THE CIVIL WAR AND THE NEGRO-AMERICAN*

The organization of the national observance of the Centennial, 1961-1965, of the Civil War has been conducted under a Civil War Centennial Commission, established by Public Law 85-305 passed by the 85th Congress, through a Joint Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives and approved, September 7, 1957. The Resolution is entitled: "To establish a commission for commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the Civil War and for other purposes." Twenty-five members were designated to be appointed by the President of the United States from official members of the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Department of Defense, the Director of National Parks, the Librarian of Congress; and there was provision also for the appointment of honorary members and an advisory Council. An appropriation not to exceed $100,000 was approved.¹

In the pursuit of its purposes, the Commission announced that, "every corner of America should focus its attention on the principles laid down for us a century ago, and having done so, should now look to the future with democratic ideals more profoundly avowed than ever before."² The hope was expressed that every part of the nation would participate, "both by sharing in national observances, and by arranging special recognition of historical events," "that young and old alike will be inspired to adopt a truly American way of thinking,"

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"that tribute will be paid to the memories of our forefathers who took part in the bitter conflict to determine the exact path our national government should follow."8

Since 1958, at least 45 states have established Centennial Commissions through state legislative acts for commission appointments and budgets. An Advisory Council was established by the National Commission, consisting of 650 members from every state in the Union. The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was represented in two appointments to the Advisory Council, Dr. Albert N. D. Brooks and myself. Dr. John Hope Franklin served on the New York State Commission and Mrs. Madeleine A. Williams on the New Jersey State Commission, and other Negro-Americans served with other state groups.

The Commission's announcements would lead to the conclusion that its purposes were sound and in accordance with the act of Congress. However, from the opening of this first Centennial year, 1961, there has been a preoccupation with the glorification of the drama of the War as it opened in 1861, with Southern dominance and victories due to the initiative seized by those under arms in the South, notably at Montgomery, Fort Sumter and Manassas. Celebrations were conducted with enthusiasm and with definite purpose. The idea was "The Confederacy is dead but long live the Confederacy." This was an abiding belief and a halo to the Southern tradition of the Civil War, the result of which has been to prevent any reconstruction of the historical thought which could prove to be a basis for improved human relations and could bring greater unity to North and South.

This idea of glorifying the Confederacy lived first in the reenactment of the Inauguration of Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederacy on February 18, 1861. The scene was described as one with "colorful costumes," "strolling minstrels," "a touch of gaiety," "a noisy celebration with fireworks and cannon," while minstrel bandsmen blared 'Dixie' as the procession relived the parade of February 18, 1861.4 Thus the eve of secession, which could have been described as an evening of treason, was again glorified. The War's deeper

3 Ibid., "Forward."
causations and the profound meaning of its victory and defeat were obscured by the flag-waving, the shouting and the distractions created by a partisan showmanship.

The National Civil War Commission and the State Commissions are primarily responsible for the pageant concept with its horses and cannon, its theatrical props, its grand stands with spectators who pay admissions and imbibe their refreshments amid jokes and laughter while death and suffering were depicted for their enjoyment, as if on an ancient Roman holiday in an amphitheatre. Of major importance in these celebrations was the glorification of episodes with which one's sympathies were associated and the romanticizing of the battles in a cause which will mean that, in fairness, current spectacles of defeats for one side will be followed by spectacles of victories for the other. What will we see when General Grant marches through the Wilderness and General Sherman marches to the sea!

Charges were made that the Centennial celebrations were commercial, and there was some truth in these assertions. Grandstand seats with admissions were provided. Souvenir items of flags, uniforms, arms and equipment were sold by hawkers. The Commission denied that it was encouraging these sales and distributions, but it defended its interest in this aspect of the program as providing "a service to aid commissions that are planning ceremonies and that are in great need of authentic items with which to stage such events." However, another step was taken when a booklet was prepared by the Commission entitled "Aids for Advertisers" which gave advice to business concerns about how to tie in their advertisements with the celebrations. These instances are similar to those in the Civil War, in which the profit motives so often dominated principles.

These Centennial demonstrations have caused a Jewish Rabbi, Dr. Bernard J. Bamberger, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, to describe them as "a blasphemy and a disgrace." He added, "Four years of bloody war are not romantic, and while not all the right was on one side—it never is—the basic issue over which the Civil War was fought is not, we believe, subject to further debate." An-

other observer in referring to the reenactment of the First Battle of Bull Run, described it as "the grisly pantomime" which was "a source of somewhat dubious pleasure for the numerous (cheering) spectators." He declared that "such weekend rehearsals of violence cause Americans to overlook those grievous unbalances and necessities in our body politic which, one hundred years ago, made the outbreak of violence a tragic but necessary preliminary to the arduous reconstitution of our society."

This Association is not interested in pageantry or circus performance or Hollywood imagery of the supposed reality of battles. We are interested in celebrations which follow and accept historical truth. We do not propose to present a false history in pictures or words so that it will please contemporaries. In fact, history may displease the reader or observer, but it is none the less truthful. The opposite may be the task of the novelist and the dramatist who work too often with their eyes on the cash box. We will not pursue historical processes in order to bolster an assumption of sectional, religious, racial or local advantage over others. This is the task of the pseudo-historian. We will not be interested in a cultural regionalism or a state defense of its acts which seeks to justify its historical acts by selecting materials favorable to one point of view, while neglecting the materials favorable to others. We do not propose to draw stereotypes of slaves or slaveholders, of rebels or unionists, of whites or Negroes, of the North or the South. We plan only a balanced, objective treatment.

However, this 1961 celebration of 1861 had a favorable soil into which its seed could be sown. The nation had been made familiar with Confederate materials—its flags, its cap and uniform, its songs and its defenses of its position of 1861 in the published literature, its books and articles. The suggestions of the Centennial celebration had no difficulty in securing acceptance. The entire South was easily organized, and work was begun immediately by the states, particularly within Southern territory. It was said with realism, "The South may have lost the war—but it's sure going to win the Centennial." The New York Post was so concerned with the precipitous action of Southern states that it carried the statement

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that, "If the next five years of commemorating proceed along the lines of the first few months, they'll be whistling 'Dixie' at the Appomattox Courthouse enacted in 1965, and General Grant will hand his sword to General Lee." Such a prophecy may represent an exaggeration, but it is not without its elements of truth. The Rebel yell and the strains of Dixie, the South's national hymn, were heard on the air and on public occasions, but the Battle Hymn of the Republic or John Brown's Body was almost never heard, although the Northern soldiers marched from North to South singing:

"John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave—
But his soul goes marching on."

Four celebrations under the auspices of the National Commission have been held. The first in Washington, D. C., in 1958, with 99 representatives from 21 states. The second was in Richmond, Virginia, with 233 representatives from 32 states. The third was in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1960, with 350 representatives from 37 states. The fourth assembly was at Charleston, South Carolina in 1961, with 173 representatives in attendance from 36 states.

The celebration to commemorate the firing on Fort Sumter, April 12, 1861, at Charleston, brought into focus the slow progress which had been made in human relations. A Negro member of the New Jersey Centennial Commission, Mrs. Madeleine A. Williams of Orange, New Jersey, was denied admission to a local hotel in 1961, and this was the exact situation in 1861. The passing of one hundred years had created no difference. However, the intervention of President John F. Kennedy brought about an immediate change in the meeting place for the assembly. This second place of meeting was at the U. S. Naval Base where space was provided for the business sessions and sleeping quarters were set aside for men and women, with admission to the base only by official pass.

This is an aspect of human relations which was enacted one hundred years ago with Negro-Americans who were either excluded or segregated, and was reenacted in 1961 in spite of a war in which freedom became later in the war an open issue. Major General U. S. Grant, 3rd, the Commission Chairman,
after declaring that his opinion was that the Commission had no jurisdiction, described this incident as "the last minute change of meeting place over housing problems and local regulations, made to conform to White House policy regarding desegregation." It was to the credit of President John F. Kennedy that this change took place and that one of the underlying and unrecognized principles of the Civil War and the legislation which followed it were upheld in practice one hundred years later. President Kennedy in a letter to Major General Grant, 3rd, expressed displeasure over the reported discrimination. This letter was not made public, but it was reported that the Commission was informed that as an official body it had an obligation in sponsoring these meetings to see that all who were invited were accorded equal treatment.

There were several types of reaction to this incident. One was given by the Executive Director of the New Jersey Centennial Commission, Everett J. Landers, who said, "The President has recognized that the National Civil War Commission is wrong in expending funds to promote a function which violates the fundamental law of all fifty states." An opposite reaction was given by state representative John A. May, Chairman of the South Carolina Centennial Commission, who said inferentially that no federal funds were involved in the Charleston celebration. A third view was expressed by Representative William M. Tuck of Virginia, Chairman of the Civil War Centennial Commission's Executive Committee, to the effect that the matter of reservations for representatives was between individuals and the owners and operators of the hotels. This has been the traditional method of evading cases of discrimination under the Fourteenth Amendment. A fourth reaction manifesting the attitude of Negro-Americans was given by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in a telegram to its branches stating that the celebration was segregated and "a betrayal of everything the Civil War was fought for," and its branches were urged to request the state commissions not to participate in the Charleston celebration. In like manner, the Michigan Civil War Commission which had decided against participation in any promotion or fund drive for Civil

War memorials or battle reenactment in other states, stated in its report that they would boycott future segregated events in other states.

In the meantime, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, established by Carter G. Woodson and associates in 1915, had been interested in Civil War history from the period of its inception. The annual volumes of the *Journal of Negro History,* comprising the quarterly issues of this Journal published since 1916, and the monthly issues of the *Negro History Bulletin,* have contained researches and serious writings about the Civil War and the Negro-American. Its supreme and controlling purpose has been to seek, publish and distribute the facts of the contributions and participation of Negro-Americans in the history of their nation. We knew that we had the facts about Negroes in the Civil War, and we were under the impression that this Commission might give some assistance in the publication and distribution of these facts. In fact, the Association needed assistance, for we were conducting our work entirely on membership contributions and contributed services of historians and those interested in history. We were carrying on the work of the Association in spite of a burden of debt, but with our sacrifices, this debt was growing less with each passing year. In our annual sessions, the proposed Civil War Centennial was presented for discussion, and it was agreed unanimously that Dr. Albert N. D. Brooks, our Secretary-Treasurer and Editor of the *Negro History Bulletin,* and the President of the Association, should seek a conference with Mr. Betts. This conference was held in the fall of 1959.

Executive Director Betts indicated that the Commission had no funds to distribute to organizations who were cooperating in the celebration, but he observed that he thought that the aims of the Association were similar to those proposed by the Commission so far as the historical presentation of contributions of the people in the Civil War period was concerned.

One of the results of this meeting was the loan to us of Official Civil War Records which listed Negroes of the Army and Navy who had won the Congressional Medal of Honor and Medals of Honor in the Civil War. It was agreed that the
Association in its research interests would develop other proposals. We have been able to prosecute two parts of these proposals. There were the publication of the awards of the Congressional Medal of Honor and the issue of historical dates for 1961.\(^9\) It is not generally known that there were 16 Negro soldiers and 4 Negro sailors who received the Congressional Medal of Honor, nor do we consider the 21 Negro commissioned officers in the Civil War, and the larger number of non-commissioned officers.\(^{10}\)

A second project was given consideration also. This project was a proposal made by Dr. Randolph Edmonds of Florida A. & M. State University. Appearances were made by him before conventions of this Association during which he proposed the launching of a pageant with chorus for appearance in large cities, North and South. When we informed him that we did not have funds with which to stage this project, he stated with confidence that we could raise one dollar from each Negro in the United States, and soon we would have the necessary expense and more for the staging and travel of this group from place to place. To many of us who have had some experience with this type of fund raising, we know very well that unless there is some original backing, it costs a great deal more to raise this kind of money than it does to secure it.

We had no funds at our disposal as are found in many communities for projects of this type, and accordingly we could not indulge in these pageants. There might still be the possibility of presenting this spectacle in one or more of our large cities such as Chicago and Cleveland with funds properly allocated. The American Negro Emancipation Centennial Authority of Chicago under the direction of Mr. Alton Davis, has planned a celebration of the emancipators of Negro-Americans in 1863 and 1865, commemorating these years of freedom for all Americans of all colors. For, where slavery existed as the basis of national economy, peoples of all types were in bondage to it and were, to a large extent, willing or unwilling servants of it. In our day, the system of segregation and


discrimination, under which our celebrations may be conducted for the most part, are the descendants of the system of slavery.

However, this first Civil War Centennial Commission is now subject to change under the leadership of President Kennedy. Major General U. S. Grant, 3rd, has resigned, as has Mr. Karl Betts, the Executive Director. The Commission has appointed a special committee to seek a replacement for the Executive Director. Representative Frank E. Smith, Democrat of Mississippi, who is a spokesman for this group admitted that there "was too much emphasis on scholarly research and those aspects of the War which help create unity." Dr. Allan Nevins, former Professor of History at Cornell and Columbia Universities, has been appointed to the Commission and may be its next chairman. It is of interest to Negro-Americans that among the new members to be appointed by President Kennedy, there is Roy Davenport, a graduate of Fisk University and Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of the Army Personnel.

In spite of the change which seems imminent for this Commission, Negro-Americans are concerned about the character of the celebrations themselves, the participation of Negroes in them, the portrayal of their neglect, and the pursuit of historical truth in their presentations. We were concerned that the Commission's plan seems to have placed us on another separate-but-equal basis, in line with the philosophy so typical of the Negro's participation in many activities. With the Negro discounted as he is in American life, it is very desirable that presentations concerning his participation in the Civil War be made and given as wide publicity as is possible.

Several minority groups have undertaken types of programs. Among them are the Jewish people. B'nai B'rith through its lodges and its commissions has agreed upon the participation of American Jews with the Civil War Commission's programs. One of the first steps taken was the publication of Rabbi Bertram Korn's scholarly study, *American Jewry and the Civil War*. Although there was a relatively small number of Jews in the Union Army, one authority
states 6,500, Rabbi Korn points out in this volume that it was primarily because of the determined energy of the Jewish people that they “emerged from the War with their rights and immunities fortified and acknowledged,” and that “in battling for their own due place in American Democracy, they had performed an important service to all Americans.” In addition, B’nai B’rith, through its National Commission on Citizenship and Civil Affairs, has issued a Program Guide for the observance of the Civil War Centennial and has sent copies to each lodge or chapter. Reports of projects and programs have followed the issuance of this guide. A national exhibit has been developed on “American Jewry and the Civil War.” Local exhibits showing Jewish participation in the conflict, and a traveling exhibit of about 150 pieces have been planned with the backing of the Jewish Historical Commission and American Jewish Archives. A letter from Sidney G. Kusworm, Chairman of the National Commission on Citizenship and Civil Affairs, stated, “We are proud to join with our fellow citizens in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the conflict that separated state against state, yet in the final analysis forged a more united country than otherwise might have been possible.”

Negro-Americans are as interested and would be just as proud to join in these celebrations if we could attain the unity with others which this statement declares. Instead, we are separated and denied participation. We do not have to go to Berlin to experience a wall of separation, for we have it even in historical celebrations. However, there are several steps which Negro-Americans should undertake to make clear as we begin the consideration of participation in the Civil War celebration.

The first of these is that we should be concerned to make more definite the meaning of the North and the South as it went to War. There were divisions within each section, and it was not so simple as the blue against the gray. It was not one entire section against the other, for there were divisions within each section. While there was a relatively large number of people in the South who were interested directly in slavery,

the total number of families holding slaves in 1850 was 347,725. This comprised about one-third of the white population of the slave states and about one-half of the population in the states of South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Conversely, there were two-thirds of the people of the Southern states who were not directly interested in slavery, although indirectly there was dependence for more of them because slavery was the basis of the economy. Then too, when one writes of slaveholders, it should not be overlooked that there were Negro slaveholders. For instance, there were one hundred and eight Negro slaveholders in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1850 who owned 277 slaves and paid $12,342.02 in taxes.

The second of these steps is to bring clearly to the attention of people of our day the major causes of the Civil War and the grave crisis of principles which erupted during these years. We should make clear to ourselves and to others that one of the major causes of the War was slavery and the plan to extend slavery. Freedom for white and for black was an important principle. Assertions are made continuously and are sought by historians to make the war’s causes rest on other causes than slavery, but in the interest of historical truth, there cannot be a complete separation of slavery from the Civil War. Moreover, it was the termination of slavery which created a profound revolution in Southern society and subsequently various issues have revolved around it.

Historically, it was alleged in 1861 that “the issue is between anarchy and order—government and lawlessness—between the authority of the Constitution and the recklessness of those who seek its destruction.” On the contrary, the Southern point of view is expressed by some leaders who made slavery “the cornerstone” of their edifice, while others insisted that “Southern independence” was the main issue.

Another viewpoint was presented more directly by the New York Tribune when it was declared “some speak as if abolition of slavery were the object, but putting down the

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gigantic conspiracy against the government is it. That and nothing else is it—"\textsuperscript{16} Harper's Weekly went a step further and was determined that, "It is not now a question of slavery or anti-slavery. It is not even a question of union or disunion. The question is simply whether Northern men will fight. Southerners have rebelled and drag our flag in the dirt in the belief that because we won't fight duels or engage in street brawls, therefore we are cowards. The question now is whether or not they are right.'"\textsuperscript{16} However, there were those who were more forthright on emancipation and urged freely the emancipation of slaves and their use as soldiers. One must not forget the abolition sentiment which was in existence and had grown as the 1860's advanced. These abolitionists met opposition in most all Northern states. Their meetings were interrupted, they were hissed, stoned and roughly handled. In Cincinnati, Boston, Philadelphia, Alton and many other places their work was opposed.

The United States in 1861, a century ago, was not divided primarily into two large sections, each with a united separate view of the War. There was no solid South for slavery or solid North then for freedom anymore than there is now in 1961 for segregation and for freedom from it. We were not two federations of states, each with its united opinion. We were a federation of differing groups, sections and individuals. It is a mistake to assume as we celebrate the Centennial that the nine million people of the seceding states favored secession and that the twenty-two million in the Northern states were ready to go to war to end slavery. On the contrary, thousands in the North agreed with the editorial of Horace Greeley's New York Tribune that "the erring sisters be permitted to go in peace." There were pacifists and those who hesitated and were in agreement with John Greenleaf Whittier when he wrote:

\begin{quote}
"They break the bonds of union: shall we light
The fires of hell to weld anew the chain
On that red anvil where each blow is pain."
\end{quote}

Third, we should discover, publish and speak of the attitude toward the war of Negro-Americans in our state. Is there

\textsuperscript{15} New York Tribune, July 7, 1861.
\textsuperscript{16} Harper's Weekly. May 4, 1861.
historical truth in the tradition that Negroes did nothing for their own freedom and that they were treated so well that they made no efforts to gain their freedom? Is there historical truth in the tradition that the slaves were loyal to their masters and preferred slavery to freedom, that they did nothing to gain their freedom?

War issues were present in the thoughts of Negro-Americans, and they were definitely aware as the first year of the war passed of the connection of the war with freedom. Here in Ohio, the valiant effort of John Brown in 1859 was known to colored Americans, for Brown lived in this state. In fact, in many places in the North they had joined in meetings honoring the memory; and one of these meetings was in Cincinnati and another in Cleveland, of the hero of their freedom, and however great other Americans criticized Brown, there is no instance of the condemnation or the criticism of John Brown by Negro-Americans. Freedom conventions of Negroes were held here in the cities of the North prior to and during the Civil War.¹⁷

As the Northern armies advanced, Negroes in the South became more aware of the issues when they came within Union lines. On January 6, 1863, General Grant wrote to General Halleck that the contraband question was becoming serious and that he did not know what to do with them. He had authorized an Ohio philanthropist, as he called him, to take many to his state at government expense, and he hoped that he could dispose of more in this way. Neither the administration nor the army commanders had a definite policy with reference to the presence and use of Negroes for military purposes, although they were eager and willing to fight or to work.

Another aspect of this subject relates to the participation of Negro-Americans in the armies. We should have scholarly works based upon sound source materials. I have completed a study for Ohio under the title, *Negro-Americans of Ohio in Civil War History*. This study has been accepted for publication by the Ohio Civil War Centennial Commission, and this

Commission has authorized the Ohio State University Press to publish the material.

This manuscript has four chapters. The first is entitled, "Status At the Beginning of the War—Not a Man and Yet a Man." Chapter II—"The First Military Employment—A laborer or a Soldier"; Chapter III—"Out-of-State Military Employment—A Soldier for Other States"; Chapter IV—"Ohio Volunteers and United States Colored Troops—A Soldier Tried and True." This monograph is footnoted and has the earmarks of scholarly pretensions.

While the study of individual state regiments would seem to center in one state, this would not be the case because of the organization of the United States Colored Troops. For instance, the Fifth Regiment of United States Colored Troops, which was originally the 127th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, organized at Camp Delaware, made its way in expeditions and battles to Yorktown, Petersburg, Richmond, City Point, Fort Converse, New Market Heights, Fair Oaks, Camden, Sandy Swamp, New Kent Courthouse, Kingston, Goldsborough, Raleigh and New Berne, thus covering two states, Virginia and North Carolina. Similar activity could be represented by troops raised in other states. The major interest, therefore, should be centered in what was beginning to happen to Negro-Americans within a given state, and then those who joined the United States Colored Troops might be followed into the battle and expedition areas in which they participated.

This story needs to be told, not only of Negro participation, but we need testimony concerning the conduct of Negro soldiers in the War. In the main, there has been praise for their efforts. There are those, however, who take an opposite view. It was reported by a newspaper correspondent that General Greenleaf of a white Massachusetts regiment had said of the conduct of Negro soldiers at Port Hudson, "It was an exhibition of cowardice on the part of the entire gang instead of that courageous and valiant spirit of which so much has been written." It is doubtful that General Greenleaf was in a position to know the facts of the battle and his attitude on the enlistment of Negroes is known to be that of using them only in labor assignments.

It is also true that a few historians have presented similar
points of view. W. E. Woodward in his volume which was a Literary Guild Book (1928) entitled Meet General Grant has said, "The American Negroes are the only people in the history of the world, so far as I know, that ever became free without any effort of their own—They had not started the war nor ended it. They twanged banjos around the railroad station, sang melodious spirituals and believed that some Yankee would soon come along and give each of them forty acres and a mule." No greater travesty of Negro participation and attitude has been written anywhere at any time, and yet this was placed in a bestseller. A writer in Dayton, Ohio, sent a letter in August, 1961, stating "I read a very nostalgic article in the Courier-Journal (Louisville) concerning the Civil War. It was written, of course, by a Southerner and laid a great deal of emphasis on romanticism and gallantry.' These impressions are being disseminated and should be corrected.

It is well known that the great mass of slaves had been made docile through the slave regime with its pressures and the superior white attitude forced upon them. The result was that the average slave was quite tractable. This is not only true of Negroes but of slaves throughout history, whether they are white or black or brown or whatever the color. History reveals very few instances of united movement by enslaved groups of any nation or race in order to obtain their freedom. Such insurrections as there have been have been sporadic, and there have been hundreds of such movements among Negro-Americans. An amusing case in this connection is that of Betsy Fuller, a free Negro woman of Virginia, who was in the huckster business. Her husband was legally her slave. As the War approached, it was reported that he was more interested in the views of the South and in continuing slavery than in those of the emancipationists!18

Minor outbreaks of smaller numbers occurred in many places, but the danger of a widespread conspiracy and revolt did not occur. Nevertheless, there were plans made for general insurrections through the entire slave regime, but these plans did not materialize. One of them was proposed by a "Mr.

Montgomery” in Washington, D.C., in a letter to General Foster at New Berne, North Carolina. The letter was dated May 12, 1863, and was found on board a captured mail steamer in Chesapeake Bay. The slaves were to make a concerted move for freedom on August 1, 1863. The plan called for no shedding of blood except in self-defense. Several intelligent contraband slaves were to be selected to go into the interior and communicate the plan to the slaves. This method was to be followed over the entire South. Governor Vance of North Carolina sent the letter containing the plan of the plot to Jefferson Davis, who advised the Confederate Secretary of War. A few days later a report was issued which stated that the plans were complete to prevent any such general insurrection.19

There were approximately two hundred thousand Negroes enlisted in the Union Army and thirty thousand in the Union Navy. A total of 186,017 were reported to have fought in the Union Army, with 104,387 recruited in Confederate territory.20 Negro men and women to the extent of a quarter of a million were in the Army and Navy as teamsters, nurses, cooks, pilots, guides, spies, scouts and laborers. They were on both sides in the struggle, but only to a limited extent in the Confederacy. They had aided the Confederate cause directly and indirectly, in the first years of the war, working in the fields in the production of food thereby making it possible for other men to leave their families and homes and their farms. Others had worked on the fortifications and in the labor battalions of both armies. A smaller number had gone to war as bodyguards for their masters, who were officers and even privates. The loyalty of Negro-Americans to both causes was tested by this war. It was on this basis, therefore, that the Confederacy in 1865 undertook its last desperate measure of employing Negro-Americans as soldiers.21

Obviously, this position was illogical for the Confederacy, because if Negro slaves would make good soldiers, slavery it-

self was without defense and should have been first terminated rather than to delude oneself with the thought that soldiers, having found out about the underlying and exotic cause of the war and its probable outcome of freedom, would fight for their enslavers. In fact, it is highly probable that some of them would have turned their guns on some of their more arrogant masters. The great bulk of the Negro people participated in the struggle to maintain the principles of the American Republic and for the freedom of themselves and their fellows.

As we Americans face the approaching Centennial in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965, there should be planning so far as we can for representation and participation in the state and city programs so that the truth can be a part of the observances of these patriotic occasions, and that the participation of Negro-Americans in the War can be noted by all Americans. In this connection, I suggest the following:

First, community meetings in which the Centennial is a major issue, should be held and which presentations should be made concerning the activities of Negro-Americans in the Civil War.

Second, Museum exhibits with visual presentations showing this activity should be planned and organized. The New York Public Library has had an exhibition, entitled "The Negro in the Civil War," at the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History on 135th Street in New York City. Memoirs, biographies, original documents of Negro officers and soldiers, drawings and photographs from contemporary periodicals were exhibited. This display remained for several periods on exhibition and was to be seen without charge. The Providence Public Library (Rhode Island) began a series of exhibits this year to last through 1964. This year's exhibit was entitled "Slavery and the Negro: America's Tragedy," and consisted of over 1200 items.

Third, wherever it can be done at the camp spots where Negroes were trained as soldiers in our state, let us seek permission to place a plaque and arrange ceremonies at these historic sites.

Fourth, let us arrange study meetings and sessions of city or state organizations for the celebration of the Centennial
with Negro participation as a major subject. Another national meeting of the U. S. Civil War Commission is to be held in Columbus, Ohio, in 1962. Will Negroes be represented? If they will be, it will be because there is initiative undertaken, for somehow it is assumed that the Negro need not be included. How can the Civil War be commemorated and the Negro, who was a factor in it, be omitted and neglected?

Fifth, special preparation should be made of any local historical materials which are available. We suggest that in every way possible the story of the part played by Negro-Americans in the Civil War be told, whether they were soldiers or citizens, North and South, who were active in connection with emancipation and the winning of the War.

Sixth, with Negroes participating in the Civil War, let us endeavor to have a committee or a group of persons to locate the records of their roles as civilians and as military persons, and if possible these should be published. Several persons have sent to me the discharge papers of their grandfathers who were in the Union Army. The libraries, the state archives, the city and state historical societies, the state and local museums and the National Archives are all sources of materials and historical facts.

Seventh, it is also of value to arrange essay contests or historical research and writing projects with the cooperation of local school officials at the high school level or on the college and university level on subjects that relate to aspects of the Civil War. Small prizes could be awarded which will stimulate interest. This type of contest will create and spread information concerning the deeds of Negro-Americans in the Civil War. Local newspapers between the period of 1861 and 1865 in many of the states contained isolated information about Negro-Americans. These have never been read as they ought to be for the type of information which we need. A Civil War Contest could be arranged in close cooperation with schools, churches, and communities. Prizes could be awarded for presentation of music involving the Civil War or of music related to it. This type of presentation with a brief talk at an intermission would be most helpful in this celebration and it could become an outstanding civic event of the Centennial.

We must not forget the heroes and heroines of the Civil
War, colored and white. We must not forget their contributions to cities, towns, villages, homes and the areas in which they lived, worked and fought during the Civil War. Negro men and women did not stand on the sidelines with their hands folded and engage in no activities for freedom while the war was being fought for them. With the notice definitely made of the ultimate objective of freedom announced through the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, Negroes began to find acceptance in the armies, and overt activities were undertaken.

How can the Civil War be celebrated as if a victory was won by those who rebelled in support of slavery, when they, the defeated, were on the wrong side of the conflict and are still not prepared to acknowledge it? When historians set out to find the causes which justify the action of a century ago, and by interpreting and publishing primarily the facts and conclusions which are creditable to persons like themselves, this is the miseducation of the people. Shakespeare has Macbeth cry out, "All our yesterdays have lighted fools." In other words, "lighted fools" describe our yesterdays, our history in the light of their objectives. They foolishly and willfully justify error and villify truth. This has been done by emphasizing one set of acts to the neglect or omission of others. We should have also in view commemoration and not celebration.

This is one of the tricks that the historians play on the dead who cannot answer with the historical truth. The proudest acts of the preceding generations, although from the highest motives, can be misconstrued, misinterpreted and subverted to serve a defeated and unworthy cause. The control of the presentation of history is so often the control of the future of a people. We can have the description of a war for Southern independence which would make it appear that it was similar to the American War for Independence against Great Britain, for such a war for Southern independence would be far more creditable than a war to extend or defend or continue slavery. A War for States Rights would be more justifiable than a war to protect property in slaves. A War Between the States would be more commendable than a Civil War over freedom, especially when a defense of states rights against the expansion of freedom is needed in 1961 and 1962. Morris
U. Schappes, writing in *Jewish Currents* and noting school events of this year in New Orleans observes, "The old Confederates are today as aggressive as their ancestors a century ago.'

It is true too often that most Southern historians have created an image through misinterpretation and misrepresentation which would justify the reactions of one hundred years ago and create a loyalty to them one hundred years afterwards. Partisan history and actual falsification under the guise of rewriting history have been used to justify the physical repression and the present exclusion of millions of people of color. There has been no sense of regret, no sense of repentance and no realization of wrong in this rewriting of the Civil War. It is heroic, they say, and it is not regarded as treason. How contrary all of this is to the religion we profess! George Santayana has well said of this type of action, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Perhaps the South and parts of the North having not learned from their errors may well repeat them.

Let us remember the past, build upon its truth, and we will not be condemned to repeat it. Some Americans are now engaging in this repetitive experience. The defense of slavery has been exchanged for the defense of segregation, discrimination, inequality, inferiority and opposition to the decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court as well as opposition to citizen voting. Because of the failures in 1865 of this opposition against freedom, we can take courage in the assurance that in these respects history will repeat itself. It has taken one hundred years to bring us to this sense of victory. We can now see the past, if we will, through the perspective of a century. We shall move forward with greater speed, for we have struck our tents, and we are now on the march. Let us decide that these Civil War Centennial Years will not close before we have made freedom for all Americans, black and white, a fact in law and a fact in American life! In the words of O'Shaughnessy: "Each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth." May this age of the Centennial be one in which freedom in reality is coming to birth, and not only by a scrap of paper and armed forces!

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