel 6; For details of McGee's confession see George Marshall to Louis Burnham, December 13, 1945, CRC Papers, reel 51, box 90; For each trial see McGee v. Mississippi, 337 US 922, 338 US 805, 330 US 958, 340 US 921, 340 US 905, 40 S. 2d 160 (1951); For deliberations on the first trial see Affidavit by Louis Burnham, April 14, 1948, SNYC Papers, File, "Willie McGee Case."

5. For a summation of the trials see "Fact Sheet" on Willie McGee case, May 22, 1950, reel 6, CRC Papers and Michael L. Radelet, Hugo Adam Bedau, and Constance Putnam, *In Spite of Innocence: Erroneous Convictions in Capital Cases* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), pp. 332-333.

6. It was the custom in the South to execute a person in the same courtroom the person was tried. For McGee's execution a portable electric chair was transported from Jackson to Laurel. An electrical generator running from a truck parked outside the courthouse provided electricity. See *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 19, 1951 and *The New York Times*, May 8, 1951, p. 32.

7. Duclos' criticism was published in a letter in the April 1945 issue of the *Cahiers du Communisme*, the theoretical organ of the Communist Party in France. The letter was translated into English and appeared in the *Daily Worker* on May 24, 1945, pp. 7, 9; The two-month long debate sparked by Duclos' letter can be followed in the *Daily Worker* beginning June 4, 1945; the reconstitution of the Communist Party of the United States took place on July 28, 1945, and was formalized in a resolution of the National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States of America at the Communist Party Convention, New York City.

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8. For analyses of Americans attracted to Communism see Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 1996 and David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979).

9. For the Communist Party of the United States' position on black Americans see Phillip Abbott Luce, *Road to Revolution: Communist Guerilla Warfare in the U.S.A* (San Diego, California: Viewpoint, 1967), p. 45; Harry Haywood, "Toward a Program of Agrarian Reforms for the Black Belt," *Political Affairs*, XXV, No, 10 (October, 1946), pp. 938-39; Claudia Jones, "On the Right of Self Determination for the Negro People in the Black Belt," *Political Affairs*, XXV, No. 1 (January, 1946), p. 67; On black Americans and the history of Communism in the United States see David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979); Wilson Record, The Negro and the Communist Party (New York: Atheneum, 1971); William A. Nolan, *Communism versus the Negro* (Chicago: Regnery,1951); For a study of the interaction between the Communist Party and the NAACP see Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964).

10. On strengthening the black/labor alliance see Henry Winston, "Party Tasks Among the Negro People," (Report to the Plenary meeting of the National Committee CP, U.S.A., February 12-15, 1946), *Political Affairs*, XXV, No. 4 (April, 1946), p. 349; "Resolution on the Question of Negro Rights and Self Determination," Reprinted in *The Communist Position on the Negro Question* (New York: New Century Publishers, 1947), pp. 9-13.

11. U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, *The American Negro in the Communist Party* (Washington, D.C. December 22, 1954), p.1.

12. "The Present Situation and the Next Tasks," *Communist*, XXXIV, No. 7 (July, 1945), pp. 619-623; Earl Browder, "Speech to the National Committee of the CPA," June 18, 1945, *Daily Worker*, July 20, 1945, CPA Discussion Page Section, p. 1.

13. "Theory and Practice of the Communist Party," Marxist Study Series I, First Course, Prepared by National Education Department of the Communist Party (New York: New Century Publishers, 1947), Fourth Printing, September, 1948, p. 31.

14. Doxey A.Wilkerson, "The Negro and the American Nation," *Political Affairs*, XXV, No. 7 (July, 1946), pp. 652-658; William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p.332; Thomas Paul Jenkin, *Reactions of Major Groups to Positive Government in the United States, 1930-1940* (Univeresity of California Publications in Political Science: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945), p. 284.

15. Haywood, *Political Affairs*, XXV. No. 10 (October, 1946), pp. 938-939 and Luce, *Road to Revolution*, p. 45.

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16. Council for Democracy, *The Negro and Defense: A Test of Democracy* (Washington, D.C., 1941), pp. 19-20.

17. The CIO and the Negro Worker: Together for Victory (Washington, D.C., 1942), pp. 2, 4-7, 11. Pamphlet. Reference Center for Marxist Studies. New York City.

18. Victor Perlo," Trends in the Economic Status of the Negro People," *Science and Society* 16 (Spring, 1950), pp. 132-34.

19. National Negro Congress, *A Petition to the United Nations on Behalf of 13 Million Oppressed Negro Citizens of the United States of America* (New York, 1946), p. 10.

20. Henry Winston, "Party Tasks Among the Negro People," (Report to the Plenary Meeting of the National Committee C.P.U.S.A., February 12-15, 19046), *Political Affairs*, XXV, No. 4 (April, 1946), pp. 356-57.

21. The IFLWU organized an exhibit in 1952 that documented the activities of the union to save the life of McGee. The original posters are in the Art and Artifacts Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York.

22. Robert Thompson, "Party Policy in the Veterans' Field," *Political Affairs*, XXV, No. 1 (January 1946), p. 45.

23. Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (New York: Athenaeum, 1971), p. 239.

24. On the ILD see Charles H. Martin, "The International Labor Defense and Black America," *Labor History* 26 (Spring, 1985), pp. 165-194; Descriptions of the CRC are found in David A. Shannon, *Decline of American Communism* (Latham, N.J., 1959), pp. 220-21, 234-35, 244 and William L. Patterson, *The Man Who Cried Genocide* (New York, 1971), pp. 156-214.

25. George C. Marshall was the Chairman of the CRC but Patterson was its de facto leader. On Patterson see his autobiography *The Man Who Cried Genocide* (New York, 1971).

26. Charles H. Martin, "The Civil Rights Congress and Southern Black Defendants," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXXI, No. 1, Spring, 1987.

27. Resolution establishing the CRC reprinted in *Daily Worker*, April 30, 1946.

28. Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973* (New York: International Publishers, 1974), p. 294.

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29. Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism, The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), p.151.

30. Statement by William Patterson at the Fur and Leather Workers Convention, undated, CRC Papers, reel 7, Schomburg Archives.

31. CRC Papers, reel 7.

32. Historian Charles H. Martin has had several volumes compiled on the CRC declassified through the Freedom of Information Act; William Patterson to Lu Ping, CRC Papers, April 15, 1954, reel 34; Nadya Schwartz to William Patterson, CRC Papers, August 7, 1953, reel 47.

33. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Un-American Activities, Report on Civil Rights Congress as a Communist Front Organization, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, May 27, 29, 31, 1948, Washington, D.C. The CRC did support several individuals who were accused of being Communists and it also supported the Top Twelve Communist Party Leaders who were tried in New York under the Smith Act.

34. See "Guide to Subversive Organizations and Publications," CRC Papers, March 3, 1951, reel 29.

35. For Patterson's account of these events see his *The Man Who Cried Genocide: An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 156-168, and the William L. Patterson Papers (1890-1980), Schomburg Archives.

36. October 30, 1951.

37. *Daily Worker*, January 9, 1956.

38. For a list of individuals and organizations in support of McGee see CRC Papers, Part II, reel 7, Schomburg Archives.

39. CRC Press Release, March 13, 1951, reel 7.

40. Reprinted in the *Daily Worker*, May 7, 1951.

41. Report by Joseph Starobin to the *Daily Worker*, May 8, 1951, p. 3.

42. Reported in *Daily Worker*, May 7, 1951.

43. Reported in the *Daily Worker*, May 7, 1951, front page.

44. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 7, Schomburg Archives and *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 19, 1951, front page.

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45. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 7, April 11, 1951, Schomburg Archives.

46. Statement made to the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, March 27, 1951.

47. The *Daily Compass*, May 3, 1951, p. 7.

48. Harlem Citizens Committee letter to Truman dated April 6, 1951 in CRC Papers, Part II, reel 42, frame 00671, Schomburg Archives.

49. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 7, Schomburg Archives.

50. *Chicago Defender*, May 5, 1951, pp. 1 & 5.

51. CRC Papers, reel 7, Schomburg Archives.

52. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 6, Schomburg Archives; For the letter by McGee's children see it reprinted in *People's World*, May 7, 1951, front page.

53. *The Washington Post*, May 8, 1951, p.11.

54. Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism: the NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), pp. 132-169.

55. "The NAACP and the Communists," (editorial) *Crisis*, LVI, No. 3 (March, 1949).

56. NAACP Annual Report (New York: NAACP, 1950).

57. CRC Papers, July 21, 1950, Part II, reel 6, Schomburg Archives.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*

62. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 7, Schomburg Archives.

63. The 11 unions were the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union (UE), the International Fur and Leather Workers Union, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelters Workers, the International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union, the United Farm Equipment Workers Union, the Food, Tobacco & Agricultural Workers Union, the United Office and Professional Workers Union and the United Public Workers Union.

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64. IFLWU Archives, Box 5, File Folder 20. Proceedings of International Executive Board of IFLWU of U.S. and Canada, June 4-8, 1951. President's Report, Morning Session, June 4, 1951, pp. 50-53. Kheel Center, NYS School of Industrial & Labor Relations, (Cornell University, Ithaca, New York).

65. IFLWU Archives. Proceedings International Executive Board. December 3-7, 1951, pp. 236-37.

66. Quoted in Philip S. Foner, *The Fur & Leather Workers Union, A Story of Dramatic Struggles and Achievements* (Newark, New Jersey: Nordan Press, 1950), p. 653.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 654.

68. George Blake, "The Trade Union Movement and the McGee Case," Vol. 30, # 81, *Political Weekly*, August, 1951, pp. 25-26.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

71. The *Daily Compass*, May 4, 1951, p.4.

72. CRC Papers, Correspondence of William Patterson, Part II, reel 35, Schomburg Archives.

73. *Ibid.*

74. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 42, frame 00683, Schomburg Archives.

75. *Ibid.*, frame 00686.

76. *Ibid.*

77. CRC Press Release, March 13, 1951, Part II, reel 7, Schomburg Archives.

78. IFLWU Archives, Box 5, file folder 20. Report of the Anti-Discrimination Committee by Lyndon Henry Johnson at the Proceedings of the International Executive Board of the IFLWU of U.S. and Canada. Held at Fur Workers Resort, White Lake, N.Y., June 4-8, 1951, p.300.

79. Quoted in the *Daily Worker*, April 18, 1951, p. 9.

80. IFLWU Archives, Box 5, file folder 20. Report of the Anti-Discrimination Committee by Lyndon Henry Johnson at Proceedings of the International Executive Board of the IFLWU of U.S. and Canada. Held at the Fur Workers Resort in White Lake, N.Y., June 4-8, 1951, p. 300.

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81. *Ibid.*

82. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

83. *Daily Compass*, May 7, 1951, and *People's World*, May 7, 1951.

84. CRC Papers, Part II, reel 7.

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Daily Worker*, May 7, 1951, p. 3.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

88. *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 19, 1951, p. 10.

89. *Time* Magazine, May 14, 1951, p. 26.

90. *Life* Magazine, May 21, 1951, p. 44.

91. Carl Rowan, *South of Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1954), p. 187.

92. *Chicago Defender*, May 19, 1951, p. 6.

93. September 13, 1947.

94. May 19, 1951, front page.

95. May 5, 1921, p. 421.

96. May 7, 1951, p. 8.

97. *Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, # 8, August 1951, p. 28.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

99. *Afro-American* (Baltimore edition), May 26, 1951, p. 3.

100. Quoted in *Daily Worker*, April 18, 1951.

101. Phillip S. Foner, ed., *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks; Speeches and Addresses* (New York: Pathfinder Press, c. 1970), p. 241.

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Chapter 6

Resurrection City and the Politics of Public Space

Of all the demonstrations at the Lincoln Memorial, one of the least understood is the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) held in 1968. Conceived by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1967 and launched just two months after his murder in 1968, the Poor People's Campaign was a 43-day protest movement centered on a makeshift encampment alongside the National Mall called Resurrection City. Overly ambitious, poorly organized, poorly led and overlong, the PPC was bedeviled by inclement weather and was mounted against an unprecedented background of social and political chaos throughout the nation. By all accounts the last of the classic civil rights demonstrations held at the Memorial was considered an unmitigated disaster. But although it was alternatively ignored and pilloried by the public and the press and criticized by the government for its strident rhetoric and politics, King's final vision for national renewal and change—through the empowerment of all of the nation's poor—was arguably the most important of the civil rights demonstrations. The Poor People's Campaign deserves re-examination, particularly as it contributed to the shaping of the politics of public space usage at the National Mall, and of the function of the Lincoln Memorial which changed decisively in 1968— and in its relationship to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

The seeds of this dynamic change were sown long before the Mall was actually constructed. Pierre Charles L'Enfant's 1791 plan for the new capital of Washington was developed around an immense greensward that in its openness and distancing perspective

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was intended to embody the promise of a youthful, ebullient and expanding nation. After numerous changes undermined much of L'Enfant's plan, his utopian vision of an uninterrupted axial vista was invested in 1901 with an inherent nationalist symbolism designed to display the might of the United States as a nascent world power, under the auspices of the Senate Park Commission. The members of the Commission viewed the Lincoln Memorial as critical to their plan to promote the United States both architecturally and symbolically. But once the Lincoln Memorial was built and opened to the public, it immediately and ineradicably altered the function of the Mall in ways unimagined by those who conceived and built it. Instead of functioning as a universal symbol of national power, the Mall acquired a narrower, more specific, and pointedly political meaning. Despite ongoing efforts by the government to restrict its usage, the Mall and its central focal point—the Lincoln Memorial—became a natural gathering space for protests. In fact, the Mall and the Memorial were viewed as natural extensions of one another. Over almost fifty years, civil rights leaders, politicians and presidents, as well as the media, helped create and sustain the perception of the Memorial and the Mall as dynamic examples of the fluidity and flexibility of American democracy. Scholars and historians built upon this perception, cementing the association and the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was both affirmation and consolidation of this perception.

Until 1968, this view of the Mall and the Memorial was left unchallenged by civil rights protesters. In that year however, the Poor People's Campaign mounted a protest movement that forced consideration of a redefinition of what constituted the public, how a public site such as the Mall should function and, ultimately, what the meaning and

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function of the Lincoln Memorial as a viable national symbol should be. The Poor People's Campaign protesters claimed a physical right to the Mall and forced an acknowledgement of both their needs and their presence which, until that time, had remained largely invisible. The implications raised by their presence and by the issues they presented to government leaders, posited a radical critique of the premises of a Capitalist form of government. This was the most radical stance yet taken by protesters at the Lincoln Memorial—one that held the potential for enhancing the democratic system of the United States by proving that the poor also had a place and a voice in American society.

Yet it was Martin Luther King's 1963 March on Washington that was perceived by the media, the public and official Washington as an unqualified success—although it did not achieve its goals of prompting passage of the pending civil rights bill or creating thousands of new jobs for black Americans. Nonetheless, some 250,000 marchers came to Washington on August 28 and held a peaceful, orderly and inspiring demonstration that was viewed by millions more on television. King's "I Have A Dream" speech, delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, was the highlight of the march and it electrified the nation. The fact that he spoke at the Memorial rather than at some other place in the capital, solidified the Memorial's place in the American psyche, and today the protest is fully assimilated in the national consciousness and public culture of the United States. It is viewed as one of the prime examples of democracy at work—a veritable testament to American democracy.

The critical turning point in how the Memorial and its future usage was perceived was the assassination of Martin Luther King. The nation, already traumatized and

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divided by the Vietnam War, was again shaken two months after King's murder by the assassination of Robert Kennedy.[1] The nation as a whole seemed to resign itself to an irretrievable loss of innocence. Writing in the *Washington Post*, Arthur Schlesinger summed up the nation's somber mood: "With the murder of Robert Kennedy, following on the murder of John Kennedy and the murder of Martin Luther King, we have killed the three great embodiments of our national idealism in this generation. Each murder has brought us one stage further on the downward spiral of moral degradation and social disintegration."[2]

When King was killed on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, his unique leadership was lost and blacks turned their pent-up anger on the inner cities, burning and looting. More radically inclined leaders, such as Stokely Carmichael, warned that King's murder was a declaration of war on black America and that "black people have to survive and the only way they will survive is by getting guns."[3] Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, rejected Carmichael's call to violence, but only because "the people who lose their lives are Negroes."[4] For many, marching for civil rights was ludicrous and the Lincoln Memorial was the quintessential symbol of hypocrisy—fulfilling Robert Moton's warning in his dedication speech at the Memorial forty-six years earlier that the nation's failure to live up to the ideals of Lincoln would turn the Memorial into just that. Then why did the organizers of the Poor People's Campaign choose to build Resurrection City in the shadow of the Memorial? It had little to do with the symbolic potency of the site or the persona of Abraham Lincoln. Instead, the force of the site now emanated from the spirit of Martin Luther King, now a martyr to black empowerment and a potent symbol

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for many Americans of the dream enunciated in his "I Have A Dream" speech delivered on the steps of the Memorial in 1963.

James Baldwin, in *The Fire Next Time* (1963), warned of a coming conflagration if the nation failed to heed his plea that "the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks...end the racial nightmare and achieve our country." [5] The Poor People's Campaign sought to do precisely that by bringing together the country's poor, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or political affiliation, in order to raise the moral consciousness of the nation and thus achieve the lofty goal of national redemption and reconciliation. Instead, it became a symbol of dissension and balkanized racial politics in a squalid "city" built alongside the National Mall that devolved into a microcosm of a failed urban ghetto. As a result of the PPC's failures, black civil rights leaders lost the moral high ground they had firmly occupied until then, and for many the Campaign marked the moment of disempowerment of the Lincoln Memorial as a symbolic and political site.[6]

There were a number of factors that might suffice to explain this shift in the public perception of the Memorial. Many Americans who were identified in the Nixon era as the "silent majority" rejected the tenets of liberalism, and protests were viewed as unnecessary (and un-American) assaults on an already strained nation. At the other end of the political spectrum, many liberals believed that with the achievement of major legal goals the most important work of the civil rights movement had been accomplished and protests had fulfilled their purpose. This perception left the old-guard civil rights organizations fragmented and in the eyes of young, more militant blacks, anachronisms. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial

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Equality (CORE), and the Black Panther Party, offered what many blacks regarded as viable alternatives to King's philosophy of nonviolence and Bayard Rustin's politics of consensus.

But a closer reading of the events of 1968 demonstrates that even these factors do not fully account for such, different receptions of the 1963 March on Washington and the 1968 Poor People's Campaign. Another factor, less apparent and less measurable, was equally significant. The disastrous Vietnam War undid the solipsistic view that Americans held of themselves. Virtuous intentions and selfless motivations for the country's presence in Vietnam—not to mention its military prowess—were critically rejected by many Americans as presumptuous and invalid. This factor and the relentless exposure of America's blatant racial inequalities through the many civil rights protests eroded the idealism that had defined and propelled the country's national persona. As this national self-perception, which looked more and more like self-aggrandizement due to its adherance to the exceptionalist ideal faded, at the same time, its function as a form of social control lessened considerably.[7]

Prior to 1968 forms of radicalism or dissent that might have competed with the existing structure were more easily compartmentalized, institutionalized, and absorbed into a liberal discourse. But in 1968, the rhetoric of exceptionalism that had been employed with such effectiveness at the Lincoln Memorial since 1922 was abandoned and replaced by an aggressive rhetoric of criticism and confrontation that was prevalent throughout the Poor People's Campaign. When this rhetoric was rejected, it was also an implicit rejection of America's (and King's) ideals.[8] As the civil rights movement came to be perceived as directed against American society and a threat to social order,

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reportage by the media and commentary by politicians and government leaders was increasingly negative and critical.

Martin Luther King had been at the center of the storm within the civil rights movement but by 1967 recognized that it was being overtaken by the Vietnam War, which diminished the undisputed popular success of the 1963 March on Washington and the pro-civil rights legislation of 1963 and 1964. Vietnam was the final catalyst that altered King's public position on both the war and the civil rights movement. Until 1967, he had managed to straddle the issue of the increasingly unpopular war, neither endorsing nor rejecting it. But in that year, he finally concluded that racism, militarism and economic exploitation were interdependent.[9] Once he resolved that the war for civil rights and the domestic war against Vietnam were one and the same, his method of protest changed.

On April 4, 1967, exactly one year to the day before King was murdered, he delivered a seminal sermon at Manhattan's Riverside Church, called a "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam." As he spoke to the three thousand people assembled in the church, he shared with them, as if each listener were a confidante, the realizations that brought him to his decision to speak out against Vietnam. The first was that Lyndon Johnson's Poverty Program had been "broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war." He told his audience that he was "increasingly compelled" to realize that the war was "an enemy of the poor," and that he realized that it was the poor who were fighting the war—mostly young, poor blacks. He laid out the irony of "watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same

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schools." He then told his audience that while trying to convince young men that they could effect social change through nonviolence, those same men made him realize that the cruelty and hypocrisy of the war made his philosophy a mockery: "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government." [10]

While those against the war in Vietnam were happy to have King in their camp, the convergence of the civil rights and antiwar movements was greatly feared by the administration and viewed as a threat by the military. King's position alienated President Johnson, who believed it would weaken support for the war. As Presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin observed, "once the turn was made on King's part, Johnson as president began to view King and the civil rights movement as potential enemies rather than embracing them"[11] Several black establishment leaders, including Ralph Bunche, undersecretary of the United Nations and a director of the NAACP, denounced King's position,[12] as did Carl Rowan, the black syndicated columnist for *The New York Times.*[13]

For King, his decision to publicly attack the Vietnam War allowed him to move forward with plans to jump-start the civil rights movement with a new protest campaign later to be known as the Poor Peoples Campaign. Along with a coalition of other Southern black ministers who formed the Southern Christian Leadership Organization (SCLC) in 1957 to protest segregation and barriers to voting, King's goal was to "redeem the soul of America" through nonviolent resistance based on the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi.[14] This nonviolent approach was initially behind King's thinking as he began

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planning the Poor Peoples Campaign in 1967 to force federal legislation that would guarantee employment, income and housing for the nation's economically disadvantaged.

The change in King's thinking can be traced as his plans for the Poor People's Campaign evolved. During this last year of his life, he gradually abandoned his strict adherence to the philosophy of nonviolence as well as the rhetoric and the message that had made so many of his previous marches and demonstrations, particularly the 1963 March on Washington, successful. This shift in his thinking, coinciding with the rise of black nationalism and the impact of the Vietnam War, resulted in a dramatically different protest at the Lincoln Memorial. As he began to draw away from nonviolence as the only form of protest, King and the Poor People's Campaign increasingly attracted the attention of the Federal Government and the FBI, which since the 1963 March was determined to "destroy" King.[15]

By August 15, 1967, when King addressed the SCLC's Tenth Anniversary Convention, he had already decided to employ a campaign of massive civil disobedience, characterizing it publicly as a "constructive alternative to riots."[16] Four months later, on December 4, when he formally announced his plans for a "new Washington movement" that he then called the Washington Spring Project,[17] there was a sense of urgency and frustration: "America is at a crossroads of history, and it is critically important for us, a nation and a society, to choose a new path and move upon it with resolution and courage."[18] King's announcement of a new Washington movement was the culmination of a long and difficult reassessment of his personal political philosophy of nonviolence and his struggle to find an approach for the civil rights movement that would be effective without completely jettisoning his long-held beliefs in a nonviolent, biracial justice

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movement. For the first time he openly blamed the Federal Government for the plight of the poor: "The true responsibility for the existence of these deplorable conditions lies ultimately with the larger society, and much of the immediate responsibility for removing the injustices can be laid directly at the door of the Federal Government."[19]

The Poor People's Campaign was in fact to be very different from all other demonstrations that had been held at or near the site of the Lincoln Memorial. First of all, its axis was meant to be a permanent site that came to be known as Resurrection City, U.S.A., and in its physical and philosophical orientation, the "city" would be a "living, visual demonstration of what poverty is," that would bring the reality of poverty and poor people "before the eyes of the nation every day."[20] Its other purpose was to serve as a base from which demonstrations throughout the capital would occur continuously and simultaneously at many Government agencies. The intent was that the demonstrations would exert pressure that would become increasingly militant until the campaigners' demands were met.

King rejected a traditional one-day march. He envisioned a massive, long-term, populist campaign with participation not just predominantly by blacks, but also by Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and poor Appalachian whites. The campaign would address the needs and grievances of all of the nation's poor. Three thousand highly trained and disciplined shock troops would first be sent into the capital. They would constitute a hard core of protesters prepared to stay there until their demands were met. Waves of poor people would follow them, flowing into the capital from points all across the country. They would be a constant presence in the capital, continuously replaced by new and always-present groups. The protesters would not be housed safely

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out of sight but would live in a city of tents on the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial, in full view of the members of Congress, residents of the capital and the public at large. Their cause would be well publicized through television and other media coverage.

At this point King still adhered to nonviolence, but his rhetoric had changed as he mixed assurances with threats that were to continue throughout the planning stages of the campaign: "We intend to channelize the smoldering rage and frustration of Negro people into an effective, militant and nonviolent movement of massive proportions in Washington and other areas." [21] But as the date for the Poor People's Campaign drew closer, he announced that if a more militant form of protest was necessary it would be employed and he was prepared to disrupt the city, resort to civil disobedience and submit to jailings to force Congress to meet their demands.

The challenges that King had to meet in planning the Poor People's Campaign were not that different than those he and other leaders had faced in 1963 in planning the March on Washington. The liberal left coalition that existed in 1963 was still available, though was not as unified. Money, resources and donors were available but as in all such undertakings, were limited. Many leaders cautioned King against the campaign, as they had in 1963. Bayard Rustin advised King against the Poor People's Campaign as did moderates such as NAACP official John Morsell, who believed that it would be viewed as "insurrection" and "could lead to violence."[22] However, the primary difference between the two was that in early 1968 King was fighting to maintain his leadership within the civil rights movement and struggling to develop a modified form of

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nonviolence as a viable means of protest. One approach was to bring more SNCC activists back into the ranks of nonviolent protest.

During the 1965 voting rights protest march from Selma to Montgomery (the televised march was violently disrupted just outside Selma when police beat and tear-gassed protesters. King and Black Power activist and SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael had split over a fundamental (and eventually irreconcilable) difference. Carmichael and SNCC regarded nonviolence as a technique to achieve an end, while not eschewing outright violence if it helped reach the desired end; King and the SCLC saw it as a philosophy that was sacrosanct. Nonetheless, King reached out to Carmichael and in 1967 many SNCC activists were working out of King's Atlanta headquarters, where they were involved in the early planning stages of the Poor People's Campaign. Carmichael said he was willing to join King's spring campaign (and announced facetiously that he would not upstage King), but only with certain conditions. Above all, he wanted assurance from King that the campaign would employ whatever direct-action tactics were necessary to achieve its goals. This alliance between King and Carmichael indicates the tenuousness of King's position within the movement, for King surely understood that the presence of SNCC activists would lend a much more aggressive tone to the Campaign than he would have tolerated in the past.

The possibility that the more radical Carmichael would take over the Poor People's Campaign also worried Washington.[23] Objections raised by William Schulz, a writer for *Reader's Digest*, about King's campaign, summed up most of the concerns of the government and the public. He characterized the Poor People's Campaign as "New Left-organized civil disobedience" and as a "form of protest alien to the principles of a

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nation which has historically sought to settle its great issues through peaceful and lawful debate" [apparently forgetting the Revolution] that would endanger the country's basic freedoms. Schulz went on to quote sociologist Lewis Feuer's observation that "such civil disobedience has evolved into civil resistance, an anti-democratic ideology of rule by [a] dictatorial elite."[24] Schultz then voiced the more typical objections: The march would jeopardize the safety and functioning of the city and it would cause "international humiliation";[25] it would offer a field day for "Communist-bloc newsmen who will cable home Washington-dateline dispatches on the 'starvation' and 'misery' of 'oppressed Americans,'" and "powerful transmitters will beam the distorted accounts to Africa, Asia and Latin America."[26] Many of these same issues were raised by the media and by members of Congress when the 1963 March was proposed. They regarded sit-ins as a first step to more civil disobedience and a prelude to violence.[27]

The problems facing the civil rights movement in 1968 were exacerbated by a Cold War culture that continued uninterrupted in the 1960s, though it had adjusted to the different needs of the times. The indiscriminate and overt governmental suppression and anti-Communist Congressional legislation of the 1950s, aimed at individuals and groups suspected of being Communist or being tainted by Communism, was replaced by a more covert and sharply focused attack on the civil rights movement. The 1963 March on Washington mobilized J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI. He believed the march was a Communist campaign that was intended to start a social revolution and posed a serious threat to internal security.[28] From 1963 on, Hoover intentionally sought to discredit King and, in 1967, when King joined forces with SNCC and announced his plans for the Poor People's Campaign, the FBI (with Hoover still in charge) aggressively stepped up its

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surveillance of King, determined to subvert the efforts for the Poor People's Campaign. The FBI established POCAM as the code name for Poor People's Campaign, and during 1967 and 1968, agents followed King's plans for the Campaign, infiltrated meetings, tapped phones, and accumulated a voluminous amount of material that reported each step King took in planning the protest.[29]

After King's death, there was even less enthusiasm for the Poor People's Campaign and the culminating march to the Lincoln Memorial but King's murder made it impossible to bring the Campaign to a halt. Ralph Abernathy and other SCLC leaders felt they had to go forward with the campaign to honor King's memory, and city officials in Washington, still reeling from the riots that erupted after King's death, were fearful of more violence if they objected to the Campaign. As it became apparent that the Campaign would take place, rumors spread about uncontrollable violence and chaos in the city and the specter of Communism was raised once again. In this climate' politicians like Senator John Mc Clellan took matters into their own hands. The Senator, dissatisfied with the Attorney General's handling of the Poor People's Campaign and what he regarded as a lack of responsiveness on the part of President Johnson, decided to bypass the Johnson Administration entirely and seek help directly from the FBI which, under Hoover, often operated independently of the White House. McClellan contacted Agent C.D. De Loach at the FBI and informed him that he had been told by a source (that he could not identify) about a secret meeting in Tennessee. At this meeting, he said, statements were made that that "the only good white men are dead men" and that people at the meeting were told to arm themselves with guns, knives and pistols. "Youths were told to be in the vanguard of the marchers so that they could be attacked by police and

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then afterwards yell 'Police brutality.'" They were also told to not take too many clothes along as they "would be able to pick up a wardrobe here in Washington as a result of looting." On the basis of these innuendoes and unsubstantiated remarks, he asked the FBI to investigate secretly these reports and the agency complied.[30]

By the time Campaign officials, led by King's successor, the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, were granted a thirty-seven day renewable permit from the National Park Service on May 10, allowing the PPC to erect its site in a park off the Mall in view of the Lincoln Memorial, official Washington was determined to control every aspect of the campaign. This took the form of a flurry of Congressional legislative activity to prevent any more large public gatherings on federal grounds and a bill successfully passed by the Public Works Committee prohibited any future demonstrations that involved extended stays on federal grounds. At the same time, the city of Washington, D.C. steeled itself for the worst. The District of Columbia and federal officials readied city police, National Guardsmen and Army troops to deal with potential disturbances. Patrick V. Murphy, the city's Director of Public Safety, was put on alert as was Mayor Walter E. Washington, who requested that Army units be stationed in the city, ready to respond quickly if needed. Although this response was not unusual— many of these same objections and actions had occurred with the proposal of the 1963 March on Washington—there was a sense of special urgency.

President Johnson did not want the Poor People's Campaign to take place at all and did not want the National Parks Service to issue the SCLC a permit.[31] However, once the permit was granted, he followed the precedent set by the Kennedy Administration in the handling of the 1963 march. That administration, also fearful of potential violence

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and the negative international opinion that would result, took extraordinary precautions to assist the protestors and control the event (to the extent that Kennedy even presigned executive orders authorizing military intervention in case of rioting).[32] In the process, exactly whose protest it was, became blurred. Johnson gave extensive assistance to the protestors, concluding that he had no other choice. Under the direction of Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the Justice Department was the liaison between government agencies and the Poor People's Campaign staff. Clark, a supporter of the campaign, was tactful, careful and meticulous. He allayed the concerns of Congressmen and other officials in the capital, met regularly with Reverend Ralph Abernathy and the SCLC staff, and personally oversaw the smallest details of the Campaign.[33]

The Poor People's Campaign, described by the *New York Post* as "a movement of bold dimensions,"[34] consisted of three stages. The first stage was an intense lobbying effort to present specific grievances and demands to various governmental agencies. This approach was vastly different than the format established in the 1963 March on Washington in which meetings with Democratic and Republican leaders of Congress were brief courtesy calls that preceded the march. The Poor People's Campaign held a three-day lobbying effort, from April 29 to May 1, that was marked by haranguing and contentiousness. Approximately 150 representatives from the campaign, led by Reverend Ralph Abernathy, and including Rejes Lopez Tjerina, the controversial land grant organization leader who headed the group from New Mexico, and Maria Varela, the spokesperson for the Spanish-speaking participants (who charged that the State Department had failed to honor the terms of the 1848 Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty guaranteeing them certain land rights and educational opportunities),[35] met with various

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government officials on Capitol Hill. The committee made a formal presentation before Cabinet officials in which a long statement of demands (ninety-nine in all) was read. This was followed by first-hand testimony of protesters on daily issues that they contended with as a result of poverty.[36] The presentations lasted for the entire work day and were marked by haranguing and contentiousness.

The Poor People's Campaign pared its original ninety-nine demands down to just five: a meaningful job at a living wage for every employable citizen; a secure and adequate income for all who cannot find jobs or for whom employment is inappropriate; access to land as a means to income and livelihood; access to capital as a means of full participation in the economic life of America; and recognition by law of the right of people affected by government programs to play a significant role in determining how the programs are designed and carried out.[37]

Hunger and malnutrition were to become the major issues as the campaign evolved.[38] On April 29, the first day of the campaign, the meetings lasted six hours. Committee members presented evidence to Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman of malnutrition and hunger among black children in Mississippi and the inability of poor families to purchase food stamps. The committee demanded that Attorney General Clark have the Justice Department investigate discrimination in employment, enforce school integration laws and the housing provisions of the 1968 Civil Rights Act, and prosecute violations of the Federal Civil Rights statutes, which included jailings, beatings and killings of Mexican-Americans and Native Americans on reservations. The committee also met Labor Secretary W. Willard Wirtz and Housing Secretary Robert C. Weaver,

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while Secretary of State Dean Rusk met with the Mexican-American contingent of the campaign. *The New York Times* called the demands made on this day "militant."[39]

The second day, April 30, began with an hour-long appearance of the SCLC delegation before the Senate Sub-Committee on Manpower, Employment and Poverty, which was chaired by Senator Joseph S. Clark, Democrat of Pennsylvania. Abernathy asked for passage of legislation creating two million jobs, "thousands of new units of low-income housing," and stated the need for "an immediate income maintenance program." [40]

On May 1, the final day of meetings, the Campaign's committee met representatives from the State Department and the Interior Department. At the State Department they demanded that an interagency committee be established that would consist of representatives of the poor and the departments of State, Justice and Interior to study the question of "legal ownership of the disputed lands under the treaty of Guadulupe-Hidalgo." At the Interior Department, the Poor People's Campaign committee asked for a "model schools system for Indian children in the communities where they live, with full community control and full Federal responsibility for provision of adequate resources for such a system." And they demanded a "specific plan for creating jobs and housing on Indian reservations, and adequate assistance for Indians wishing to relocate in the cities."[41]

On May 15, there was a follow-up meeting with members of the Congress. Abernathy met with seventy-two Congressmen and at the outset assured them that no large-scale "disruption of government" except "as a last resort would occur." [42] The most important result of this meeting was the creation of an informal committee consisting of

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eight Senators and eight Representatives to "continue the dialogue" with campaign leaders on at least a weekly basis.[43]

These meetings, which were televised, prompted "Hunger In America" a CBS program narrated by Charles Kuralt that aired on May 21. Viewers might have been startled to learn that The Citizens Board of Inquiry, a private agency, determined that while the government spent one and a half billion dollars a year to feed hungry people in other countries, in the United States 30 million Americans (out of a total population of 200 million) were impoverished. Of those 30 million, 10 million were without adequate food, many were malnourished, and some—often children who lived on reservations in the Southwest and in the rural South—died of diseases that officially did not exist in the United States like Kwashiorkor, a severe form of protein calorie malnutrition; and Marasmus, a disease of total calorie and protein malnutrition. The transcript of this program, along with three editorials, was added to the Congressional Record of the Senate on May 29, 1968.[44] As a result of the program, the idea for a guaranteed income gained ground among academic, business and financial leaders but not with the general public, which made its views known to Congress. As one member of Congress commented: "We all know there's a lot wrong with the present welfare system, which reaches only a quarter of the poor anyway. But the great majority of my people, as of now, are against it. They think of it as just another handout, another way of avoiding work."[45]

The second stage of the Poor People's Campaign began on May 2 with a rally at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis—the place where King was killed. Reverend Abernathy placed a "memorial star" in the cement of the balcony where Dr. King fell after being

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shot,[46] and then led 1,500 followers across the nearby state line and on to the town of Marks, Mississippi. From there, approximately 150 people walked on to Edwards, Mississippi, and the first caravan, the Southern Caravan, set out for Washington. Caravans also left for the nation's capital from Seattle, Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles [Fig. 6.1]. On May 8, a second and much larger group of about a 1,000 demonstrators left from Marks in ten buses called the "Freedom Train," and finally, on May 13, a third group in fifteen mule-drawn wagons—the "Mule Train"—left Marks with about eighty people [Fig. 6.2 & Fig. 6. 3]. The caravans planned to pick up participants along the route to Washington.

The first of the caravans arrived in Washington on May 12, and the next day ground was broken, and the encampment was dedicated and named Resurrection City, U.S.A. At the dedication Abernathy vowed "to plague the Pharaohs of this nation with plague after plague until they agree to give us meaningful jobs and a guaranteed annual income." [47] And while he pledged nonviolent protests "to arouse the conscience of the nation," he added ominously: "we cannot give you any further guarantee that massive disruptions in the city would not occur."[48]

The third stage of the Campaign consisted of constructing Resurrection City. John Wiebensohn, a University of Maryland professor of architecture, drew up plans for the city. Organization and planning was carried out by a Structures Committee that advised the SCLC staff on the design, layout and construction of the city.[49] As construction began on May 23 on the 16-acre site in West Potomac Park alongside the tree-lined Reflecting Pool at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, spirits were high and there was a generous outpouring of support from civic, religious and labor groups from the

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gatherings and meetings would take place with politicians and visitors would be taken here, and residents would arrange to meet one another. Dwellings for residents radiated from this central core [Fig. 6.6]. Two types of housing were designed—one for families and one dormitory-style structure to house up to six people.[50] Most of the residents built their own A-frame shelters of plywood with canvas sides, some even adding sun-decks or second stories and further personalizing dwellings by putting their names, designs or messages on the exteriors. This not only slowed down construction, it also gave the city a chaotic, random and unplanned look rather than the uniform and evenly-spaced row of structures originally intended by the planners. The Wiebensohn plan called for wooden structures, not tents, and the architect commented that he "would be insulted to have this called a shantytown."[51] When the settlement was open to the public on May 26, hundreds of people visited the site. Some were simply curious, but many came to talk with the residents in an informal attempt to understand their objectives.

Once the dwellings were built the residents immediately began their planned protests, which were intended to take place night and day and were to be conducted simultaneously at several Government agencies. On May 23 campaigners led by George Wiley, director of the National Welfare Rights Organization, marched to Capitol Hill to demand welfare legislation. When the marchers were charged with violation of the Capitol's antidemonstration regulations and arrests were imminent, Jesse Jackson arrived on the scene and negotiated with James M. Powell, chief of the Capitol police. By then, 18 demonstrators had already been arrested, but Jackson convinced the marchers to leave and reassemble at the Rayburn Building one block away. There about 300 marchers crowded into a room with only about 90 seats, hastily obtained by Representative Richard L.

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Most of the demonstrations were directly related to the inadequacy of current government programs to meet the needs of the poor, but other demonstrations also addressed historical abuses of minorities that negatively impacted on their economic status, such as one held at the Supreme Court Building on May 29 in what demonstrators called a "fish in" to assert the rights of American Natives to fish in "ancestral waters." [54]

The Justice Department was another favored site for demonstrations. On June 3, more than 400 demonstrators walked from Resurrection City to the department to follow up on demands they had made earlier and, specifically, to demand federal intervention in the Los Angeles County prosecution of 13 Mexican-Americans indicted on charges of conspiring to disturb the peace. They arrived to find the doors of the Justice Department building locked. Led by Hosea Williams, the leader of "Direct Action" for Resurrection City, the demonstrators demanded that a delegation of 100 representatives be permitted to meet with Attorney General Clark. They threatened to surround the building and stay there indefinitely if their demands were not met [Fig. 6.7 & Fig. 6.8]. Clark refused to meet them, stating that impromptu demands for meetings with large delegations would not be honored. He did, however, agree to meet with the group the next morning, and the demonstrators, appeased, left.[55] Earlier that same day, American Native demonstrators from the Campaign had picketed the National Press Building to protest what they regarded as unfair reporting by the press on land and water right issues, and a Mexican-American group visited the Mexican Embassy to ask Ambassador Hugo B. Margain to present a list of grievances to the United Nations. A group of demonstrators who had charged "paternalism" by the Bureau of Indian Affairs also went to the Interior Department and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where Interior Secretary Stewart Udall

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endorsed the campaign: "I think the Poor People's Campaign is achieving important aims and awakening the conscience of the country in a way that hasn't been done before." He added: "It quickened a lot of action in my Department and in the Bureau of Indian Affairs."[56] However, many Congressman felt that the pressure exerted by the PPC was outrageous and resented the intrusions, labeling the encampment as "Insurrection City."[57] Although most of these demonstrations were nothing more than irritants, ongoing disruption of government business on Capitol Hill did forcibly, if only momentarily, redirect the politicians' and nation's attention to the dire needs of several million impoverished Americans.

In addition to the almost daily demonstrations, residents in Resurrection City also published a newspaper, established the New Breed Art Center, the Coretta Scott King Day Care Center, and a sewing and crafts center. A utopian plan for a Poor Peoples University was proposed. The plan called for calling on administrative and faculty members from area colleges and universities (including American, Catholic, George Washington, Georgetown and Howard universities) which, would contribute their time and expertise free and would also make available classrooms, dormitories and other facilities to all interested "students." The idea was that the Poor People's University would be open to all students free of charge and that it would help form a permanent "task force for youth" that would be established that summer in Washington. At the end of the summer, the students would return to their communities and continue their activities, sharing their new-found knowledge and skills and helping to plant a grass roots education

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revolution .[58] Although the use of major facilities on college and university campuses did not materialize, a scaled-down version of the University opened on May 29. Seminars and workshops were held mostly on the grounds of Resurrection City. They largely focused on the problems of poverty, but also included workshops on topics such as "English as a Racist Language," "University Reform," "History of Violent and Nonviolent Protest," and "Social Problems of the Poor."[59] The workshops, however, quickly degenerated into places where blacks vented their anger against whites, and foreshadowed both the establishment of autonomous black studies departments in universities throughout the nation and racial balkanization—a far cry from the original visionary goal of the University.[60]

Resurrection City even proposed a Poor People's Embassy that was, like the University, intended to be permanent and to empower the poor "to speak for themselves...the goal is not to make plans for the poor, but to inspire and encourage the poor to develop their own programs for action, to stimulate the poor to communicate in their own behalf." [61] But like the University, this idea did not endure.

A more successful, if short lived venture was the publication of a daily newspaper, the *True Unity News of Resurrection City.* The newspaper reported many events that were not picked up by the commercial press that give a richer sense of the complex dynamics of Resurrection City. In one article, the newspaper reported that "Five Yippies of Resurrection City, accompanied by a Panther, were arrested when a group of about fifteen went to the White House to have a 'Flower Plague.' The flower plague both startled and pleased Washingtonians to whom the group was handing out flowers." In another article, a sense of the spirit of the gatherings of the city is conveyed

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from the point of view of the residents and is strikingly different in tone from commercial reportage: "Resurrection City, U.S.A., a city of many cultures and talents, manifested both culture and talent in their program last night. Music, a way of expressing one's self, was evident during this program. A 50 gal. (sic) drum, a whiskey bottle and a twig from a tree, proved the many uses these items could be used constructively to bring out the tonal value in them. The audience, also of every race and culture, was very enthusiastic and orderly. The mud did not turn them around."[62]

Many politicians and celebrities visited Resurrection City and endorsed the campaign's aims. Shortly before he was killed, Robert Kennedy toured Main Street in Resurrection City. Another visitor was vice president Hubert Humphrey [Fig. 6.9], who announced to a crowd: "You're dramatizing to the American people the needs of their fellow Americans who are poor. This can be a very helpful educational experience."[63] He proposed that "an open town meeting" with the poor be held on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the first in a series of what he envisioned as public gatherings to "listen to the grievances of the nation's disadvantaged."[64] Humphrey's aides later reported that his proposal would be formalized in his campaign for President as part of his plan for a "new democracy."[65] Senators Eugene McCarthy, Jacob Javits, Edward Brooke (the first black senator since Reconstruction) and Philip Hart also visited Resurrection City, as did New York Mayor John Lindsay, Washington Mayor Walter E. Washington, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and UAW leader Walter Reuther.[66] Among the celebrities who visited Resurrection City were Sidney Poitier, Marlon Brando, Barbara Streisand, Bobby Darin, Eartha Kitt, Bill Cosby, Nancy Wilson, and Sammy Davis, Jr. But the residents were most impressed by Coretta Scott King's

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visit on May 31. Mrs. King was in Washington to narrate Aaron Copland's "Portrait of Lincoln" and read from some of her husband's speeches [67] at an open-air concert with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Lincoln Memorial, which was cancelled because of rain. She "put on a pair of boots and toured Resurrection City," and accompanied by Abernathy and followed by a large, admiring crowd, stopped in a dining tent, where she took the opportunity to reiterate the battle cry of the campaign: "We have a great job to do, we have to save the nation."[68]

From the outset, however, there were difficulties. Repeated telephone threats to burn the city down were received. It rained 11 of the first 19 days of Resurrection City's existence—a rain so torrential that it seemed like a driving biblical force, and was a paradigm for the mood and despair of the country at the time. The weather turned the city into a muddy and, as time went on, health-threatening quagmire. There was no hot water. A drainage system was never properly installed, so residents had to be transported to other locations for bathing. Even food preparation became bogged down. From the moment Resurrection City opened, the complex and unpredictable dynamics of an urban space filled with a diverse population came into play. There were ongoing internal power struggles. Self-imposed "marshals"—young urban toughs—threatened non-black residents and harassed and alienated the members of the press who were anxious to cover this most unusual demonstration. Finally, on May 22 about 200 of these youths, most of them members of Detroit and Chicago street gangs, were put on buses and sent home.[69] Exacerbating these difficulties was the fact that the FBI had infiltrated the encampment and planted troublemakers for the sole purpose of creating dissension.[70] Another critical problem was that no one seemed to be in charge. SCLC president Abernathy, Jesse

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Jackson, who was appointed City Manager, and troubleshooter Hosea Williams, were largely absent (they did not reside there), and in their absence, Resurrection City quickly degenerated into a dangerous slum. Toward the end, self-governance had completely broken down. Thefts and acts of violence occurred regularly. One reporter, Louis Lomax, called it a "jungle, a city falling apart, dangerously so."[71]

Resurrection City had come, in a very brief time, to mimic the disintegration of cities across the United States that were rocked by riots, chaos and violence. The disorder of the City was, in a sense, a metaphor for the irretrievable, ineffable loss of faith and optimism in the American Dream, and the Lincoln Memorial, which in the past stood as both sentinel and symbol of the dream, now required protection by National Park Service guards alerted by the threat that residents from Resurrection City intended to spraypaint the Memorial black. Meanwhile, teenage residents of the City floated on air mattresses in the Reflecting Pool—their presence both flaunting and mocking the great American Dream.[72]

In Congress, Southerners made long, loud speeches about "anarchy" in Resurrection City'[73] and the press became increasingly critical. Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson co-authored an article in the *Washington Post* headlined, "It's Time for the Poor to Go Home":

> No group in years has been treated so generously by the Federal Government, which allowed them to camp on a public park, and by the churches of the city and by most of the residents in Washington. The churches opened up their doors, women made thousands of sandwiches, people contributed blankets, and the Hechinger hardware stores contributed food. The public park adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial has been churned up by bulldozers and the daily wear of several thousand feet to a point where it will take at least a year to restore the grass. Poor People's marshals, acting with the officiousness which they objected to on the part of the Birmingham police, have even barred

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> picture taking, saying, 'These are private homes,' though of course they are located on land belonging to all the taxpayers.[74]

Black journalists were equally critical. William Raspberry, a columnist for *The Washington Post*, wrote: "The Washington press has, if anything, been too kind. If more of the internal strife, lack of control and poor discipline had been reported, there might have been more pressure to set things right."[75]

Resurrection City residents themselves were disillusioned. Aside from the difficult physical conditions, which forced people to leave the encampment, many felt it was a spiritual failure. One resident expressed the sentiment of many at the encampment: "I took off from my job to come here because to me this meant the Movement, but this is not the Movement. This wasn't Dr. King's dream..."[76] The Poor People's Campaign leaders were equally disillusioned and wanted to extricate themselves from the situation but were searching for a way to get out with having achieved a few victories. The Solidarity Day Rally of June 19 (the day when word of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation reached slaves in the South) was to have been that exit.[77]

Just two weeks before the Solidarity Day protest was to be held Abernathy called on Bayard Rustin, the civil rights leader who coordinated the 1963 March on Washington, and asked him to help organize the rally. It was a desperate move on Abernathy's part and was a reflection of his failure to bring focus and organization to the Campaign.[78] Rustin, a pacifist who was nonetheless a strong supporter of the Johnson Administration, had earlier publicly disagreed with King's stand on the Vietnam War and openly criticized the Poor People's Campaign. The steering committee of the SCLC, which included antiwar groups, was hostile to Rustin from the outset. The committee did not agree with Rustin's old-guard approach to demonstrations—to some of the SCLC

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leaders he was viewed as a "moderating and even somewhat villainous agent of the establishment."[79] They objected to his suggestions that some of the Campaign's demands should be scaled back and that a more realistic timetable should be drawn up for them to be met, criticizing his approach as a "sell-out."[80] The committee also objected to Rustin's demand that "participation in the June 19 mobilization will be based on adherence to democracy, integration and nonviolent methods of social change." [81] The committee feared that such a demand might exclude militant groups friendly to the Poor People's Campaign from participating. Despite such resistance, Rustin quickly brought the effort under control. He met U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and arranged for the government to provide toilets, water fountains, blankets and first aid-stations for those attending the rally. He negotiated permits, arranged transportation to and from Union Station and National Airport to the Lincoln Memorial and arranged for the installation of a public address system—important logistic needs to ensure a successful and peaceful large-scale demonstration.[82] Most importantly, he brought a much-needed clarity to the demands being made by the Campaign, making them both specific and realizable, and he voiced the only unanimous message of the march—"to redeem the American promise" that he invoked in a "Call to Americans of Good Will."[83] Finally, he also rejected attacks by critics of the utopian demands made by the campaign: "The daydreamers and utopians are not those of us who have been preparing massive Freedom Budgets and similar ideas. They are the smugly 'practical' and myopic Philistines in Congress, the state legislatures and the city halls who thought they could sit it out...The very practical choice before them and the American people is whether we shall have an authentic democratic social revolution or more tragic and futile riots that tear our nation to shreds."[84]

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However, Rustin's masterly role as coordinator of Solidarity Day was short-lived. On June 7 he resigned. He issued this statement in New York City: "I know from long experience that large numbers of people cannot be enlisted in such a mobilization unless they clearly understand its aims, objectives and tactics,"[85] implying, as was the case, that there was no one at the helm of the SCLC. In fact, Abernathy had been forced by members of the committee to "choose between mere reform with the system, as represented by Rustin, and really revolutionary change, as demanded by his people."[86] Rustin's departure sparked press comments that reflected the dissension and power struggle within the SCLC. According to one news report, the break with the SCLC occurred because "Rustin was trying to seize power" from Abernathy, was a "mouthpiece for the AFL-CIO," and was a "stalking horse for the Johnson administration."[87] The break was also a culmination of the fracturing of the core civil rights groups that began in 1963, when activists were already rethinking the role of public protest and collective action. But Rustin (and A. Philip Randolph) steadfastly adhered to Gandhian tactics of protest used so successfully by King and viewed public protests primarily as a means to inspire and organize people and secondarily to effect change.[88]

When Rustin resigned, support for the Solidarity Day Rally waned among many leaders of civil rights, church, labor, political and antiwar groups, although a desire to honor King's memory apparently convinced them to support the effort.[89] Sterling Tucker, executive director of the Washington, D.C. Urban League, took over as national coordinator of the march and basically implemented the format that Rustin had established. After a frantic week of effort, a few days before the rally, Abernathy hastily called a news conference. He appealed to Americans to "redeem the national dream" of

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equality and opportunity for the poor of all races. Then he referred to King's "I Have A Dream" speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 and told his audience that King's dream had not been fulfilled. "On that day we felt that America had great promise for her poor people. Today, we can see that the promise was empty. This is a last call to save America."[90]

About 600 buses and cars began arriving in the capital at sunup on June 19. By noon many people had assembled at the Washington Monument. It was, after many days of rain, clear and warm and many marchers picnicked on the grass, lounged and walked around. Some stopped in at the Sylvan Theatre, close to the Washington Monument, to listen to big-name entertainment. The route was exactly the same as that followed in the March on Washington. Marchers were to step off from the Washington Monument grounds, walk a little less than a mile to the Lincoln Memorial, and assemble there for a formal ceremony that was to be held from 2 to 4:30 P.M. But in stark contrast to the 1963 march, they carried placards that targeted an unpopular war: "How Many Deaths 'Til We Know How Many Have to Die?" and "Build at Home—Don't Destroy Abroad." Despite the angry messages, the march to the Lincoln Memorial was peaceful and orderly [6.10].

Like the 1963 march, extensive plans were in place to keep order, although an even larger force had been mobilized for the 1963 march.[91] Police presence along the route and at the Memorial was highly visible. There were 500 police reserves, 1,100 National Guardsmen, and a number of federal troops were on stand-by. There were also large contingents of local police and military crowd-control units, and 1,000 black policemen and firemen from New York City, "acting as civilian parade marshals under special leave granted by Mayor Lindsay."[92]

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The formal program at the Lincoln Memorial was very similar to the 1963 program [Fig. 6.11, 6.12, 6.13]. Remarks by several speakers were interspersed with song and prayer. Many of the same speakers and performers were present. Dr. Benjamin Mays, President Emeritus of Morehouse College, who had closed the March on Washington with a benediction in 1963, was the master of ceremonies in 1968. Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers union, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young spoke at both demonstrations, and Mahalia Jackson sang at both. In addition to an invocation offered by Rabbi Jacob Philip Rudin, President of the Synagogue Council of America, and statements by Sterling Tucker, the National Coordinator of Solidarity Day, and James Bevel, director of Nonviolence of the campaign,4333` there were thirteen other speakers. Democratic Party Presidential nominee Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota and his rival Vice President Hubert Humphrey, also a Minnesotan, sat on the VIP platform.

That the function of the Lincoln Memorial had changed dramatically by 1968 is apparent in the rhetoric of the speakers at the Solidarity Day Rally. All of them engaged in what one reporter described as "non-stop rhetoric against official injustice, neglect and hunger."[93] Their apocalyptic warnings and threats reflected the extent to which the political culture had changed since 1963. During the only controversial speech at the 1963 March on Washington, SNCC activist John Lewis pointedly criticized the Kennedy Administration, Congress and the proposed Civil Rights Bill for being "too little, too late." Recalling Sherman's violent march through the South, he promised to "pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground." He concluded with a call to the people of the United States: "Wake up America, wake up, for we cannot stop and

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we will not be patient."[94] There was a great deal of infighting and a last minute behind-the-scenes conflict over the tone and content of Lewis's speech. He delivered it with some modification, but his strident words were in striking contrast to the attitudes expressed by the rest of the speakers at the March, which were overwhelmingly characterized by optimism and a sense of united purpose that flowed outward to many American citizens. This sense of unity culminated in King's "I Have A Dream" speech that embraced all Americans and presumed that it was only a matter of time until the dream was achieved. The normative ideal of democracy as eventually achievable was, again, restated to an enthusiastic, enthralled crowd.

In 1968 when Whitney Young, one of the speakers at the Solidarity Day Rally, warned his listeners that the Poor People's Campaign might be "the last march which is nonviolent and which brings blacks and whites together...the nation and the Congress must listen to us before it is too late, before the prophets of violence replace the prophets of peace and justice," [95] his words were no stronger than the words of any of the other speakers on that day. But when he lamented, perhaps recalling the aftermath of events that followed the promise of the 1963 March, that "protest demonstrations have become a kind of entertainment for millions of morally impoverished people who view the demonstrations of the oppressed on television sets in comfortable homes then turn to other diversions, unmoved, uncaring," he revealed the critical shift that had occurred: a profound sense of disillusion, pessimism, and bitterness. By 1968 Lewis's rhetorical plea was out of step with the times. A reporter who spotted Lewis at the Rally observed, "This morning he stood alone near the press tent, dressed in a gray suit, blue button-down shirt and striped tie, almost a figure [out] of the past."[97]

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When the newly widowed Coretta Scott King addressed the Solidarity Day Rally supporters [Fig. 6.14], she opened her speech by reading a telegram of support from Mrs. Robert Kennedy, who had lost her husband less than two weeks earlier. But this opportunity for articulating a sense of shared grief, both personal and national, was dropped, and like Whitney Young, she warned her listeners that the march was "maybe the last opportunity to save the nation and the world from destruction."[98] She then launched into her sustained theme, the violence of poverty, that was clear and pointed: "Poverty can produce a most deadly kind of violence. In this society violence against poor people and minority groups is routine. I remind you that starving a child is violence; suppressing a culture is violence; neglecting schoolchildren is violence; punishing a mother and her child is violence; discrimination against a workingman is violence; ghetto housing is violence; ignoring medical needs is violence; contempt for equality is violence; even a lack of will power to help humanity is a sick and sinister form of violence." [99]

She raised the question of America's involvement in Vietnam, the issue that was originally intended to be the central theme of King's Poor People's Campaign, and she directed her message to the women in the audience: "Women must realize that the war in Vietnam is the most cruel and evil war in the history of mankind, and therefore it is our moral obligation to oppose it. If enough women spoke out against the Vietnam war and stood firm in their opposition even to being willing to go to jail if necessary, I think it would make a tremendous impact on the president and the policymakers of this nation."[100] She reminded the audience of how costly the war effort was and that money

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for the war could be used to establish a guaranteed income, create new jobs and build housing units, schools, hospitals and cultural centers.

Mrs. King predictably closed with words from her husband's "I Have a Dream" speech that he had spoken on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at the conclusion of the 1963 March. It was at this point that the listless, fatigued crowd roused themselves and joined in a chorus of voices, finishing the speech with Mrs. King: "Free at last, thank God almighty I'm free at last!"[101]

When Abernathy, who was the last speaker of the day, finally moved to the podium, few remained to hear what he had to say. His speech was too long (he read from a 29-page text that took 65 minutes to complete) and bordered on the megalomaniacal: "I want you to know that I speak not only with the words of Ralph David Abernathy, but I speak with a Divine Mandate from God, I speak with a mandate from the people. . ." It was belligerent: "...in spite of the lateness of the hour and the confusion of this rostrum, I guarantee you that I will be heard." He paraphrased King's "I Have A Dream" oration but turned its moving, measured cadences into a nonsensical, awkward analogy: "I intend to stay here until justice rolls out of the halls of Congress, righteousness falls from the Administration, and the rough places of the agencies of government are made plain, and the crooked deals with the military-industrial complex become straightened out and the glory and abundance of this God's nation be revealed to the poor all races shall share it together."[102] And, at the urging of his listeners, he promised that "civil disobedience would begin in earnest later this week—an event that was pre-planned from the outset."[103]

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For all the fiery rhetoric, there was little inspiring in the program. Nothing was offered that could create even an illusion of a national goal or common ground. There was no voice with the moral authority to invoke the ideals of American democracy, as King had done so brilliantly in 1963, by bringing everyone together, implying that his dream, "a dream deeply rooted in the American dream," was the vision and strength of all Americans.[104]

That the mood of the country had changed was clearly reflected in each of the marches. While the marchers in 1963 were full of enthusiasm for a democratic and multiracial nation, the participants in the Solidarity Day Rally had very little sense of hope or optimism and did not believe that any tangible results would or could be achieved. Although one participant optimistically observed: "The speeches aren't important. The people being here, that's the important thing. They could eliminate most of the speeches." [105] But other participants, especially young blacks, concluded that marching was useless. One Resurrection City resident caught the changed mood when he commented: "It's not really going to change anything and we'll still be poor on Thursday morning after it's all over. I'd much rather see Congress march in some legislation to eliminate poverty."[106]

Robert B. Semple, Jr. of *The New York Times* contrasted the two marches: "In tone, the 1963 march was a kind of mass love-in, church social, country fair and civil rights demonstration. There were picnics on the monument grounds, babies in carriages, impromptu singing, and a good deal of un-selfconscious brotherhood. White and black, singing 'We Shall Overcome,' marched arm-in-arm down Constitution Avenue. And above all, there was an exhilarating sense of hope and promise." Then speaking of the

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Solidarity Day rally marchers, he said: "Today's crowd was more intense. It conveyed a greater sense of cool anger and militancy, and there was little of the camaraderie, the unsophisticated gaiety of 1963." [107] Another columnist described the '63 march as "gentle" and "pastoral," and the '68 march as "garish and strident."[108]

Twenty-four hours after Solidarity Day, Abernathy's plan to engage in civil disobedience was put into action, sparking the first serious clash with the police, and with it, marking a sea-change in civil rights protests in and around the Memorial. The clash began when 500 demonstrators blocked the main doorways of the Agriculture Department in mid-afternoon. The demonstrators refused to leave and had to be hauled away by police. Then, about 100 demonstrators started to march around the building and got into a shouting and shoving match with police. Other demonstrators sat down at various intersections, snarling and stopping traffic. When police tried to remove them, they jumped up, ran to another intersection and sat down again. This chase had been going on for about half an hour when a patrolman bloodied a demonstrator with a nightstick. The crowd turned ugly, seventy-seven marchers were arrested, and it was midnight before the situation was brought under control.[109]

Each day after the Solidarity Day Rally, tensions mounted and violence escalated. Robbings, beatings and a shooting occurred in Resurrection City. On June 23, U.S. Park Police fired 15 canisters of tear gas into the camp to disperse a crowd that was stoning cars and throwing burning torches at police. Abernathy called the police's action more "vicious" than "all the tear gassing and other military attacks we have experienced in the South." Hosea Williams threatened a march on the Capitol and Abernathy proclaimed that the police would have to use force to evacuate Resurrection City.[110]

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As incidents of violence and clashes with police increased, Congressmen, business owners and residents pressured police and city officials to close the camp. On June 24, a spokesperson for the Department of Interior announced that the permit for the camp originally issued on May 10 and extended on June 14 had expired and that no extension would be granted.[111] At a news conference on that same day, Abernathy announced that he and about five hundred other residents of Resurrection City would not quit the camp voluntarily: "This is a jail-without-bail program we are embarked on now. We must be prepared for the worst."[112]

In the end, Resurrection City was vacated without incident as a result of a behind-closed-doors agreement between the SCLC, federal officials and the police. Caution, care, and concessions were the hallmarks of the negotiation process and reflected officials' fears that additional, uncontrollable violence could occur. Law enforcement officials pre-arranged with the Resurrection City officials that on the last day of their stay in the encampment, there would be two nonviolent demonstrations: one at Resurrection City, the other on Capitol Hill. "Voluntary" arrests would be made following the demonstrations, and dismantling of the encampment would begin after the arrests.[113] As also had been pre-arranged, Abernathy was arrested and spent 20 days in jail for leading an illegal demonstration on the grounds of the Capitol. During his stay in jail Abernathy, like King during his incarceration in a Birmingham jail, appealed to the clergy for help, but only a handful responded. When released, he returned to where Resurrection City had stood and unconvincingly called it a "true city of love and brotherhood."[114]

After Resurrection City closed, the Reverend Andrew Young led supporters of the Poor People's Campaign in seven marches that were held around the Capitol Building.

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Young sensed a victory in these protests, telling marchers that "The wall that made the poor invisible has come down...The wall of the sense of inferiority of the poor has come down... And the wall of middle-class indifference has been broken down."[115] But by then SCLC leaders who had initially envisioned a nation-wide permanent movement had already announced their decision to not hold demonstrations in Washington in the future.

While the March on Washington became historic overnight, and overnight lodged itself firmly in the ethos of the nation, the Poor People's Campaign collapsed amid allegations of corruption and mismanagement. It was plagued by violence, exacerbated by troublemakers planted by the FBI, and it alienated the public and the media, especially the influential Washington press corps. But these were not the only reasons that the Campaign failed. The primary reason for its downfall was the fact that neither the leaders of the Poor People's Campaign nor the participants in it expressed any inclination to employ the national ideology of exceptionalism that had worked so well for those who joined King in the 1963 march. They also made no effort to defer to the traditional historic symbolism of the Lincoln Memorial or of Lincoln that King and all previous protesters employed. The Memorial was not likened to a "cathedral of democracy." Neither Lincoln's name nor the ideals he represented were invoked by campaign leaders at the Solidarity Day Rally or in the many meetings they held with government officials. They did not appeal on the basis of democratic fairness or the ideals of liberty that Lincoln articulated nor did they fall back on the rhetoric of previous protesters that stressed sacrifice, suffering and the rightness of their cause—all derived from Lincoln's speeches—to justify their demands.

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This marked a decisive break with the previous demonstrations at the Memorial. It not only altered how the Lincoln Memorial functioned as a national symbol and how it was perceived by the public; it created a rupture in the fabric necessary to forge a coherent national identity. The campaign's rejection of Lincoln's ideals was also a rejection of traditional American values. Resurrection City was meant to be living proof of the fallacy of the idea of the City on a Hill and the long-held myth that the United States was a shining beacon of democracy and a moral example to the rest of the world—ideas that were farcical to these protesters.[107]

While the leaders and demonstrators of the Poor People's Campaign rejected the exceptionalist ideal and largely eschewed the kind of politics that King represented, they still carried signs that read "I Have a Dream"—King's classic oration that was the national hymn of American exceptionalism. King's words were used to decorate many dwellings in Resurrection City, and his image, in photographs and crude drawings, was omnipresent. Although all of the major leaders of the Poor People's campaign, including Abernathy, Andrew Young and Jesse Jackson, frequently used King's words, they did not employ them for the purpose of reasserting a belief in democratic justice or for the reasssurance of a common political ideal but to threaten or warn of potential violence if their demands were not met. A new kind of racial politics marked by dissensus and balkanization was born in Resurrection City.

The failure of the Poor People's campaign was so spectacular and so public that any successes are easily overlooked. However, there were successes. The Campaign mounted a concerted and sustained challenge to the traditional definition of an open, democratic society and how such a society functions in relation to its polity. The

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Campaign, in short, challenged the limits, to borrow Nancy Fraser's phrase, of the "actually existing democracy."[117] Until the Poor People's Campaign was held, the Mall and the Lincoln Memorial were used solely as metaphorical, symbolic spaces by civil rights protesters—artificial, isolated sites where only organized, structured, temporary protests were permitted. Demonstrators assembled for the few hours allotted them and altered the physicality and meaning of the space they occupied, turning it, temporarily, into a charged national forum. When the protests ended, the space reverted back to its normal usage by the public and the status quo was quickly reaffirmed by the absence of the protesters and the reestablished openness of the space. Ultimately, these protests were symbolic displays that had little impact on collective decision making or state power,[118] and it was largely left to the government and the media to construct (or deconstruct) their meaning.[119]

The duration of the Poor People's Campaign, however, raised conflicts and odd junctures between groups of people that were historically separated physically and psychically. Poor, powerless blacks, whites, Chicanos and Native Americans purposefully collided with the rich and powerful representatives of the most powerful nation on earth, and they insisted on direct, face-to-face contact with leaders in government. Their presence was physical, tangible and at times inescapable, and it severely strained the ideal of a participatory democracy or a single public. Their presence and pressing, seemingly intractable needs, confounded the government and frustrated its ability to construct a more sanitized image for public consumption, one that by its very nature called for the exclusion of such a group.[120] As a result, the focus shifted, and as Calvin Trillin observed in writing about Resurrection City, many commentators blamed

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the messengers for the message, missing the point of the Poor People's Campaign. They tended, he wrote, "to blame the Poor People's Campaign for a futile demonstration rather than blame Congress for being unresponsive to the needs of the poor. The poor in Resurrection City have come to Washington to show that the poor in America are sick, dirty, disorganized, and powerless—and they are criticized daily for being sick, dirty, disorganized, and powerless."[121]

King's vision of a permanent body of informed and engaged citizens who were multi-racial and multi-ethnic and who would have ongoing access to legislators and government administrators to effect economic and social change was never realized. In the future the Lincoln Memorial site would be host to demonstrations by American citizens representing every point on the moral and political compass. But for many Americans in 1968, the Memorial no longer functioned as a corollary of democracy.

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Chapter 6: Notes

1. King was assasinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968. Robert Kennedy died on June 6, 1968 after being shot in Los Angeles by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a Jordanian born in Jerusalem, who had lived in Los Angeles since 1957.

2. *The Washington Post*, June 9, 1968.

3. Jules Witcover, *The Year the Dream Died. Revisiting 1968 in America* (New York: Warner Books, 1997), p. 157.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

5. *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dial Press, 1963), p. 120.

6. See Lerone Bennett Jr., *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* (Johnson Publishing Company, 2000); Vincent Harding, *There is a River*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1981).

7. For an exploration of this idea see Sacvan Bercovitch, The Rites of Assent, Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America (New York, London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc. 1993), esp. pp. 29-67.

8. Ibid., p. 12.

9. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York, 1968), esp. pp. 6-13.

10. For the full text of King's speech, see *Ramparts*, May 1967, pp. 33-37.

11. Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

12. Jules Witcover, *The Year the Dream Died* (New York: Warner Books, 1997), p. 8.

13. Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, and H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (New York: Grove Press, 1995), p. 310.

14. David J. Garrow, *Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1996).

15. The FBI's interest in the Poor People's Campaigns can be followed in the files and memos on the Washington Spring Project and the SCLC in David J. Garrow's Freedom of Information Act materials on the Civil Rights movement, 1958-1969, Schomburg Archives.

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16. Garrow, FBI Files, Washington Spring Project, AT 100-5718, p. 23. The FBI's source was Marion Graves, "King Calls for a New Drive of Massive Civil Disobedience," *The Atlanta Constitution*, August 16, 1967, p. 1.

17. Garrow, FBI Files, AT 100-5718, p. 9.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

20. Quoted from a proposed script for an audio-visual communications program called "The Face of Poverty." In the Catherine Clark Civil Rights Collection, Box 3, file 7, Schomburg Archives.

21. Garrow, FBI Files, AT 100-5718, p. 9.

22. Quoted in William Schulz, "Martin Luther King's March on Washington," *Reader's Digest*, April 1968, p. 68.

23. Ethel L Payne, *Daily Defender*, undated, p. 2 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

24. *Reader's Digest*, April 1968, p. 66.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

27. In the press, see James Reston, "Washington: No Longer a 'Problem' but a Revolution," *The New York Times*, June 16, 1963, sect. IV, p.10; Agnes Meyer, Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times*, July 2, 1963, p. 28; For comments by members of Congress, see "Aiken Says March in Capitol Would Kill Rights Legislation," *The New York Times*, July 8, 1963, p. 18; "Negro Rally Seen as Threat to Bill," July 15, 1963, p. 19; "Russell Asserts Kennedy Fosters Negro Marches," *The New York Times*, June 25, 1963, p. 13.

28. Frank Donner, *The Age of Surveillance: The Aims and Methods of America's Political Intelligence System* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), pp. 142-143.

29. Garrow, FBI Files, Washington Spring Project.

30. Memo dated May 3, 1968 from C.D. DeLoach to Mr. Tolson, in Garrow, FBI Files, Washington Spring Project, 100-438794-2130.

31. See Gerald McKnight, *The Last Crusade: Martin Luther King, Jr., the FBI, and the Poor People's Campaign* (Westview Press: 1998), p. 110.

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32. On the extensive role played by the Kennedy Administration, see Thomas Gentile, *March on Washington: August 28, 1963* (Washington, D.C.: New Day Publications, 1983), pp. 62-68, 125-129; for the role played by the Justice Department see *Robert Kennedy in His Own Words: The Unpublished Recollections*, eds., Edwin O. Guthman and Jeffrey Shulman (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), p. 277.

33. Richard Harris, *Justice: The Crisis of Law, Order and Freedom in America* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), pp. 15, 56.

34. April 29, 1968.

35. *The New York Times*, April 19, 1968, in Clark, Box 2, file 12.

36. Booklet outlining the demands presented to the Federal Government, "The Poor People's Campaign Speaks to The Question of Poverty," p. 1, in Clark, Box 3, file 9.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

38. In 1966 Marian Wright, a Yale law graduate, led a small group of poor people from Mississippi in a Washington camp-in and tried to interest King in the protest movement in which hunger would be the central issue. See James R. McGraw, "An Interview with Andrew J. Young," *Christianity and Crisis*, Vol. XXVII, No. 24 (January 22, 1968), p. 3.

39. April 30, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

40. Statement of Demands, p. 7, in Clark, Box 3, file 9.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 7

42. Ben A. Franklin, "Abernathy and 72 Congressmen Confer on Poor People's Goals," *The New York Times*, May 16, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

43. *Ibid.*

44. The CBS transcript and the additions to the Congressional Record are in Clark, Box 3, file 6.

45. *The New York Times*, May 28, 1968.

46. *The New York Times*, April 19, 1968, no page number in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

47. Ben A. Franklin, "City of Poor Begun in Capital: Abernathy Vows to 'Plague Pharoahs of Nation' for Help Against Poverty," *The New York Times*, May 14, 1968.

48. *Ibid.*

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49. Members of the structure committee were James Goodell of Urban America; Kenneth Jadin, professor of Architecture at Howard University; Tunney Lee, an architect and city planner from Washington, D.C.; and John Wiebenson, professor at the University of Maryland School of Architecture.

50. For a detailed description of the planning and development of Resurrection City, see John Wiebenson, Planners Notebook, "Planning and Using Resurrection City," *American Institute of Planners Journal*, November, 1969, pp. 405-411.

51. This is similar to what happened, on a much larger scale, with Oscar Niemeyer's utopian Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. A totally new city built in the Brazilian interior, Brasilia featured a regular system of broad streets, few cross streets, and widely-spaced megastructures. This "system" was found to be lacking once residents moved in and was eventually supplemented by new structures and attendant urban sprawl that undermined the original plan.

52. *New York Post*, May 24, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

53. For an account of one such march to the Department of Agriculture see *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

54. *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

55. *The Washington Post*, June 4, 1968, A12.

56. *Ibid.*

57. New York Times, May 26, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

58. Unidentified, undated newspaper article in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

59. *True Unity News of Resurrection City*, June 5, 1968, p. 7, Clark, Box 3, file 8.

60. Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Poor People's U. in Convocation," *The Washington Post*, June 11, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

61. Notes on proposed Poor People's Embassy, transcribed July 17, 1968, meeting held at Airlie house, Warrington, Va., in Clark, Box 3, file 8.

62. *True Unity News of Resurrection City*, June 5, 1968, Vol. 1, No. 3. p. 7 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

63. Ben A. Franklin, "Humphrey and Lindsay Tour 'City' of Poor and Endorse Drive," *The New York Times*, May 17, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12

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64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*

66. Unidentified, undated newspaper article in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

67. *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1931, A12

68. *True Unity News of Resurrection City*, June 5, 1968, p. 6 (?).

69. *The Washington Post*, May 23, 1968, A1

70. Frank Donner, *Age of Surveillance*, and William C. Sullivan with Bill Brown, *The Bureau: My Thirty Years in Hoover's FBI*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979).

71. Quoted in Roland L. Freeman, *The Mule Train, A Journey of Hope Remembered*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), p. 111.

72. *The New York Times*, May 26, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

73. *The New York Times*, June 2, 1968, 4E.

74. Washington Merry-Go-Round column, June 15, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

75. Quoted in Freeman, p. 11.

76. Unidentified, undated newspaper article in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

77. Unidentified, undated newspaper article, *The New York Times*, June 2, 1968 and June 8, 1968, *The Washington Post*, June 4, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

78. *The New York Times*, June 2, 1968 and *The Washington Post*, June 4, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

79. *The New York Times*, June 2, 1968, 4E.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *The New York Times*, June 8, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

82. Robert C. Maynard, "Rustin Pushing for Big March," *The Washington Post*, June 4, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

83. *The New York Times*, June 3, 1968, p. 40C.

84. *The New York Times*, June 2, 1968, p. 4E.

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85. *The New York Times*, June 8, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Unidentified, undated newspaper article in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

88. The NAACP and its executive secretary, Roy Wilkins, rejected direct action techniques and viewed mass protests as largely ineffective and moved away from the political strategy of public protests in favor of lobbying campaigns.

89. Sally Hammond, "Poor People's Day: An Honor to Dr. King," *The New York Times*, June 14, 1968, Clark, Box 3, file 12.

90. *The New York Times*, June 16, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

91. Warren Young and William Lambert, "Marchers' Master Plan," *Life*, August 23, 1963, p. 70; Gentile, pp. 148-150

92. *The New York Times*, June 16, 1968, Clark, Box 3, file 12.

93. McGrory, "March of Poor," *New York Post*, June 20, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

94. Gentile, *Speeches*, pp. 281-283.

95. Speech reprinted in Ben A. Franklin, "Protesters Call for Sharing Nation's Affluence by All," *The New York Times*, June 20, 1968 in Clark Box 3, file 12.

96. *Ibid.*

97. *The New York Times*, June 20, 1968, Clark, Box 3, file 12

98. *The New York Times*, June 20, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

99. Coretta Scott King's speech bears similarities to Robert Kennedy's speech given on the day after King's assassination at the City Club of Clevelan in which he also talked about "another kind of violence, slower but just as deadly, destructive as the shot or the bomb in the night. This is the violence of institutions, indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that affects the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colors. This is a slow destruction by hunger, and schools without books and homes without heat in the winter. This is the breaking of a man's spirit by denying him the chance to stand as a father and as a man among other men." See Witcover, p. 157.

100. Gentile, *Speeches*, pp. 281-283.

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101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid*

103. *The New York Times*, June 21, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

104. For an analysis of King's speech, see Keith D. Miller, *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Source* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), pp. 142-150.

105. *The New York Times*, June 20, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

106. Robert Terrell, "The Poor Say 25,000 Will March Tomorrow," *New York Post*, June 18, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

107. "Anger Replaces the Hopes of '63," *The New York Times*, June 20, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

108. Mary McGrory, "The March of the Poor," *New York Post*, June 20, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

109. *The New York Times*, June 21, 1968, in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

110. Robert Terrell, "Resurrection City Faces Pressure to Wrap It Up," *The New York Times*, June 24, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12

111. *The New York Times*, June 24, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

112. Terrell, "Resurrection City," *The New York Times*, June 24, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

113. Carl Bernstein, "The Deal To Close Resurrection City," *Washington Post*, June 25, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

114. *The Washington Post*, July 14, 1968, A8.

115. *The Washington Post*, July 22, 1968 in Clark, Box 3, file 12.

116. For the earliest expression of this idea, see John Winthrop, *Papers*, A.B. Forbes, ed. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), Vol. II. p. 295.

117. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), p.108

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118. For a discussion of protests from this point of view see Richard Sennett & Philippe Aries, *The Fall of Modern Man* (1976).

119. For a discussion of the influence of the media on the formation of a capitalist/cultural ideology see Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: 1987), p. 123

120. King's vision was close to that of John Dewey's vision. See *The Public and Its Problems* (New York, 1927).

121. Calvin Trillin, "U.S. Journal: Resurrection City, *The New Yorker*, June 3, 1968, p. 71.

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Conclusion

Memorials, particularly national memorials, are shapers of memory, palimpsests that carry enormous cultural weight and responsibility because they are meant to represent a nation's collective image of itself. The Lincoln Memorial is the nation's mythic mirror, a shaper of collective memory that reflects how Americans see themselves and the world. The vision that has remained amazingly constant over the years is America as the shining City on a Hill, a moral beacon that is the world's last best hope of freedom and liberty. The nation's narcissistic self-image was challenged by the civil rights protests that took place at the Memorial between 1922 and 1968. The simple moral clarity of the demands to stop the lynching of black Americans and to end racial segregation, complicated the meaning of the Memorial. Yet, even as the nation refused to establish laws to prevent the lynching of its own citizens and endured race riots, the perception of the Memorial as a national symbol of democracy not only remained unshaken; its association with the nation's progress in achieving racial harmony and civic equality grew, as did its centrality in the American psyche as an icon of color-blind democracy.

The overarching ideology of exceptionalism--the belief that the United States is morally superior to all other nations--made it possible to forge a national consensus and sustain the perception that the Lincoln Memorial was synonymous with democracy and racial equality. As an ideological construct, exceptionalism has provided a framework for the cultural and national identity of the United States and has proven to be an extremely persistent, tenacious and fertile myth, feeding the national imagination and unifying an otherwise disunified nation. It has provided a system of beliefs and attitudes,

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symbols and values creating an ideological blueprint for a uniform cultural identity in a society composed of multiple, heterogenous factions. It is a binding agent that helps sustain the nation itself. Exceptionalism has also provided a symbolic framework to make itself visible to its polity and the Lincoln Memorial has served as its cultural handmaiden by reinforcing the values and assumptions of the dominant majority.

The potency of the exceptionalist ideal is attested to by those who led and took part in the civil rights protests at the Memorial. Despite exceptionalism's inherent qualities of exclusion and its hierarchical assumptions about race, the protesters did not reject its ideology. They insisted on being part of the myth, employed its rhetoric, and drew on its symbolic constructs to justify their demands, for a share of the American Dream; and they chose the Lincoln Memorial because of what they perceived to be its reinforcing symbolism of exceptionalism.

However, the civil rights protest movement was institutionalized and bureaucratized, facilitated by the almost uniform and uncritical acceptance of the exceptionalist ideal. This narrowed dissent, curtailed critical debate, and circumscribed the nation's discourse on race. This, along with the government's increasingly important role in controlling public culture in the 1930s, led to its active intervention in the civil rights protests. With the cancellation of A. Philip Randolph's threatened march of 1941, the government's modus operandi had been established and all future civil rights protests at the Memorial were disempowered. Thereafter, while protests were reluctantly tolerated, they were controlled and selectively assimilated into the public culture. The Marian Anderson concert and the March on Washington, protests that worked within the boundaries established by the government and the mass media and that most closely

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adhered to the exceptionalist ideal, were subsumed by the government and used to reaffirm the nation's commitment to democracy. By contrast, although Paul Robeson's strident American Crusade to End Lynching and the protest held to prevent the execution of Willie McGee also employed exceptionalist rhetoric, their demands for radical revisions of the economic, social and legal foundations of the nation and their association with Communism, were viewed as threats to fundamental American values, and as a result were marginalized. The Poor People's Campaign abandoned the exceptionalist ideal entirely. In so doing, it rejected the traditional view of Lincoln as Savior of the Nation and elevated Martin Luther King as the nation's new martyr and hero. This campaign was intentionally subverted by the FBI and was repudiated by the government and mass media as a failure. Civil rights leaders lost the moral high ground that they had occupied until that time, and the Memorial lost its potency as a national symbol that held the promise of a collectively shared memory of the nation.

Contemporary reality dictates a shedding of the nation's solipsistic view of itself. In an era of global balkanization, the necessity to view the nation's self-image with a sharper and more moral eye is all the more urgent. The question of race as a determinant in the fate of democracy posed by Lincoln and voiced by King and made real through protests at the Memorial, still call the nation to action. In an age of identity politics when self-segregation in the social and political arena is now viewed as a viable solution, conceiving politics as an antonym to race and mythology might allow the nation to be free to achieve the kind of democracy espoused by the President whose words and towering figure grace the Lincoln Memorial--a symbol that still remains the nation's best reminder of its potential to be the last best hope of earth.

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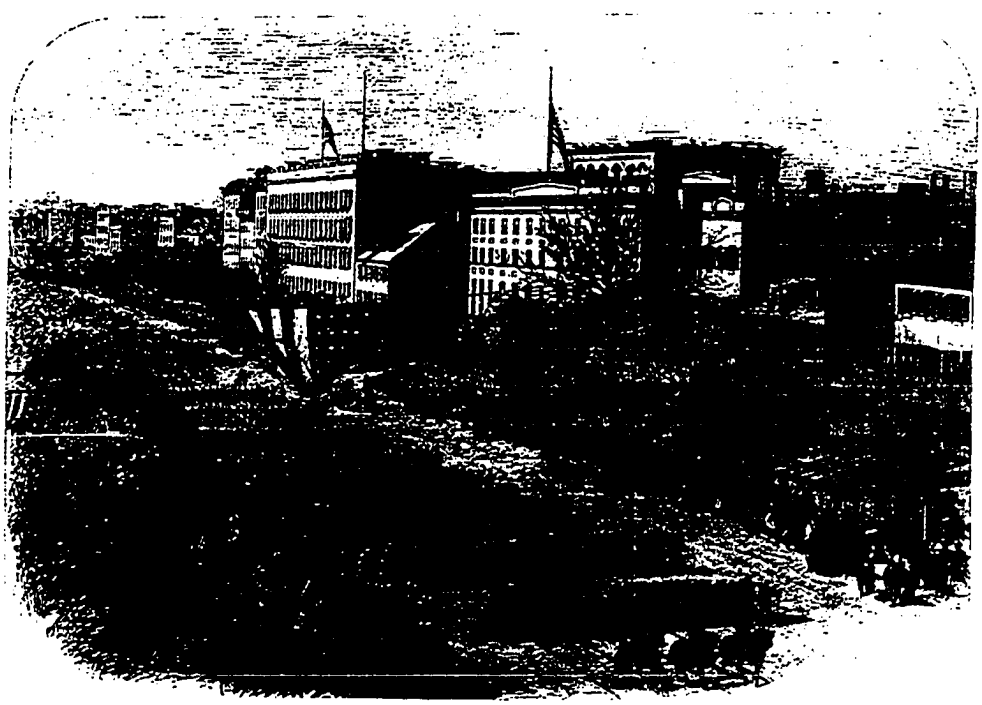

1.1 Abraham Lincoln Funeral Procession, Washington, D.C. Source: Illustrated London News, 1865.

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1.2 Clark Mills, National Lincoln Monument. c. 1868. Plaster Model (now lost). Source: Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, p. 105.

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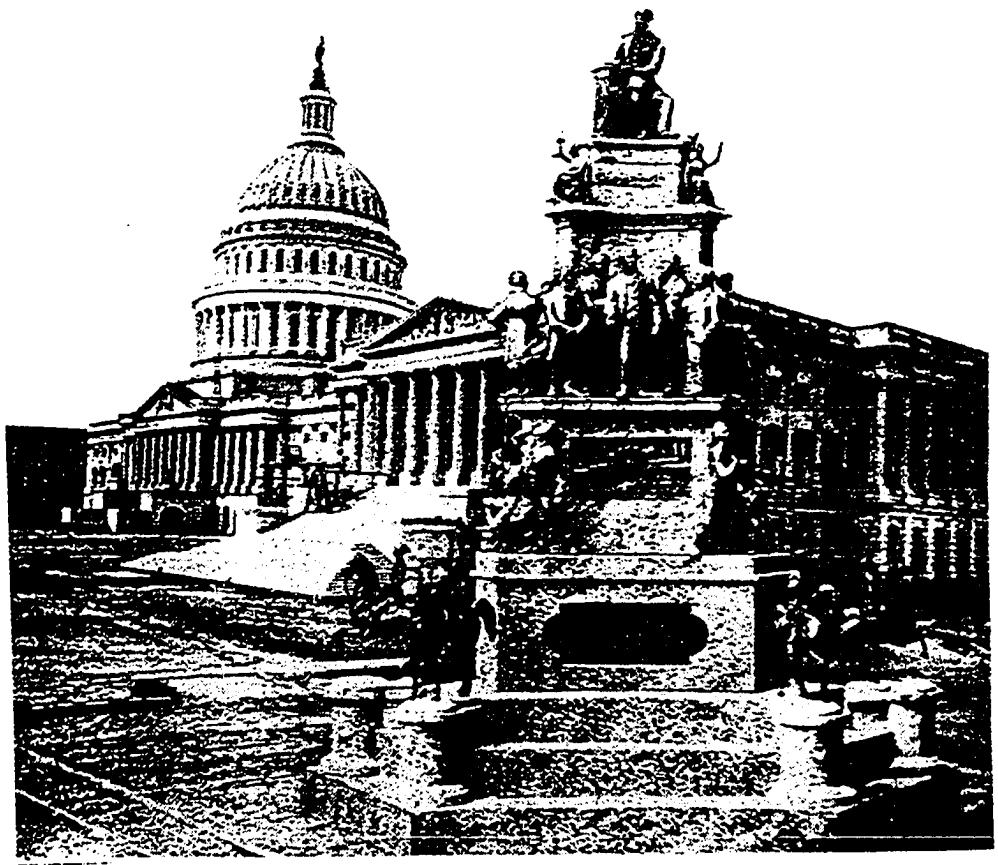

1.3 Clark Mills, Proposed National Lincoln Monument. Stereo Photograph. Source: Murray, Emancipation and the Freed, fig. 11.

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1.4 Thomas Ball, Emancipation Group. 1874. Bronze. Washington, D.C. Source: Craven, Sculpture in America, fig. 7.5.

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1.5 Edmonia Lewis, Forever Free. 1868. Marble. Source: Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, p. 63.

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1.6 Thomas Ball, Monument to Lincoln. c. 1866. Stereograph plaster model. Source: Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, p.78.

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1.7 Vinnie Ream Hoxie. Abraham Lincoln. 1865. U. S. Capitol Rotunda.

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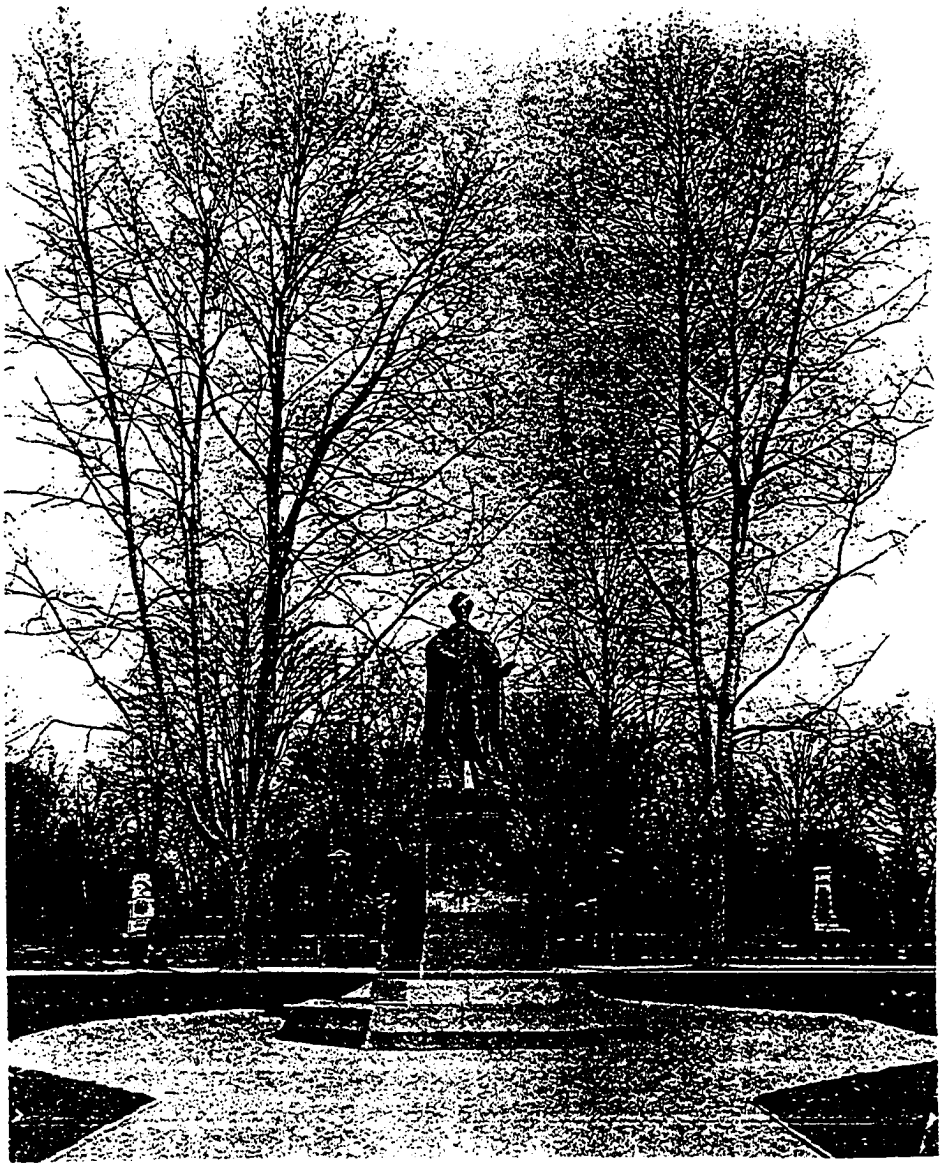

1.8 Henry Kirke Browne, Lincoln Monument. 1869. Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York. Source: Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, p. 68.

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1.9 Augustus St. Gaudens, Abraham Lincoln. 1887. Bronze. h. 11'6." Chicago: Lincoln Park. Source: Craven, Sculpture in America, fig. 11.3.

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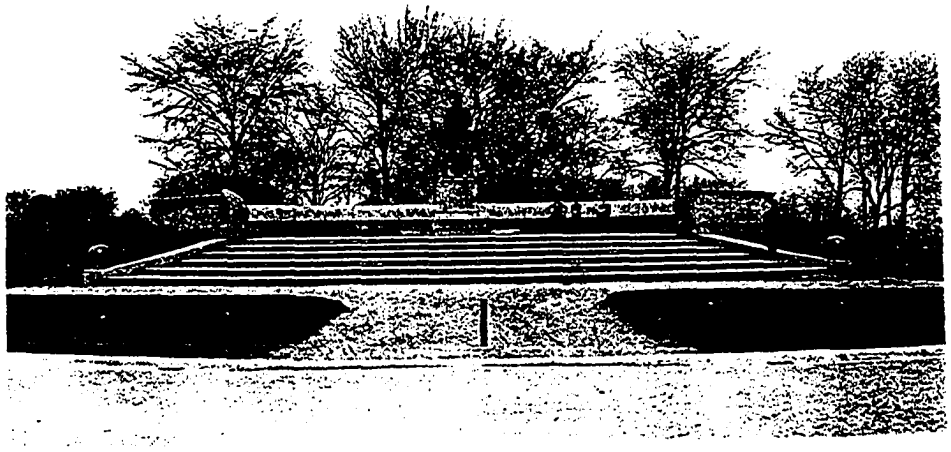

1.10 Augustus St. Gaudens & Stanford White. Lincoln Monument (Standing Lincoln). 1887. Chicago, Lincoln Park. Source: Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, p. 123.

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1.11 Augustus St. Gaudens. Abraham Lincoln: The Head of State (Seated Lincoln). 1897-1906. Chicago, Grant Park. Source: Dryfhout, Lincoln p. 279.

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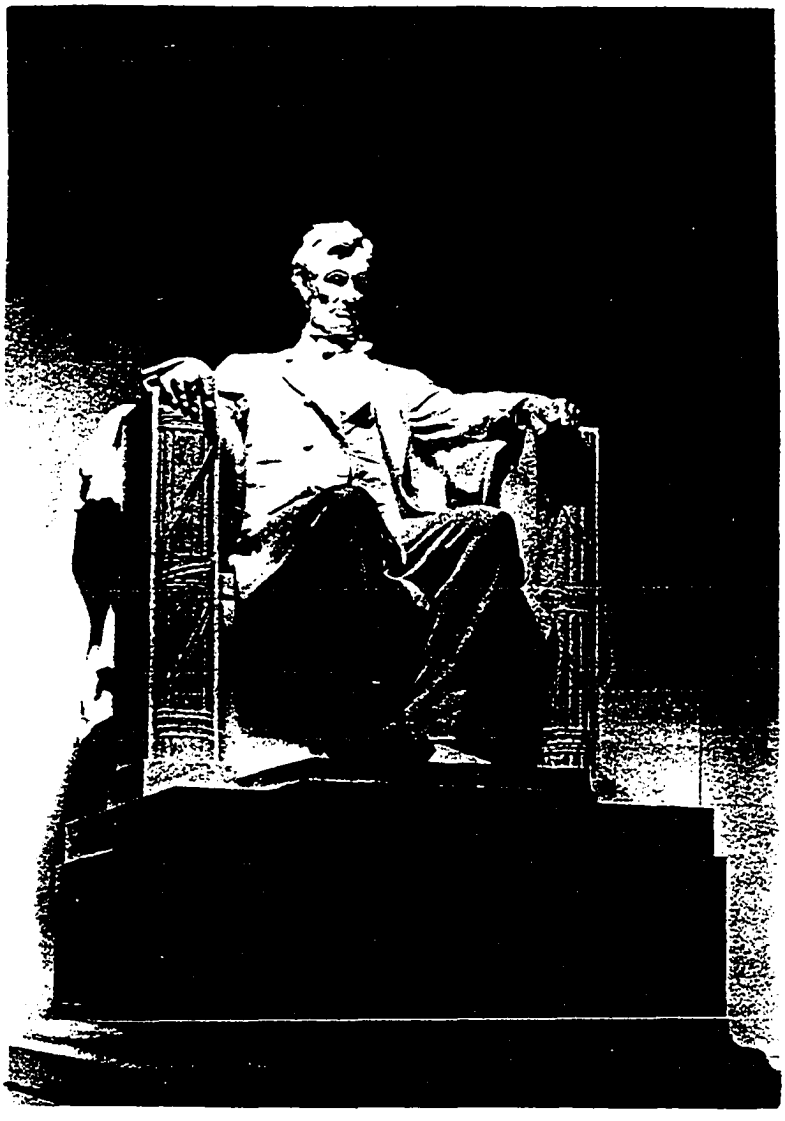

1.12 Daniel Chester French, Abraham Lincoln, National Monument, Washington, D.C. Source: Chesterwood Archives.

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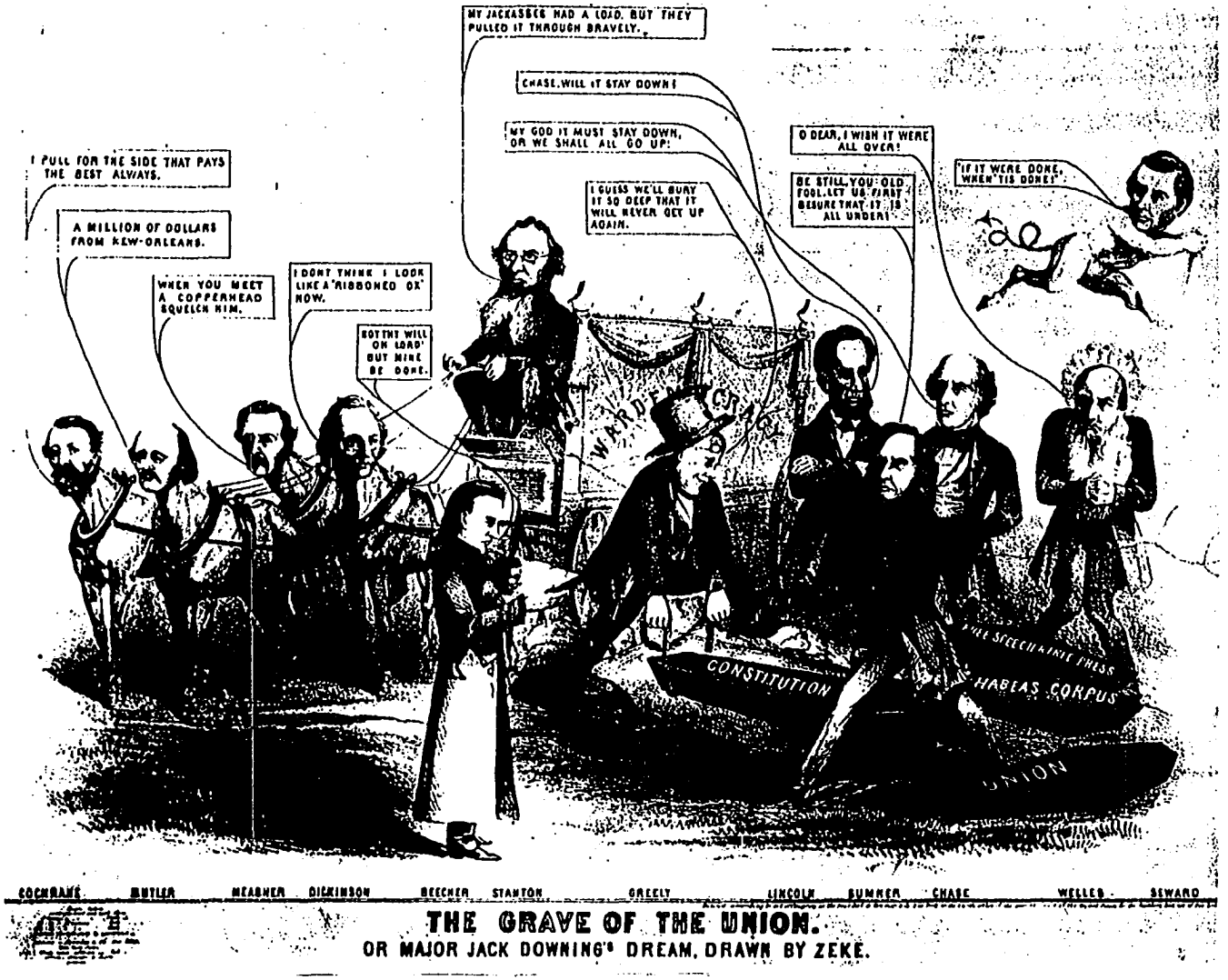

THE GRAVE OF THE UNION.
OR MAJOR JACK DOWNING'S DREAM, DRAWN BY ZEKE.

1.13 Bromley & Co., The Grave of the Union. New York. 1864. Lithograph. Source: Holzer, Lincoln, Seen & Heard, p. 112.

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1.14 Currier & Ives, An Heir to the Throne, or The Next Republican Candidate, New York. 1860. Source: Holzer, Lincoln Seen & Heard, p. 112.

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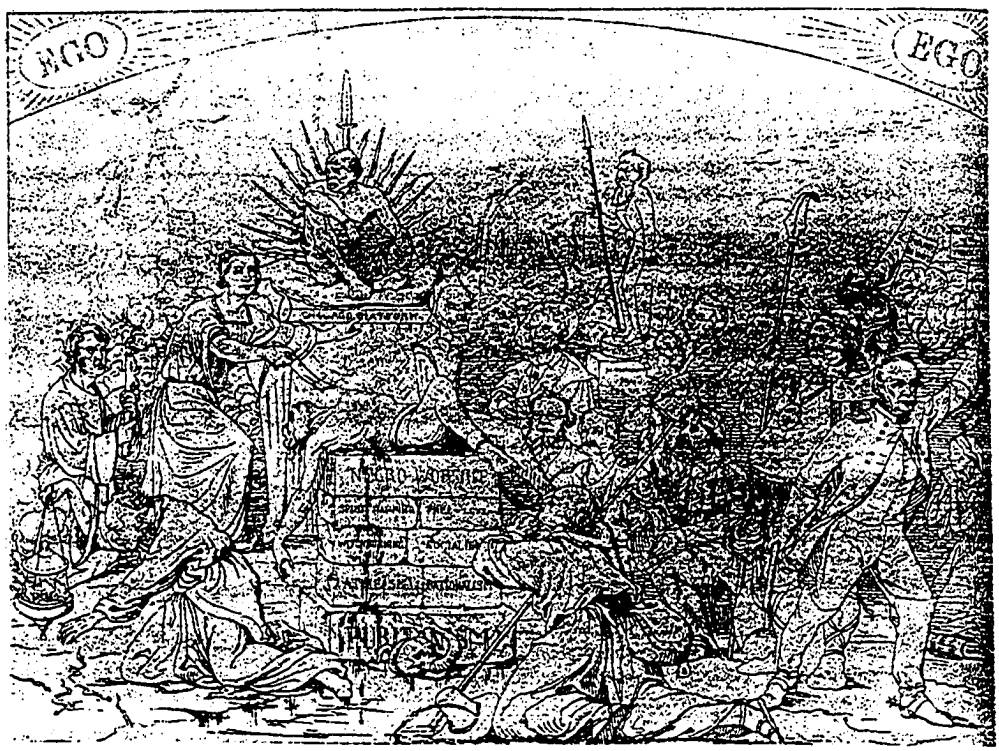

1.15 Adalbert Volck, Worship of the North. c. 1862. Baltimore. Etching. Source: Holzer, Lincoln, Seen & Heard, p. 120.

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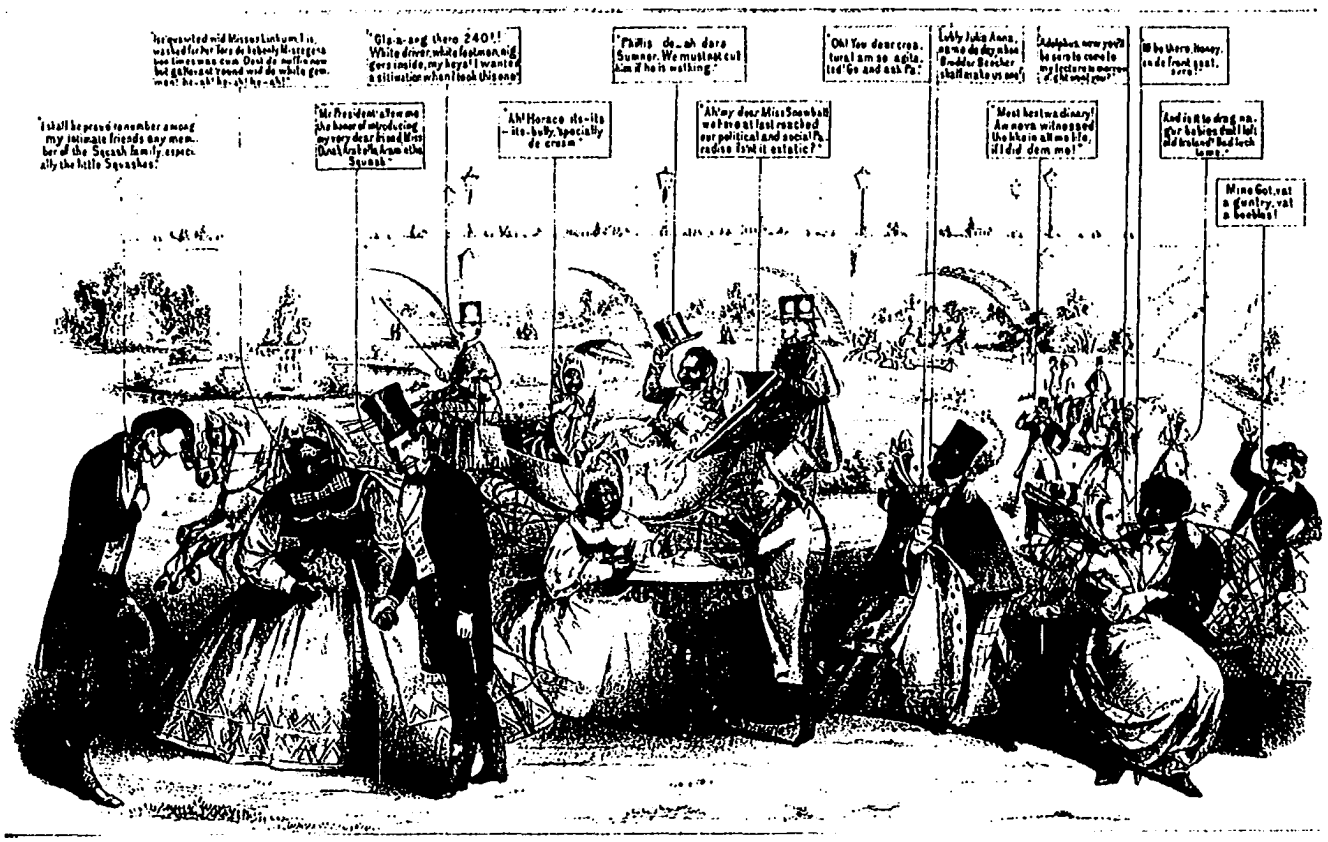

1.16 Bromley & Co., Miscegenation. New York. 1864. Lithograph. Source: Holzer, Lincoln, Seen & Heard, p. 155.

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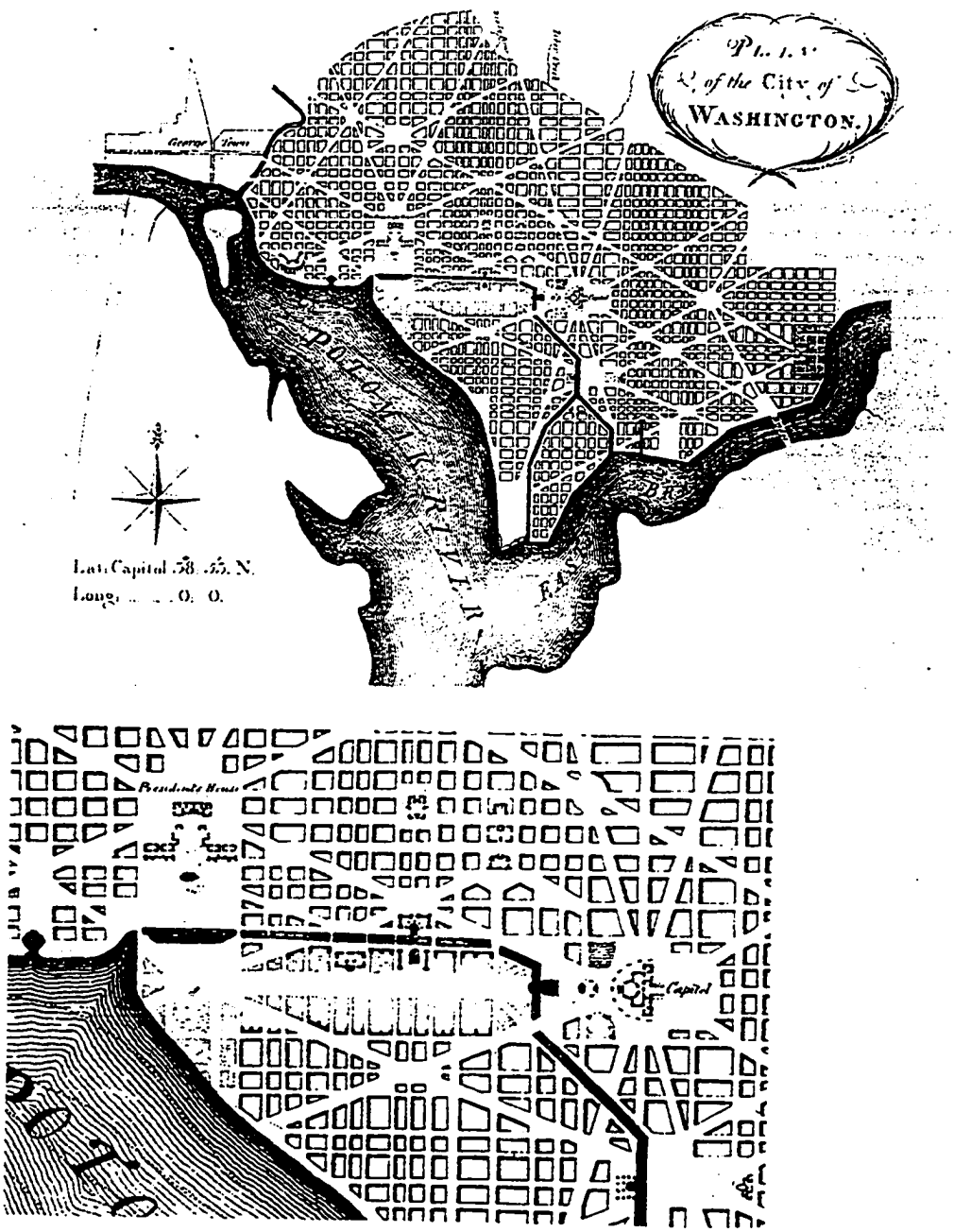

2.1 Pierre L'Enfant. Plan for the Capital area, Wash., D.C. 1791. Source: Longstreth, Mall in Washington, p. 174.

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2.2 Lincoln Memorial Ground Breaking, February 12, 1914. Source: Henry Bacon Archives, Wesleyan University.

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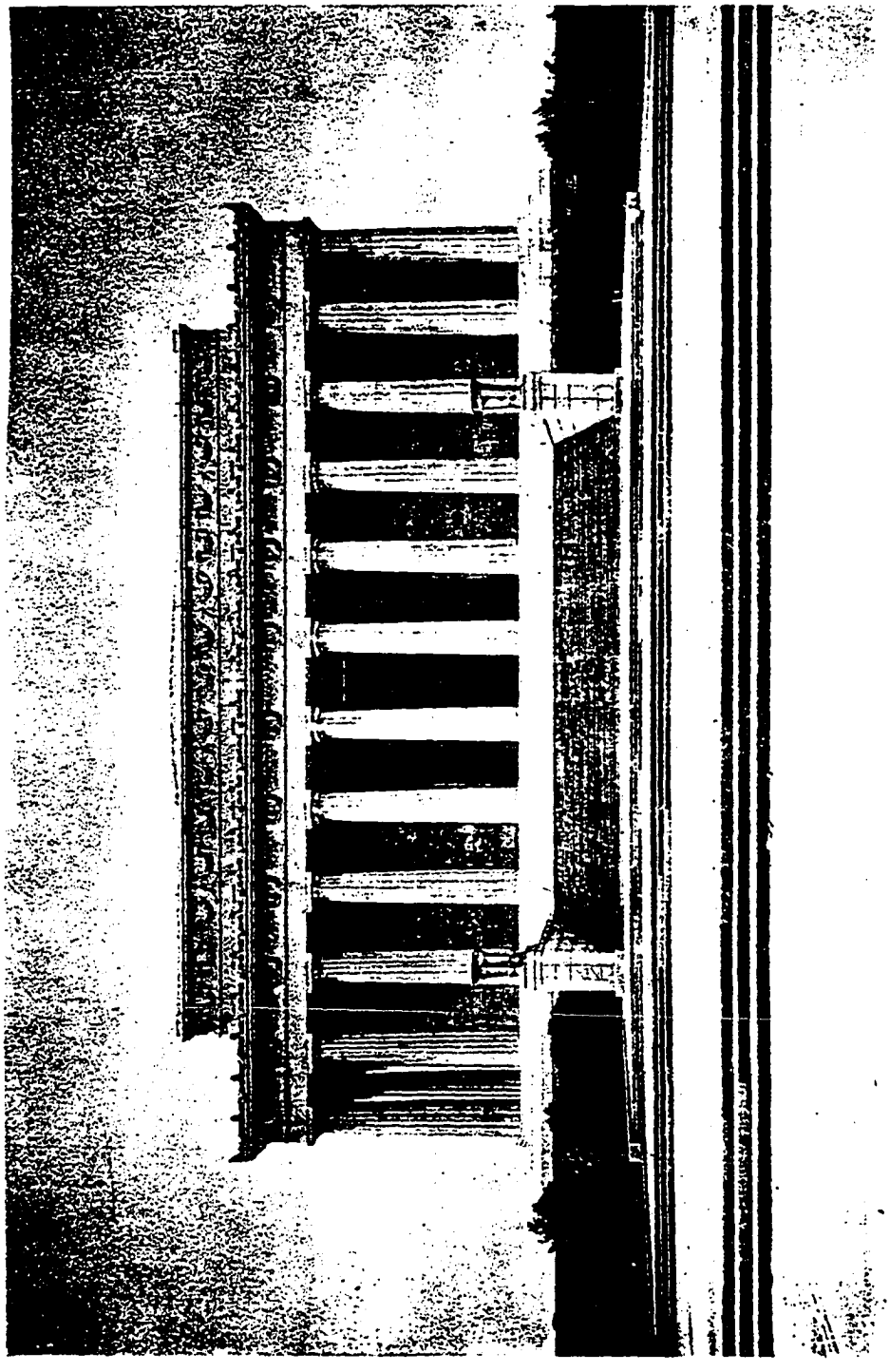

2.3 The Lincoln Memorial, east front. Source: Concklin, Lincoln, frontispiece.

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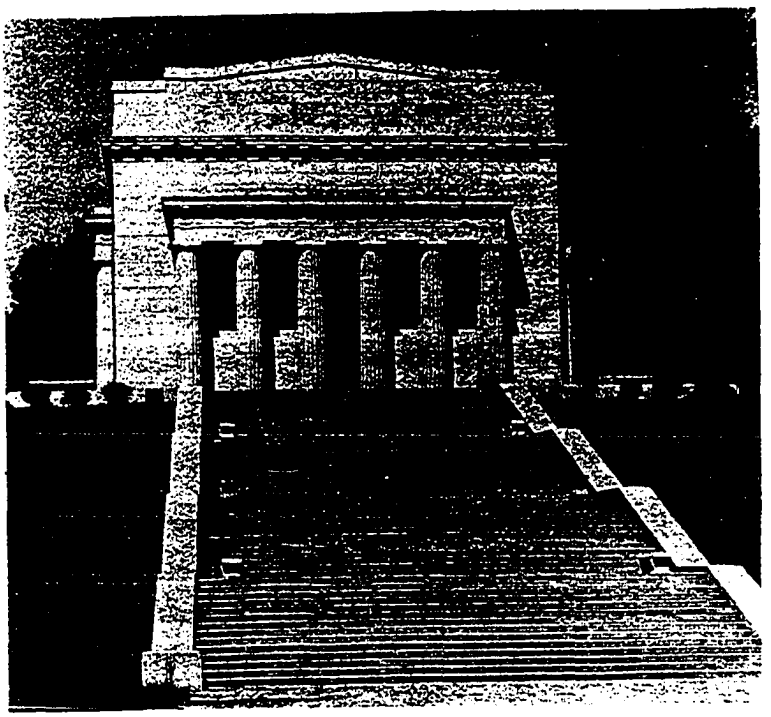

2.4 John Russell Pope, Lincoln Birthplace Memorial. 1909. Hodgenville, Kentucky, Source: Peterson, Lincoln, p. 181.

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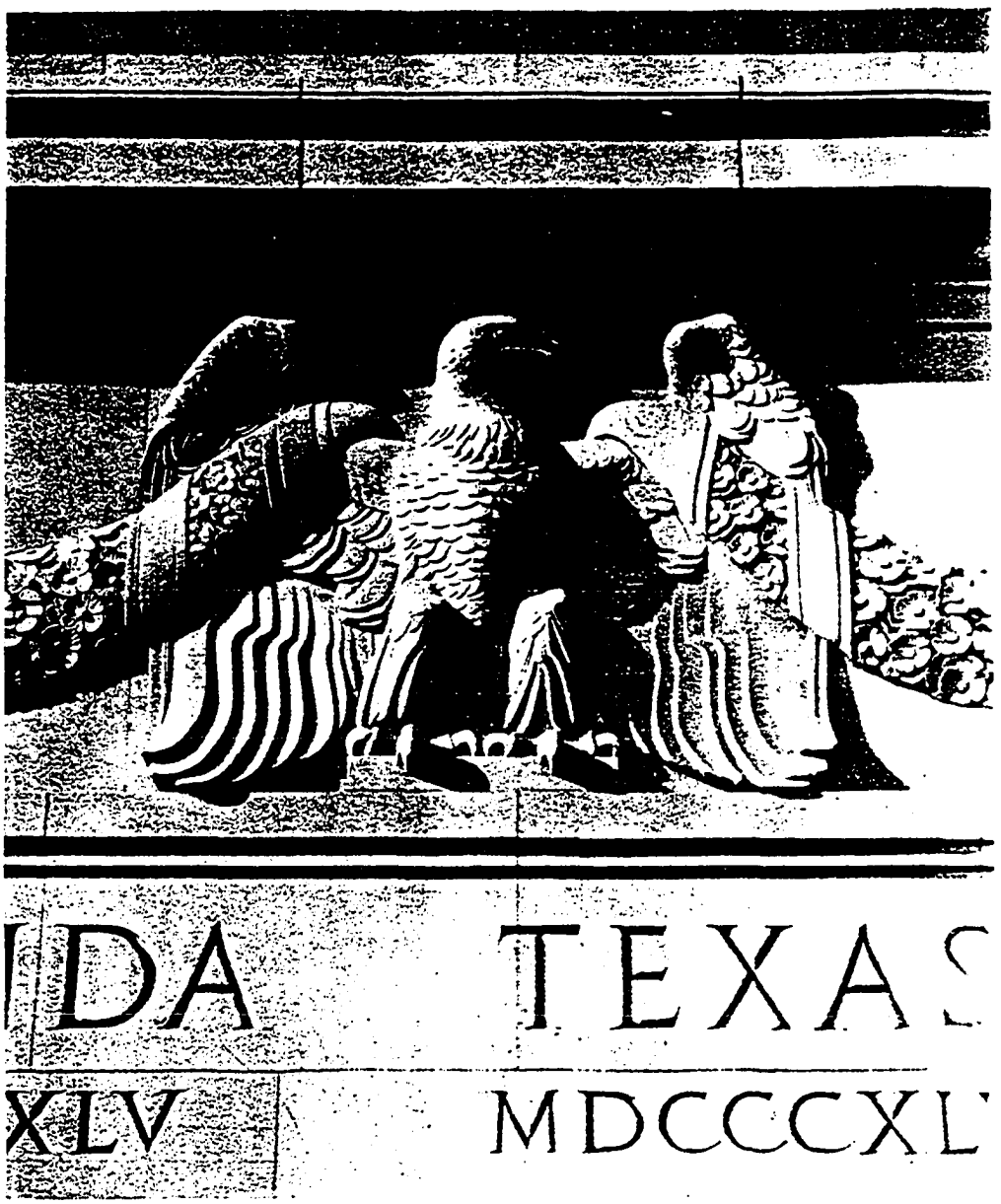

2.5 The Lincoln Memorial, Ornamental carvings of wreaths & eagles.
Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 50.

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2.6 Daniel Chester French, Statue of Abraham Lincoln, National Memorial, Washington, D.C. Source: Chesterwood Archive.

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2.7 Daniel Chester French, Abraham Lincoln. 1909-1913. Bronze & granite. h. fig: 270 cm. Lincoln, Nebraska. Source: Richman, French, p. 121.

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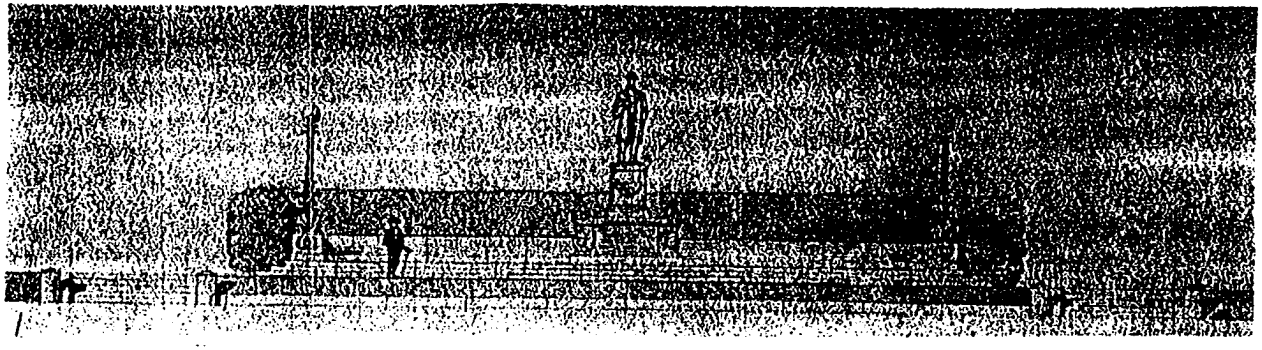

2.8 Henry Bacon, Preliminary Drawing (det.), Nov. 29, 1909. Lincoln Memorial, Lincoln, Nebraska. Pencil on paper, 27.5x52 cm. Bacon Archives, Wesleyan University. Photo: Richman, French, p. 123.

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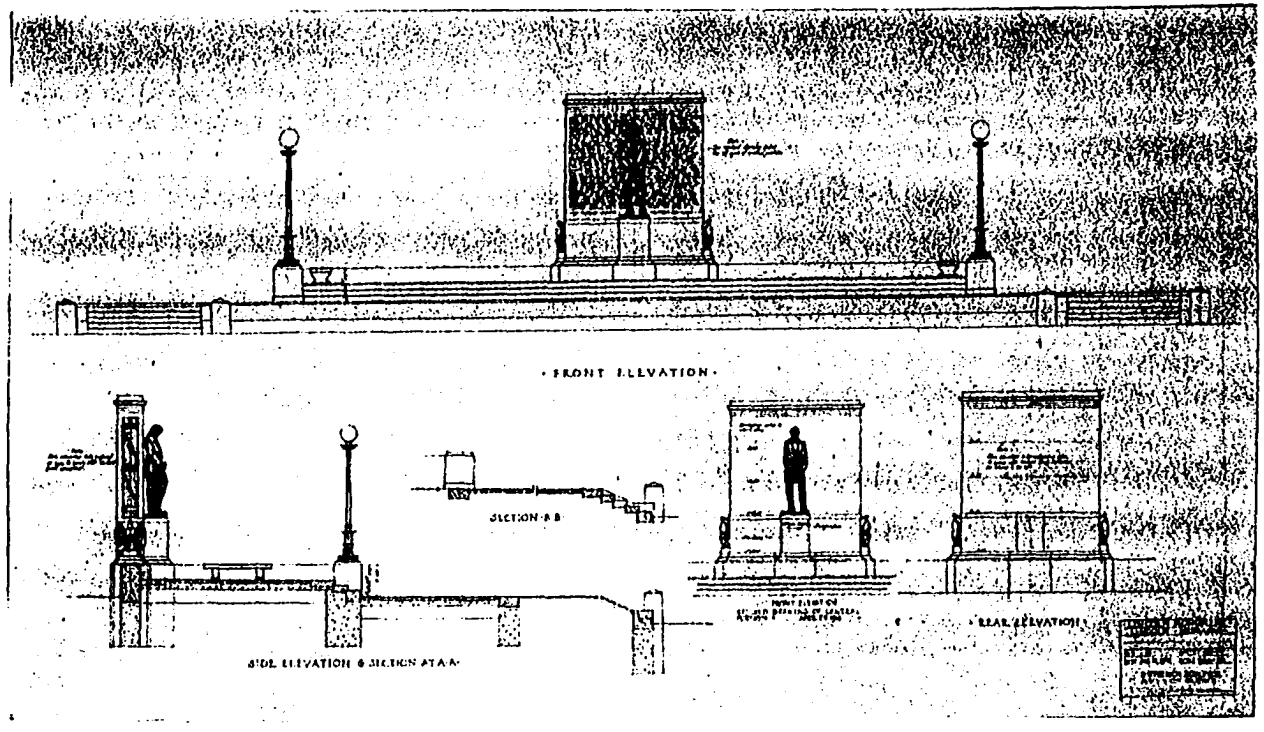

2.9 Henry Bacon, Specification Drawing, Jan. 11, 1911. Lincoln Memorial, Lincoln, Nebraska. Ink on paper, 73.5x125.2 cm. Bacon Archives, Wesleyan University. Photo: Richman, French, p. 125.

2.10 Leonard Volk, Abraham Lincoln Life Mask. 1860. Bronze from plaster. Illinois State Historical Library. Source: Peterson, p. 64.

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2.11 Daniel Chester French, Standing Lincoln. 1912. Lincoln, Nebraska. Source: Richman, French, p. 121.

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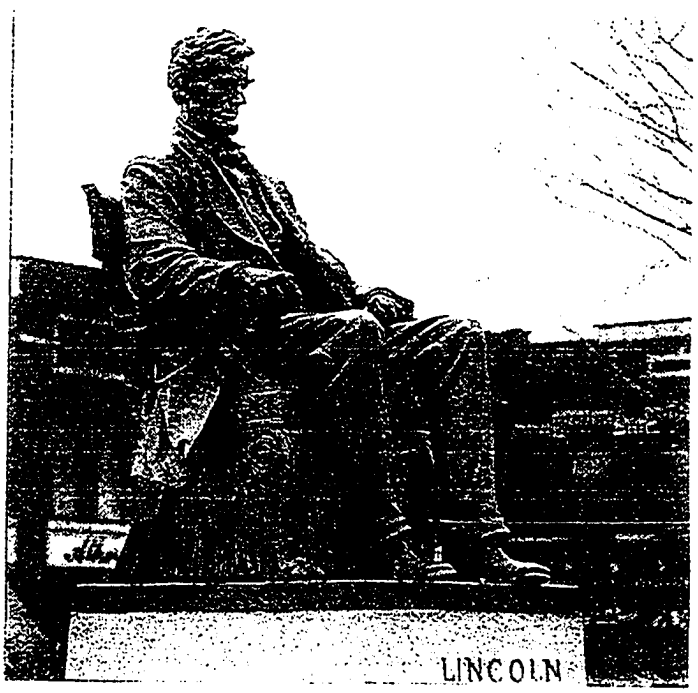

2.12 Adolph Weinman, Abraham Lincoln. 1909. Bronze. Hodgenville Courthouse square, Hodgenville, Ky. Illinois State Historical Library.

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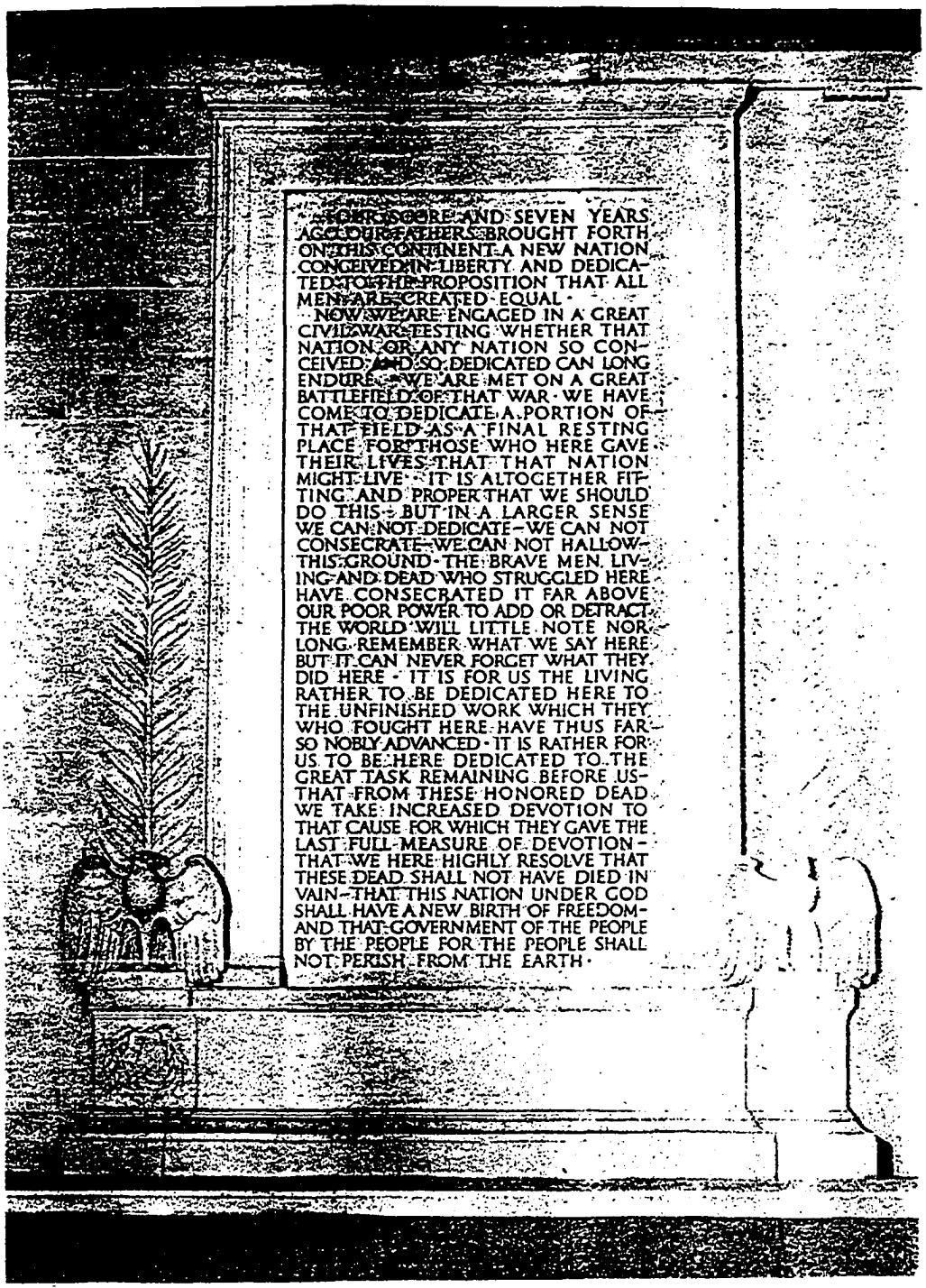

2.13 Gettysburg Address tablet, south wall, Lincoln Memorial. Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 48.

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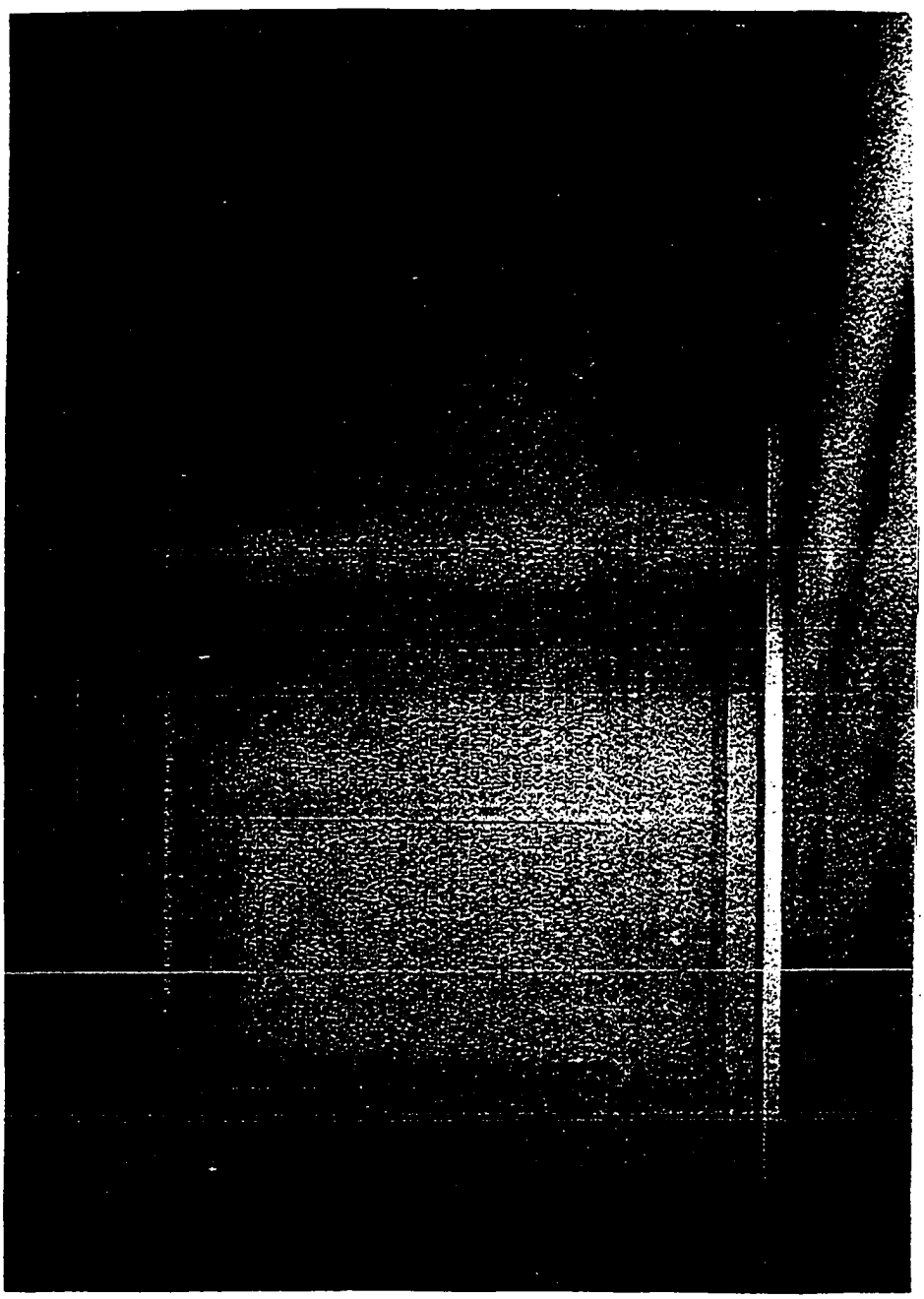

2.14 The Second Inaugural Address tablet, north wall, Lincoln Memorial.
Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 49.

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2.15 Jules Guerin, The Emancipation of a Race, mural, south wall. Lincoln Memorial. Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 46.

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2.16 Jules Guerin, Reunion, mural, north wall, Lincoln Memorial. Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 47.

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2.17 Jules Guerin, Lincoln Memorial. Colored perspectival drawing. Source: Bacon Archives, Wesleyan University.

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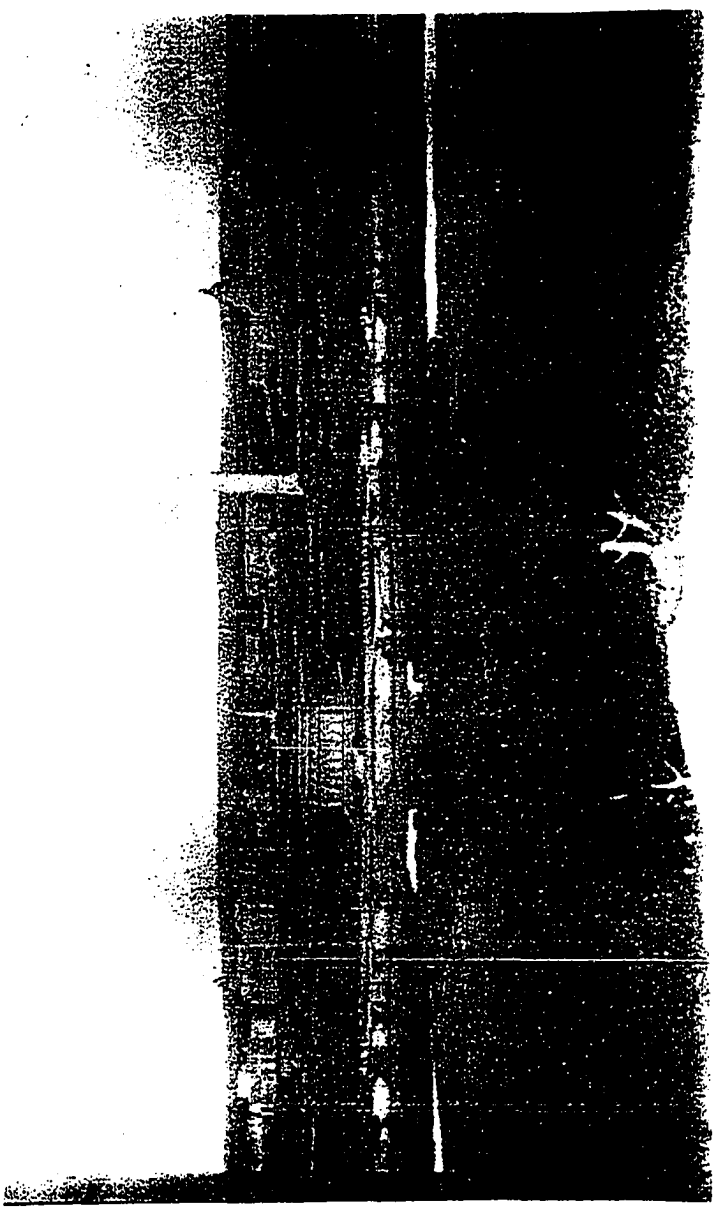

2.18 Jules Guerin, Lincoln Memorial. Colored perspectival drawing. Source: Bacon Archives, Wesleyan University.

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2.19 Jules Guerin, In his studio working on central Emancipation panel for Lincoln Memorial murals, c. 1920. Source: Pencil Points, May, 1924.

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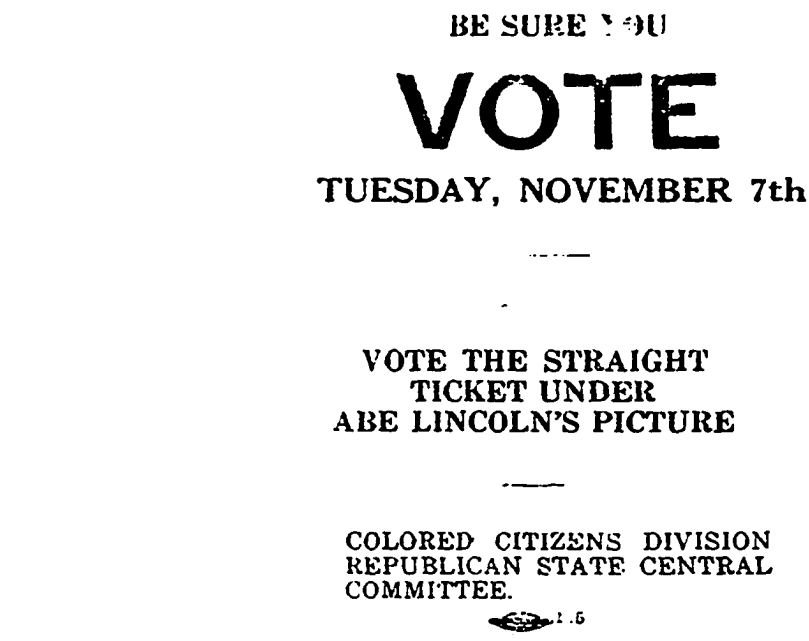

2.20 Warren Harding Presidential Campaign advertisement. Vote the Straight Ticket under Abe Lincoln's Picture. Colored Citizens Division, Republican State Central Committee. Source: Manuscript Divison: Library of Congress.

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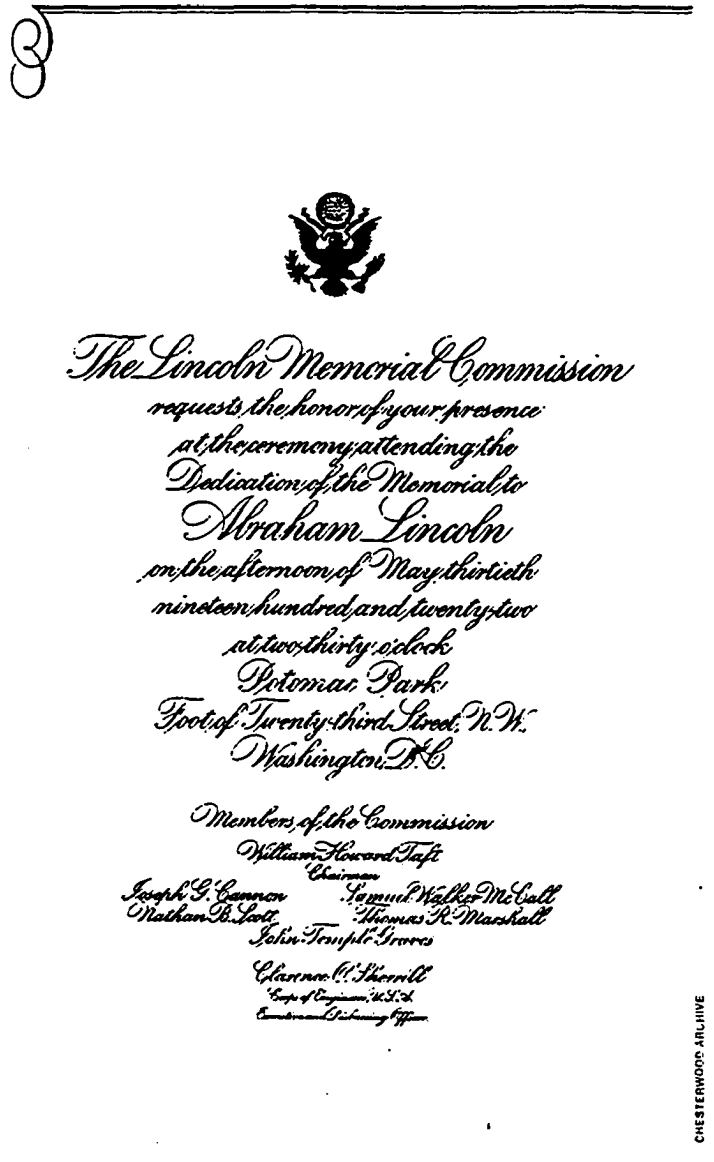

The Lincoln Memorial Commission
requests the honor of your presence
at the ceremony attending the
Dedication of the Memorial to
Abraham Lincoln
on the afternoon of May thirtieth
nineteen hundred and twenty-two
at two thirty o'clock
Potomac Park
Foot of Twenty-third Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Members of the Commission
William Howard Taft
Chairman
Joseph G. Cannon — Samuel Walker McCall
Nathan B. Scott — Thomas R. Marshall
John Temple Graves
Clarence O. Sherrill
Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.
Executive Officer

CHESTERWOOD ARCHIVE

3.1 Invitation to the Dedication Ceremony of the Lincoln Memorial, May 31, 1922. Source: Chesterwood Archive.

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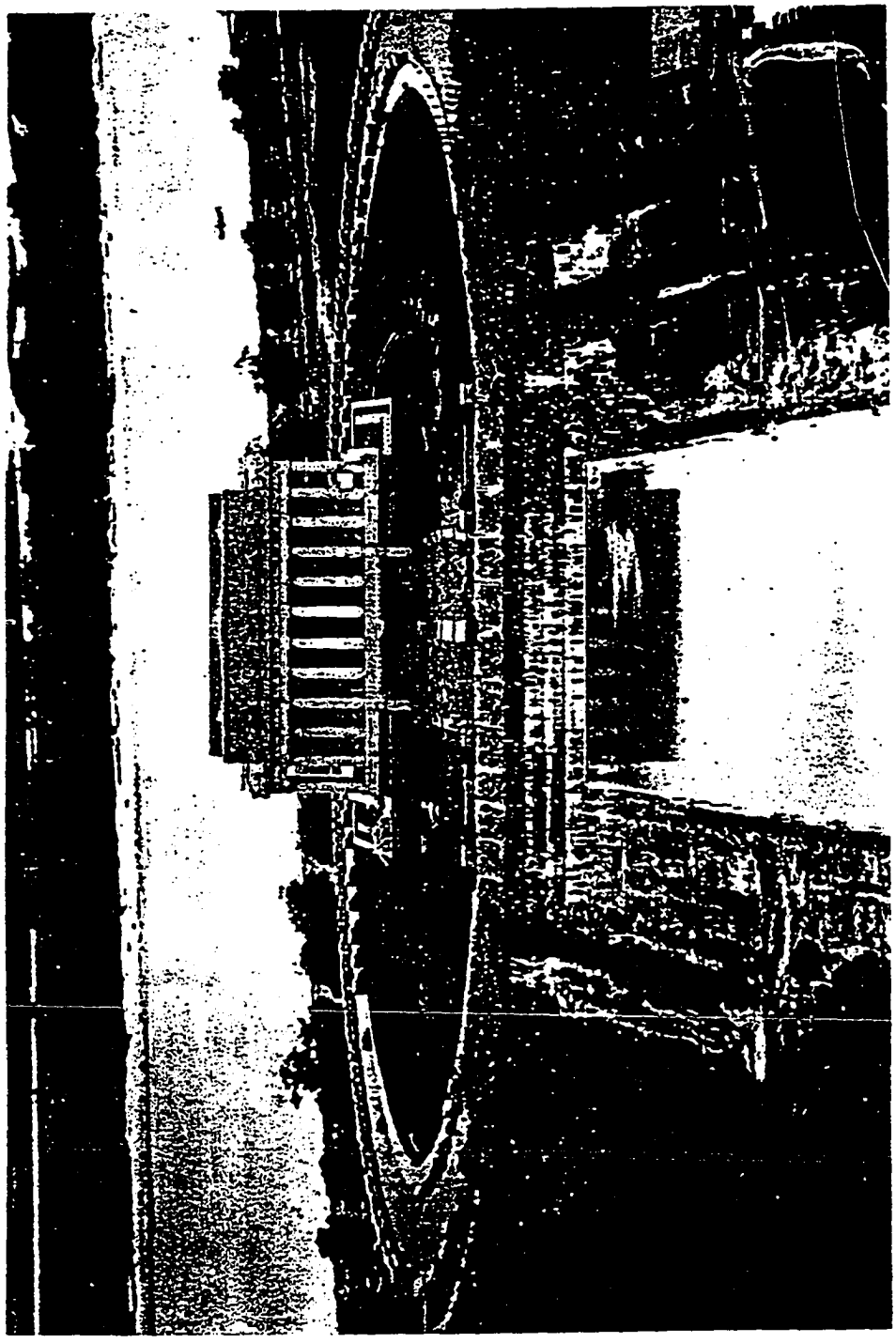

3.2 Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, looking toward the east front.
Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 84.

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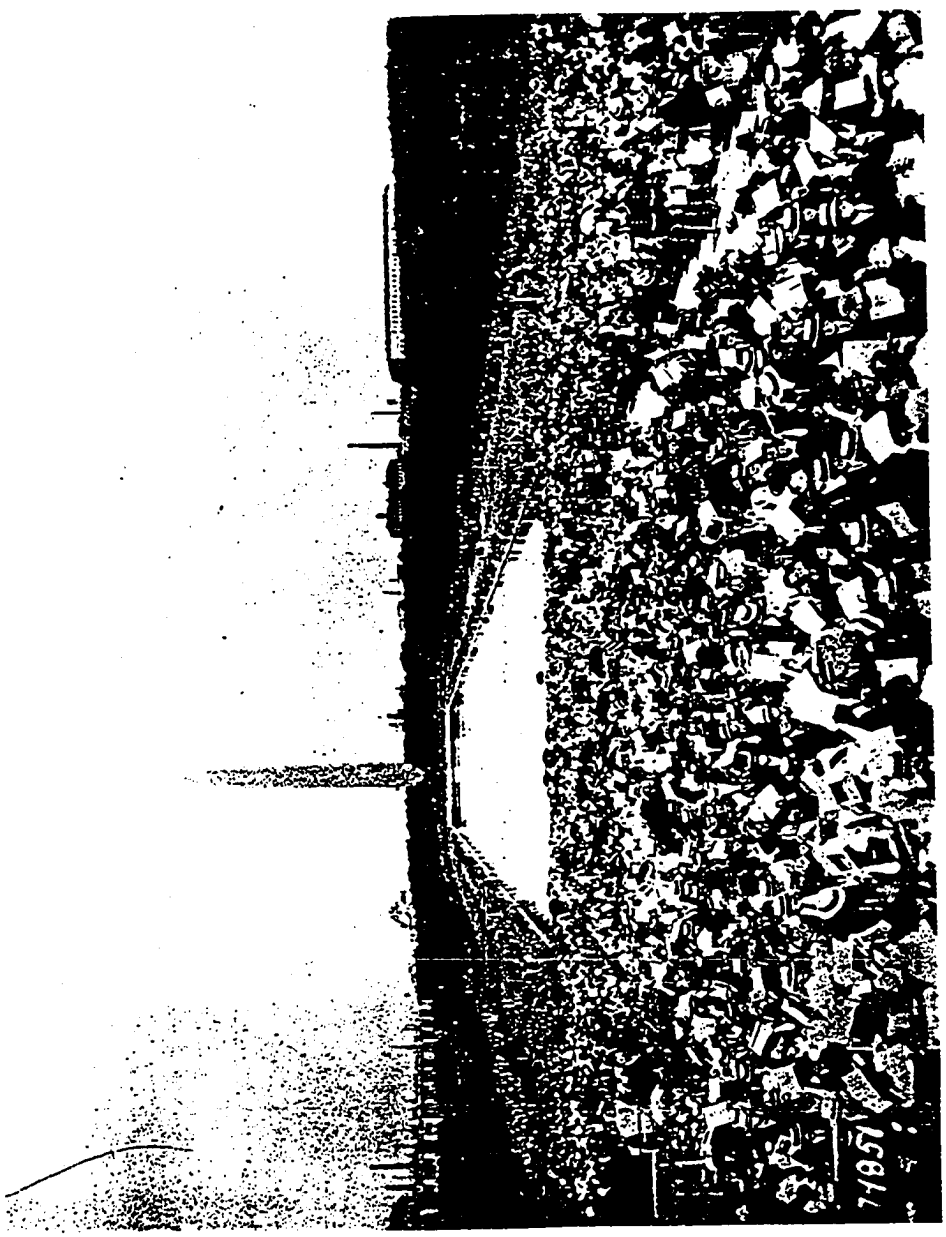

3.3 Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial. Source: Concklin, Lincoln, opp. p. 88.

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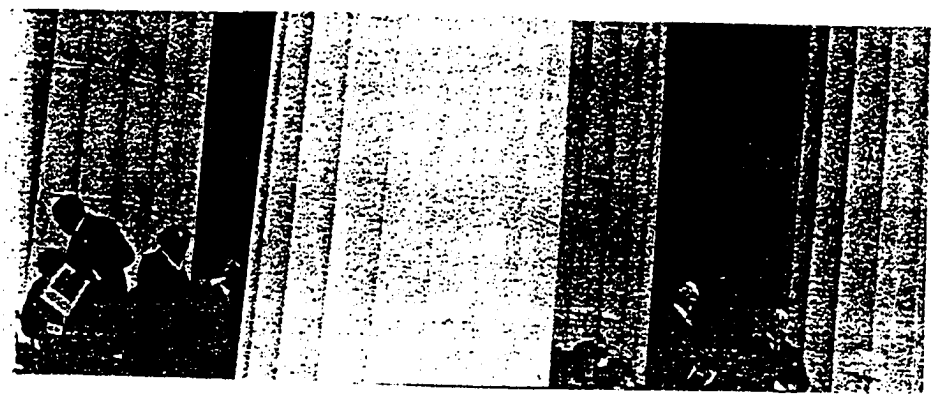

3.4 Robert Moton leaving podium after delivering his address at the Lincoln Memorial, May 31, 1922. Source: Library of Congress.

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3.5 William Howard Taft delivering his dedication address at the Lincoln Memorial, May 31, 1922. Source: Chesterwood Archive.

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3.6 Altered image of a Union and a Confederate Veteran ascending steps of the Lincoln Memorial together on Dedication day, May 31, 1922. Source: Washington Post, May 31, 1922.

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3.7 Reginald Marsh, *The Park Bench*. 1833. Source: Time-Life Books, American Painting, p. 105.

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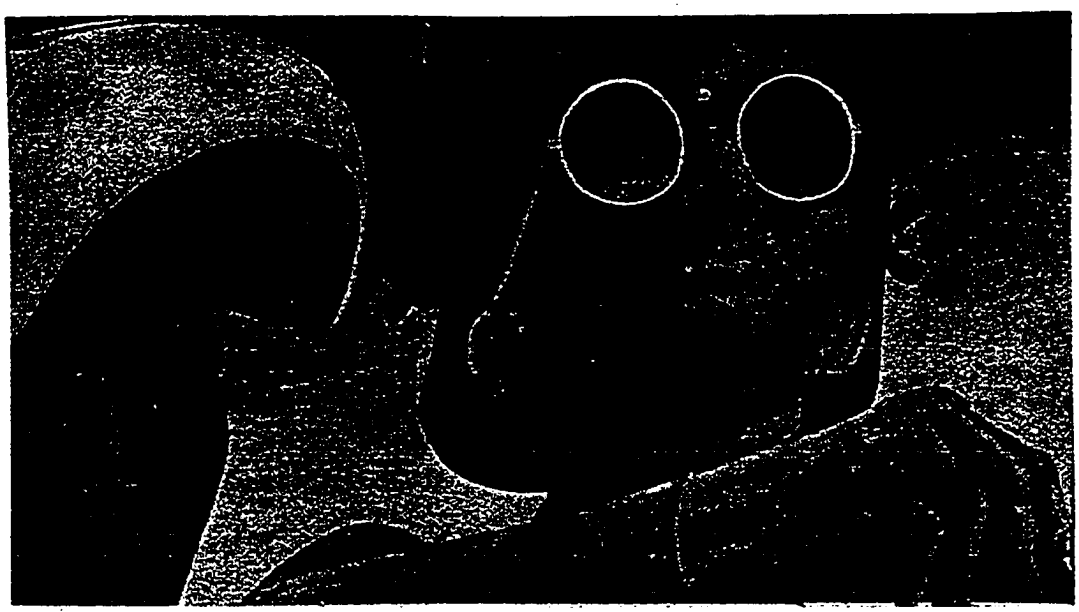

3.8 Ben Shahn, *The Welders*. 1944. Tempera. Source: Larkin, Art and Life in America, p. 463

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4.1 Cartoon: "Hypocrisy." Source: The Daily Worker, October 15, 1946.

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4.2 Cartoon: Ku Klux Klan Lynching Black World War II Victims. Source: The Daily Worker, October 18, 1946.

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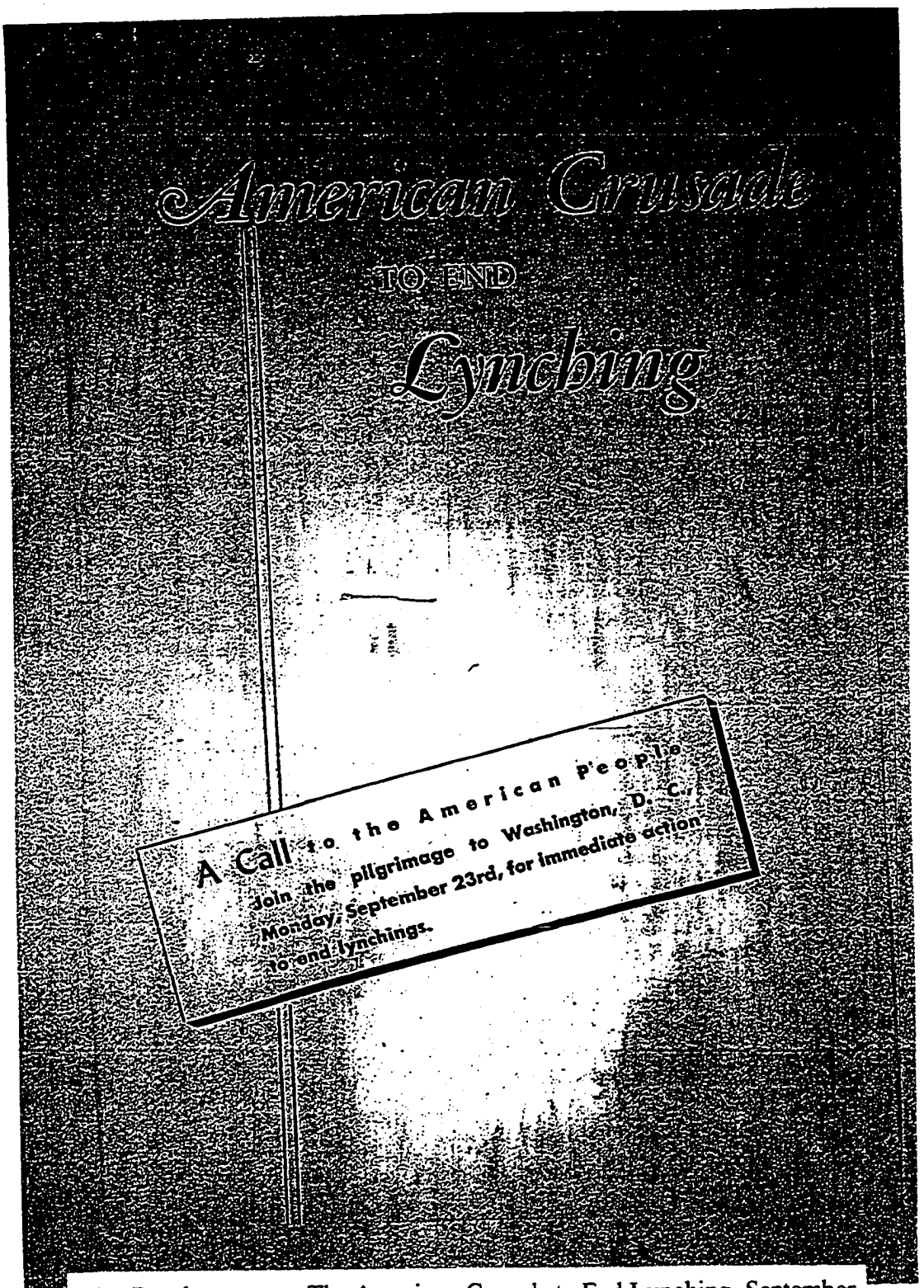

4.3 Brochure cover: The American Crusade to End Lynching, September 23, 1946. Source: Papers of the National Negro Congress.

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4.4 Cartoon: "Pointing Out the Resemblance." Source: Chicago Defender, October 12, 1946.

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4.5 Paul Robeson addressing protesters at American Crusade to End Lynching demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial, September 23, 1946. Source: Robeson Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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MASS MEETING

Sunday, June 29, 3:15 P.M. 354

Lincoln Memorial

Walter White, New York, N.Y., Presiding

3:20 P.M. -- Musical Program

Community Chorus

Warner Lawson, Dean Howard University School of Music, Director

4:00 P.M. -- Invocation ..... Rev. Stephen Gill Spottsw

The Star Spangled Banner

"Ride on King Jesus"

Miss Carol Brice
Jonathan Brice, Accompanist

Address ..... Hon. Wayne L. Morse, Sens from Oregon

Address ..... Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

Remarks and introduction of the President of the United States ..... Walter White, Executive Se NAACP

Address ..... President Harry S. Truman

"God Be With You Till We Meet Again" .....Audience

Led by Miss Brice and U. S. Marine Band

Benediction ..... The Reverend John W. Dean of the Washington Cath

4.6 NAACP program for 38th annual convention, held at the Lincoln Memorial, June 29, 1947. Source: Papers of the NAACP, Schomburg Archives.

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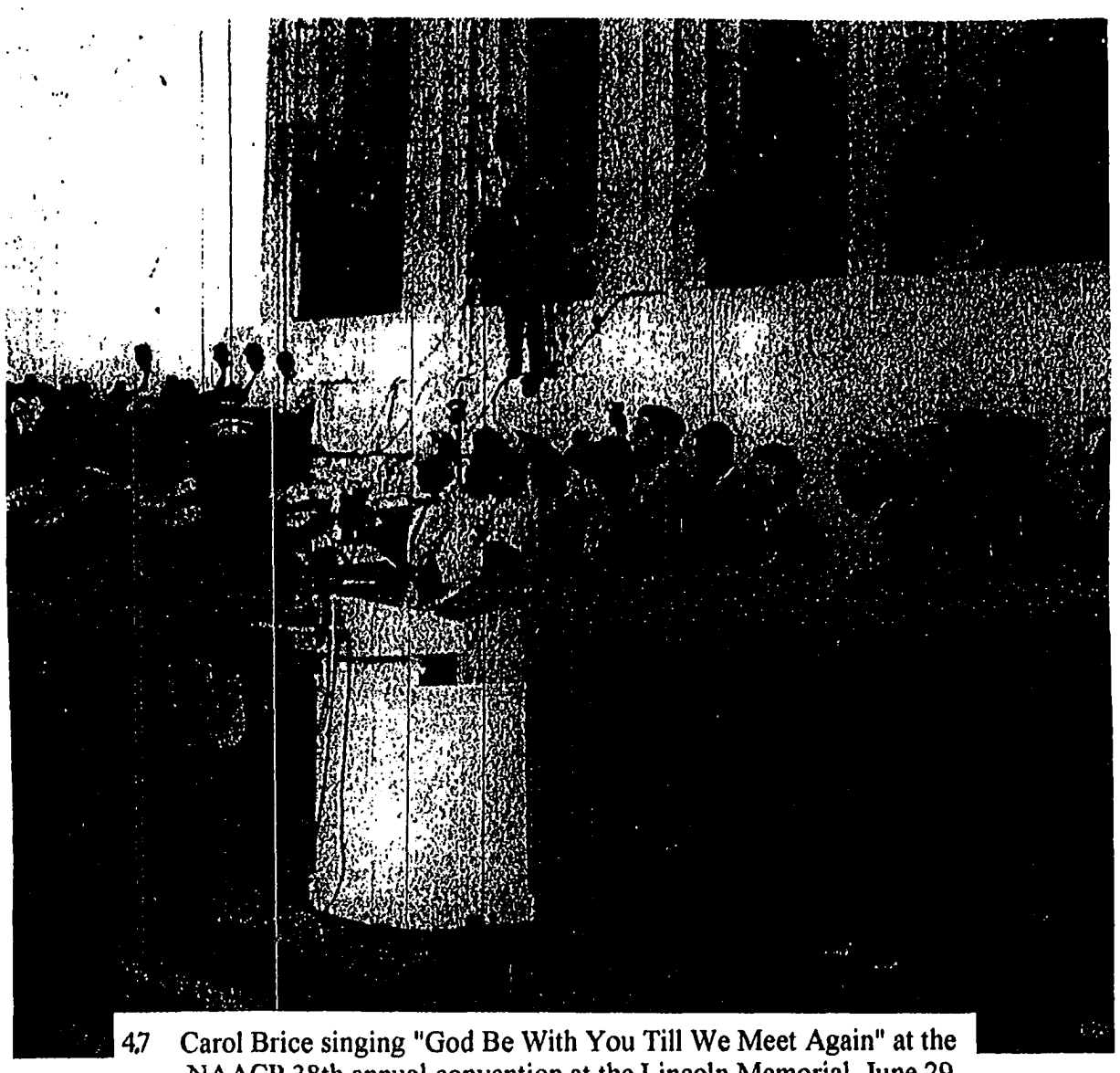
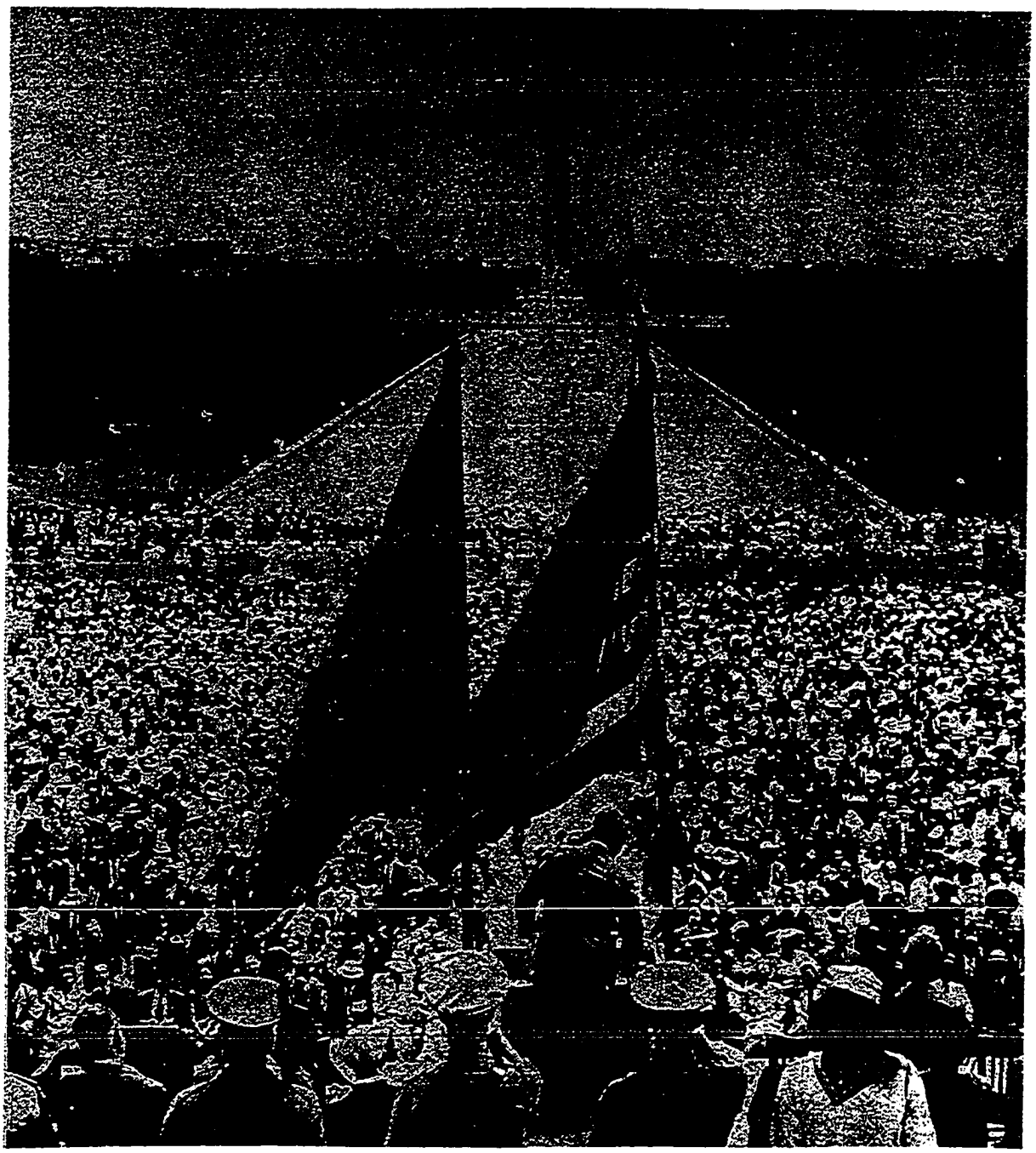


4.7 Carol Brice singing "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" at the NAACP 38th annual convention at the Lincoln Memorial, June 29, 1947. Source: Papers of the NAACP, Schomburg Archives.



4.8 President Truman addressing the closing session of the NAACP's 38th annual convention at the Lincoln Memorial, June 29, 1947. Source: New York Times, June 30, 1947, p. 3.

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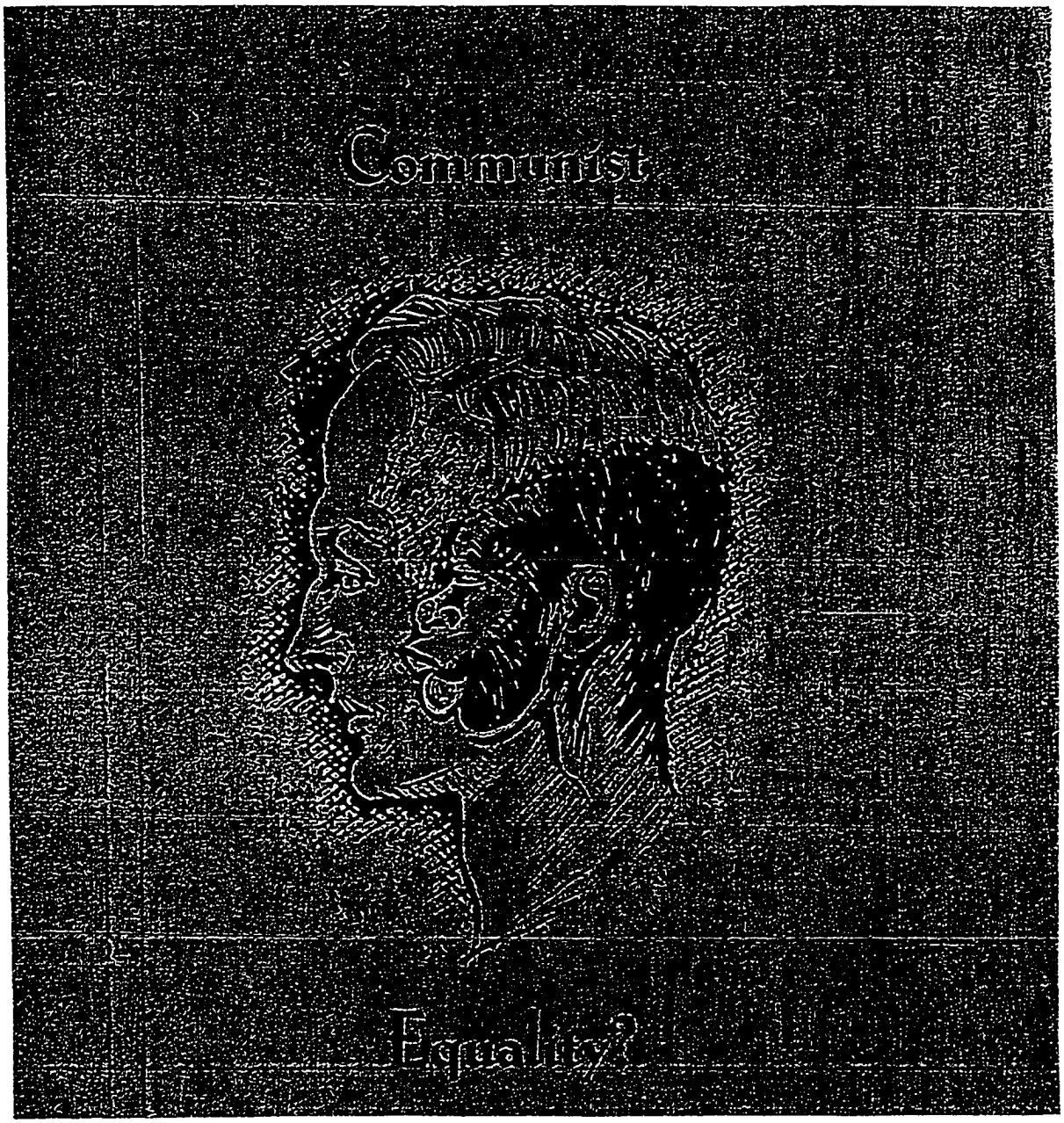

4.9 Brochure: Communist Equality? National Citizens Protective Association, St. Louis, Missouri. Source: Robeson Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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5.1 IFLWU Veterans protesting at the Lincoln Memorial on behalf of Willie McGee, May 6, 1951. Source: Civil Rights Congress Photo Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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5.2 IFLWU Veterans chained together around columns of the Lincoln Memorial, May 1951. Source: Civil Rights Congress Photo Collection, Schomburg Archives

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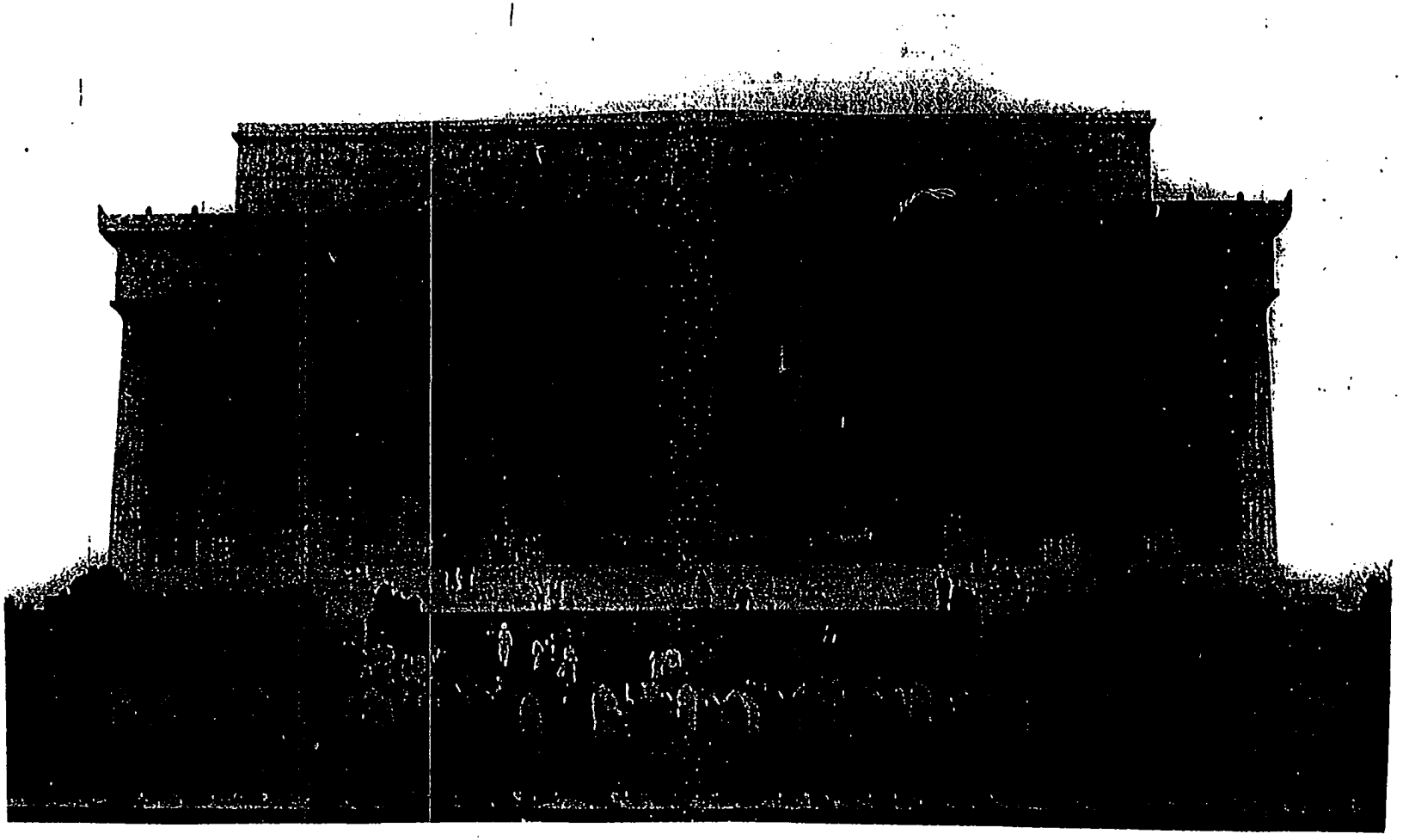

5.3 IFLWU Veterans marching in front of the Lincoln Memorial, May 6, 1951.
Source: Civil Rights Congress Photo Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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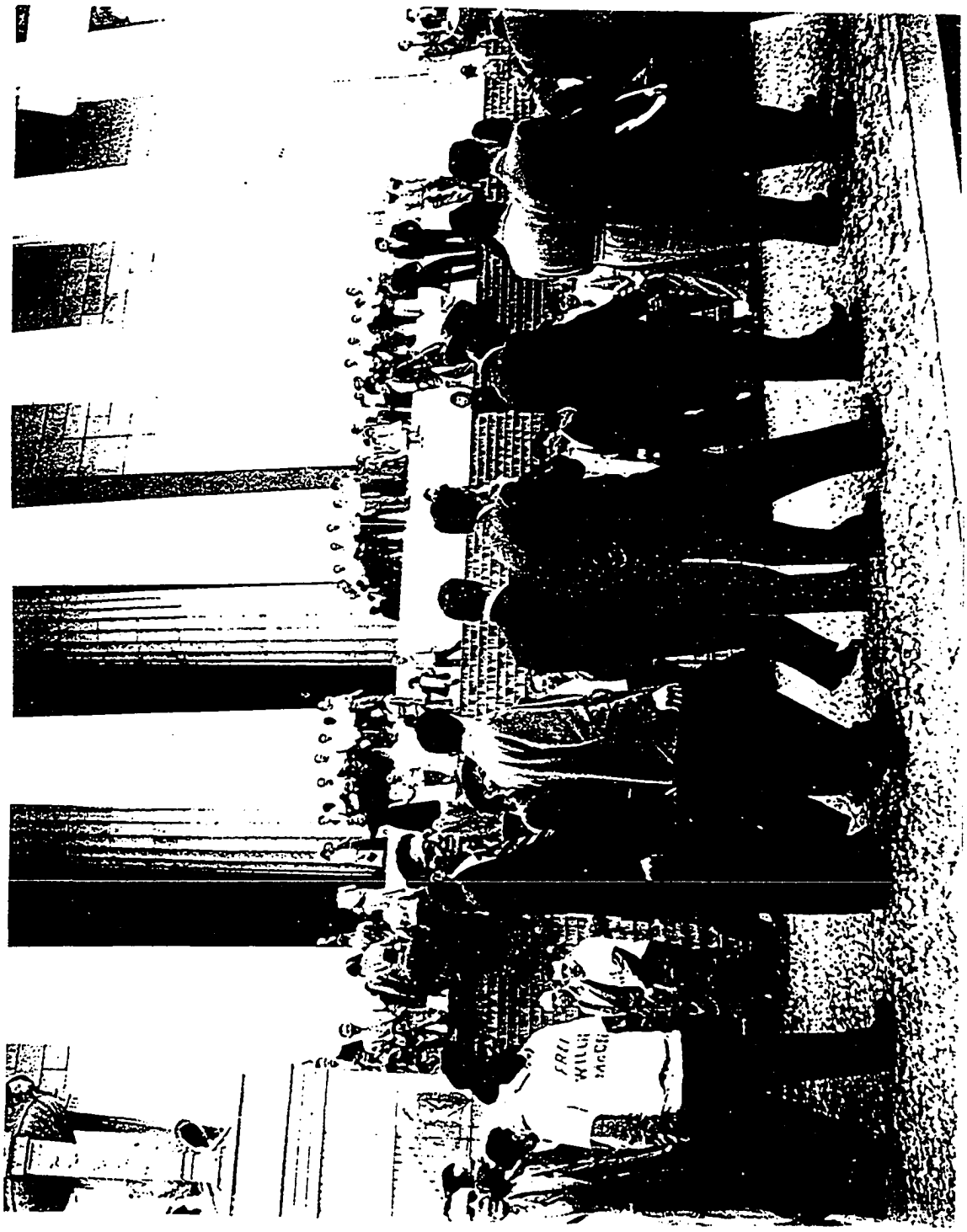

5.4 IFLWU Veterans marching in front of the Lincoln Memorial, May 6, 1951.
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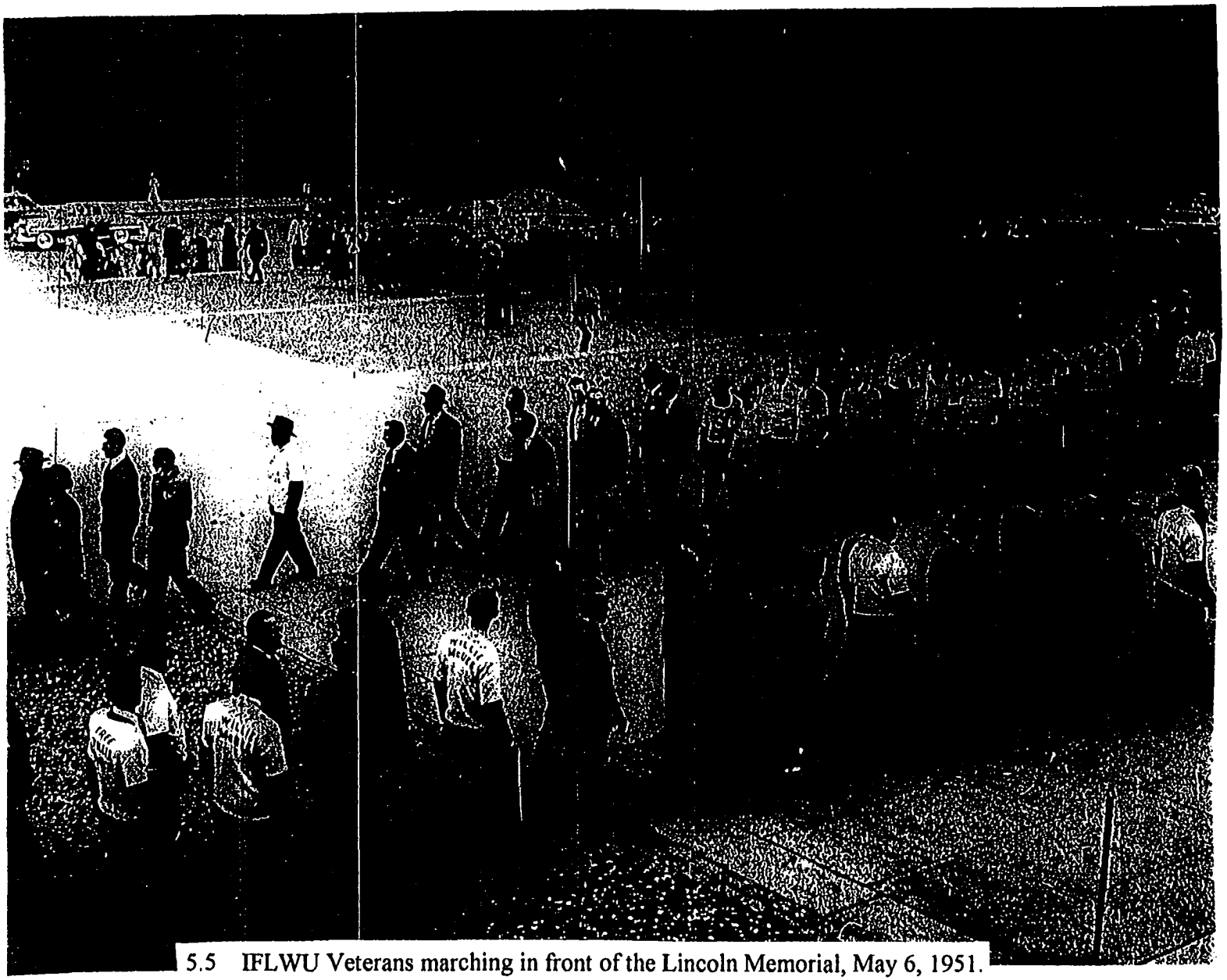

5.5 IFLWU Veterans marching in front of the Lincoln Memorial, May 6, 1951.
Source: Civil Rights Congress Photo Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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5.6 IFLWU Veterans unchaining themselves from columns of the Lincoln Memorial, May 6. 1951. Source: Civil Rights Congress Photo Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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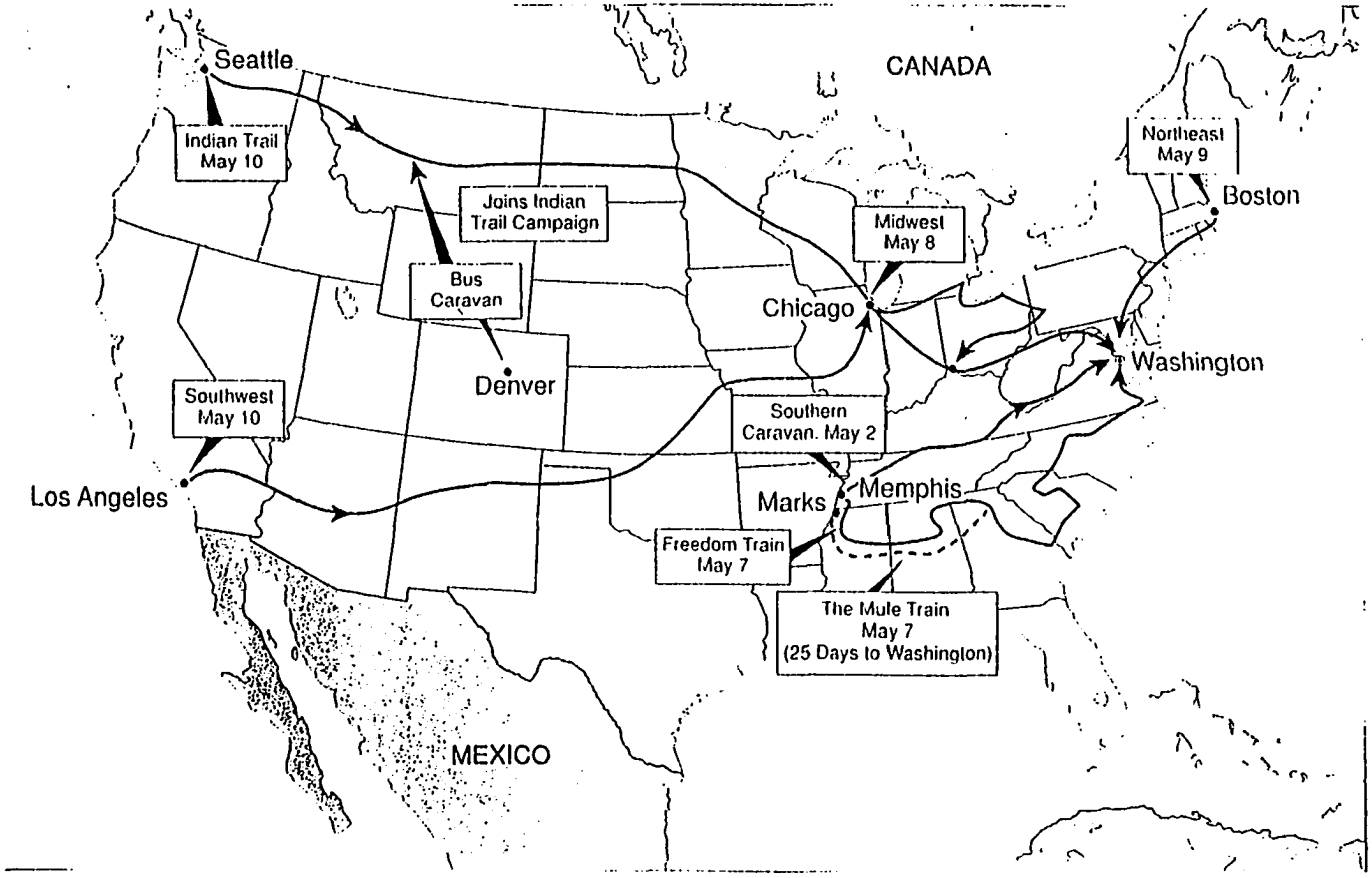
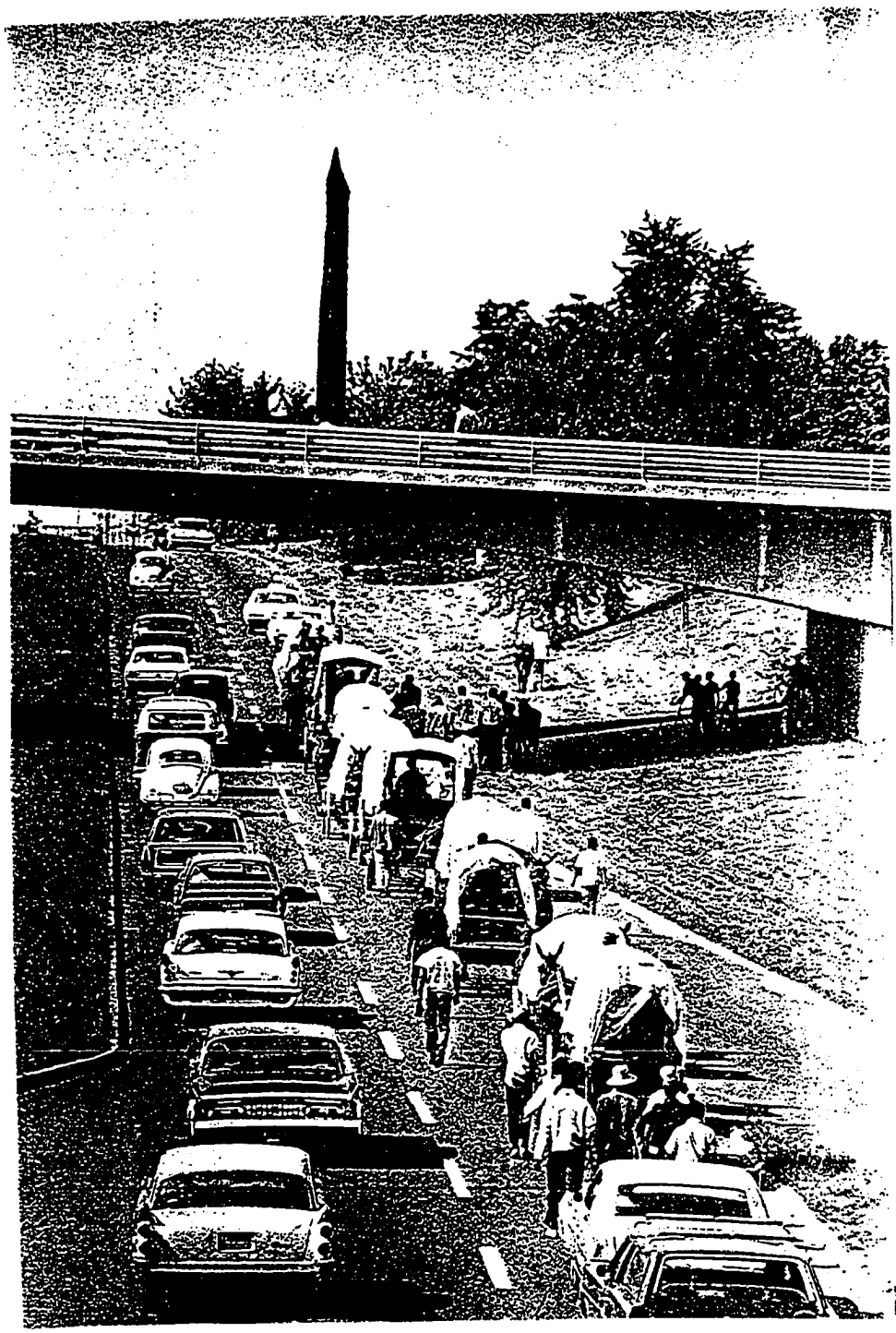


6.1 Map of Poor People's Campaign Showing Departure Points, Dates and Routes. Destination: Washington, D.C. Source: Freeman, Campaign, p. 91.



6.2 The Mule Train on the George Washington Memorial Parkway with the Washington Monument visible in the distance. Source: Freeman, Campaign, p. 72.

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6.3 The Mule Train arriving in Washington, D.D. Source: C. Clarke Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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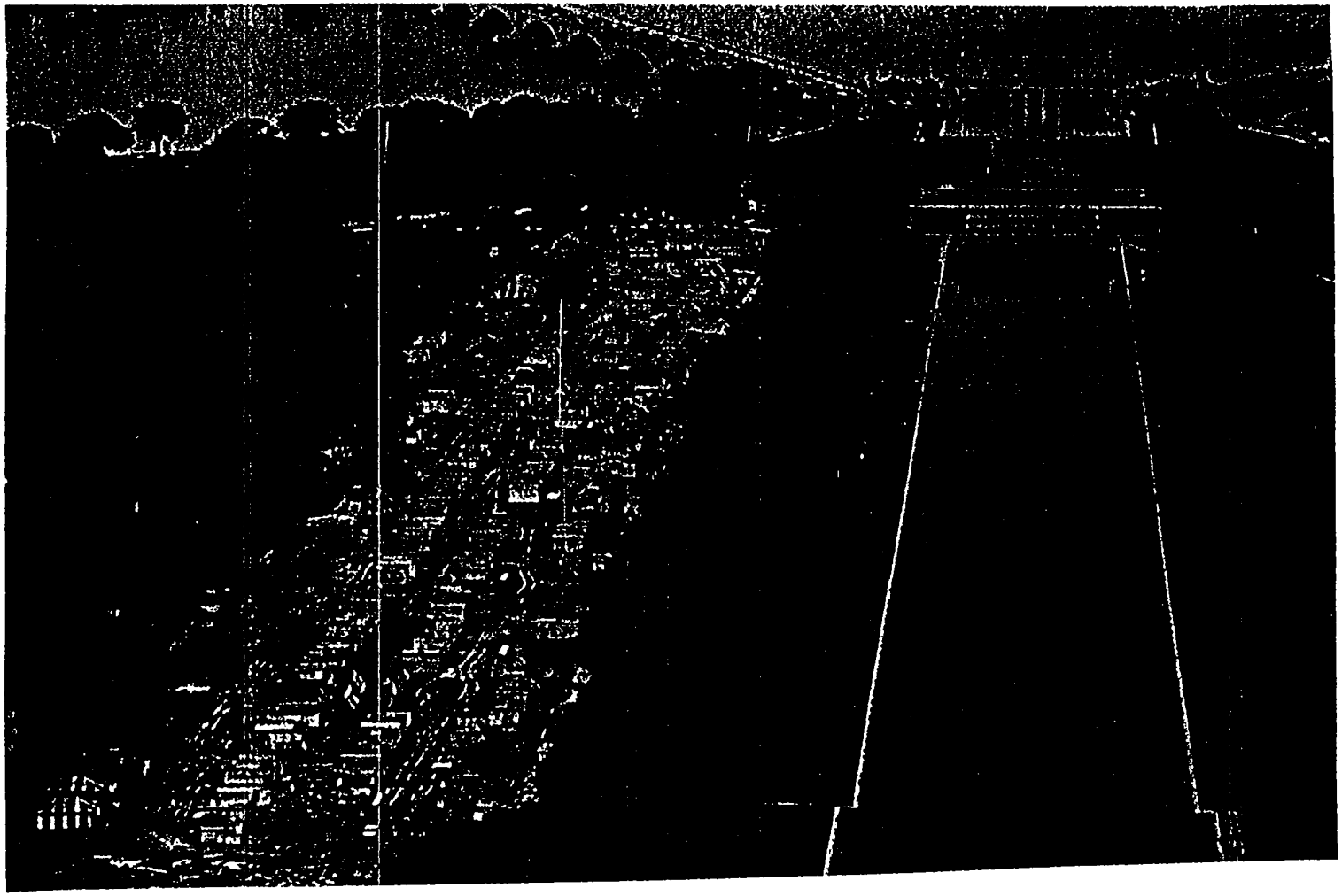

6.4 View of Resurrection City seen from atop the Washington Monument with the Lincoln Memorial at rights and the Potomac River in the background. Source: C. Clarke Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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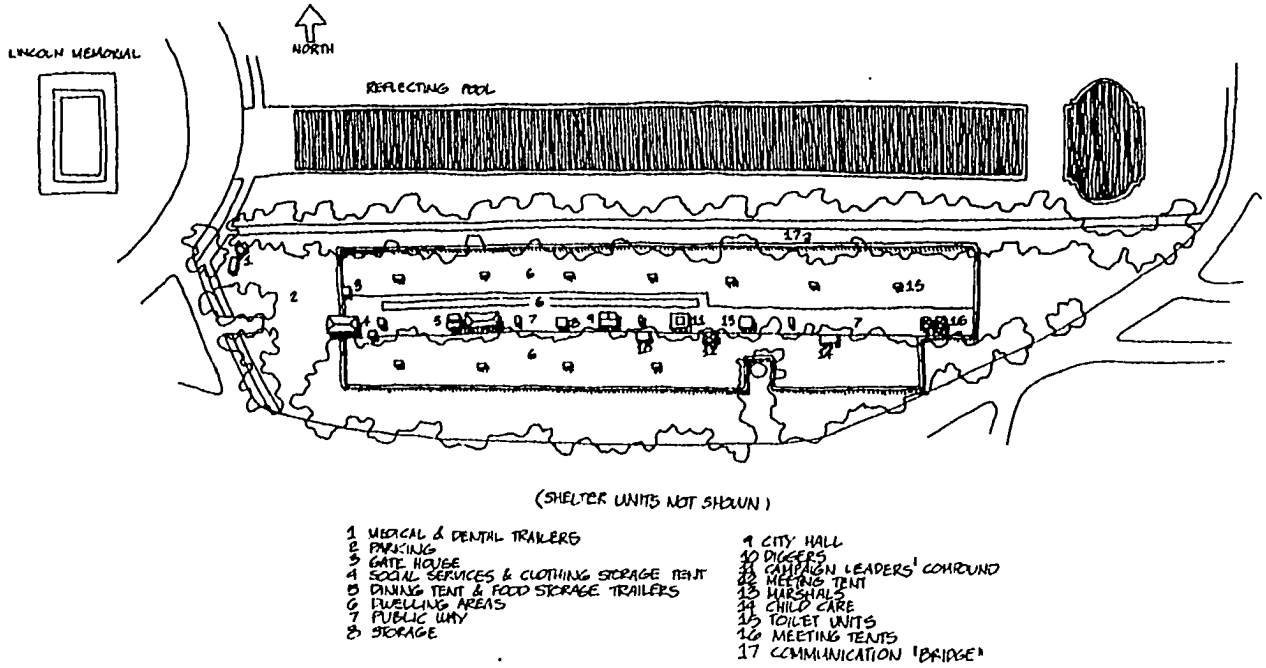

6.5 Plan of Resurrection City as built (shelter units not shown). Source: AIP Journal, November, 1969, p. 410.

6.6 A-Frame Dwelling Units in Resurrection City. Source: AIP Journal, November, 1969, p. 405.

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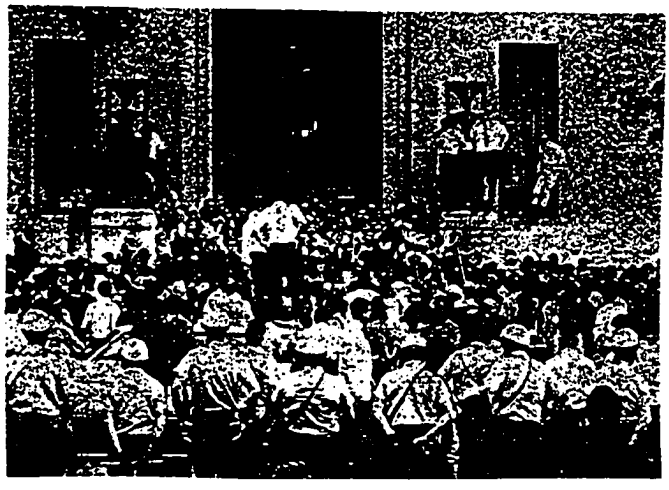

6.7 Poor People's Campaign Protestors Gathered at the Justice Department, June 3, 1968. Source: Washington Post, June 4, 1968.

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6.8 Poor People's Campaign Protestors Late Night Vigil outside the Justice Department, June 3, 1968. Source: Washington Post, June 4, 1968.

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6.9 Vice-President Hubert Humphrey Touring Resurrection City. Source: C. Clarke Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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6.10 Poor People's Campaign Solidarity Day Rally, June 19, 1968. Source: New York Times, June 20, 1968.

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LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING

Lift ev'ry voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise high as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered
We have come, treading our path thro' the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path we pray,
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, True to our native land.

Solidarity Day

In Support of the Poor People's Campaign

June 19, 1968

Programme

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN
DR. RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY

NATIONAL VICE-CHAIRMAN
MRS. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
MRS. MEDGAR EVERS

NATIONAL COORDINATOR
STERLING TUCKER

TREASURER
MRS. ARTHUR C. LOGAN

6.11 Program: Solidarity Day, June 19, 1968, front cover. Source: C. Clarke Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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PROGRAMME

Presiding: Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, President Emeritus
Morehouse College

Dr. Wyatt T. Walker, Pastor
Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, New York City

"The Star Spangled Banner"

Invocation . . . . . Rabbi Jacob Philip Rudin, President
Synagogue Council of America

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

Statement . . . . . Sterling Tucker, National Coordinator
Solidarity Day

The Poor People's Campaign . . . The Rev. James Bevel, Director of
Non-Violence, Poor People's Campaign

• • •

Speaker . . . . . Miss Dorothy Height, President
National Council of Negro Women

Speaker . . . . . Mrs. Peggy Terry
JOIN Community Union, Chicago, Illinois

Speaker . . . . . Cleveland Robinson
President, Negro American Labor Council

Prayer . . . . . Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle
Archdiocese of Washington

• • •

Speaker . . . . . Mrs. Johnnie Tillmon, National Chairman
Welfare Rights Organization

Speaker . . . . . Walter Reuther, President
United Auto Workers

Speaker . . . . . Gilberto Gerena Valentin
Home Towns Puerto Rico, New York City

Speaker . . . . . The Honorable Edward W. Brooke, Senator
Massachusetts

Speaker . . . . . Reies Lopez Tijerina
Alianza de Pueblos Libres,
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Speaker . . . . . Mrs. Martha Grass, Representing Ponca Indians
Ponca City, Oklahoma

Speaker . . . . . Roy Wilkins, Executive Director
National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People

Prayer . . . . . The Rev. C. K. Steele, Vice President
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

• • •

Presentation of Citizens of
Resurrection City . . . . . The Rev. Bernard Lafayette, National
Coordinator, Poor People's Campaign
Rodolpho (Corky) Gonsales
Crusade for Justice, Denver, Colo.

Speaker . . . . . Whitney M. Young, Jr., Executive Director
National Urban League

In Tribute to
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Rev. Andrew J. Young, Executive Vice-
Chairman, Southern Christian Leadership Conf.

Mrs. Mary Gurley
"I Trust in God"

Speaker and Selection . . . . Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.

• • •

Selection . . . . . Miss Mahalia Jackson

Introduction . . . . . The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery,
Chairman of the Board
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Speaker . . . . . Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, President
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Selection . . . . . Miss Aretha Franklin
"Beams of Heaven As I Go"

Litany . . . . . The Rev. Jesse Jackson, Director
Operation Breadbasket
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Hosea Williams, Director of Direct Action
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

"We Shall Overcome"

Benediction . . . . . The Right Rev. John D. Bright
First Episcopal District A.M.E. Church
New York City

6.12 Program: Solidarity Day, June 19, 1968. Source: C. Clarke Collection, Schomburg Archives.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM

AUGUST 28, 1963

LINCOLN MEMORIAL PROGRAM

1.	The National Anthem	*Led by* Marian Anderson.
2.	Invocation	The Very Rev Patrick O'Boyle, *Archbishop of Washington*
3.	Opening Remarks	A. Philip Randolph, *Director March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom*
4.	Remarks	Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, *Stated Clerk, United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., Vice Chairman, Commission on Race Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America.*
5.	Tribute to Negro Women Fighters for Freedom Daisy Bates Diane Nash Bevel Mrs. Medgar Evers Mrs. Herbert Lee Rosa Parks Gloria Richardson	Mrs. Medgar Evers
6.	Remarks	John Lewis, *National Chairman, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.*
7.	Remarks	Walter Reuther, *President, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, AFL-CIO; Chairman, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.*
8.	Remarks	James Farmer, *National Director, Congress of Racial Equality.*
9.	Selection	Eva Jessye *Choir*
10.	Prayer	Rabbi Uri Miller, *President Synagogue Council of America.*
11.	Remarks	Whitney M. Young, Jr., *Executive Director, National Urban League.*
12.	Remarks	Mathew Ahmann, *Executive Director, National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.*
13.	Remarks	Roy Wilkins, *Executive Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.*
14.	Selection	Miss Mahalia Jackson
15.	Remarks	Rabbi Joachim Prinz, *President American Jewish Congress.*
16.	Remarks	The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference.*
17.	The Pledge	A Philip Randolph
18.	Benediction	Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, *President, Morehouse College.*

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"

6.13 Program: March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, 1963. NAACP Papers, Schomburg Archives.

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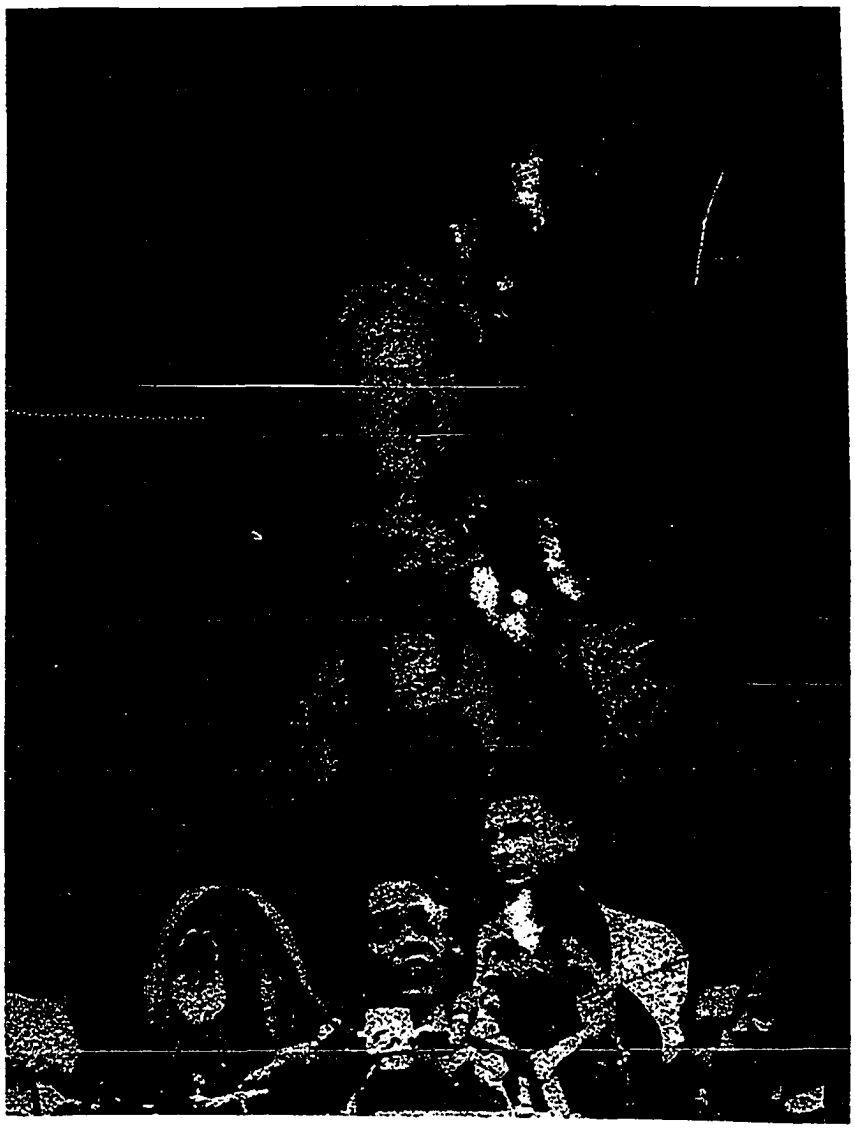

6.14 Coretta Scott King Delivering Address on the Steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Solidarity Day Rally, June 19, 1968. Source: C. Clarke Collection, Schomburg Archives.

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Moton Family Papers, 1850-1991

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Records of the Lincoln Memorial Commission, RG 42.

National Park Service
Central Office Classified Files, NARS, RG 79.
Department of Interior Records, RG 42 and RG 66
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George C. Marshall Papers
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National Negro Congress Papers
National Urban League Papers
A. Philip Randolph Papers
Paul Robeson Collection
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